

# SPERDVAC **RADIOGRAM**

## ELECTION EDITION

Vol. XVI, No.2 February 1990



Sgt. Dick Wesson announces while Jimmie O'Neil handles the piano at the world's first mobile radio station. The Fifth Army's traveling station was organized in Italy in 1943. Known as the American Expeditionary Radio Station, the broadcast facility followed soldiers into combat and provided competition to Axis Sally. See story on page 8.



# "Front Page" Airs Live

KPCC-FM in Pasadena will air a ninety minute adaptation of the stage play "Front Page" beginning at 8 pm on Feb. 25. The presentation is a production of the California Artists Radio Theatre.

The non-commercial station has decided to carry the program live when it is performed at the Equestrian Center, 480 Riverside Drive in Burbank as part of a fund-raising banquet for the Greater Los Angeles Press Fund Foundation. Proceeds will go to a fund for former employees of the recently defunct *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* and scholarships for college students majoring in journalism. The cocktail hour begins at 6 pm and dinner will be served at 6:45 pm.

CART's Peggy Webber has adapted the script based on the stage play by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. Jerry Devine will serve as program consultant and engineering will be by Marty Halprin and Jim Green. Ray Erlenborn and David Krebs will perform the sound effects.

Actor Parley Baer has been added to the cast, which includes Richard Erdman, Jeanette Nolan, William Woodson, Marvin Kaplan, Paul Keith, Robert Rockwell and Lou Krugman. Jimmy Lydon, Marie Windsor, Linda Kaye Henning, Kathleen Freeman, Pat Buttram, Les Tremayne, Dan

O'Herlihy, Sean McClory, Tom Hatton, Bob Legionaire, Shay Duffin and John Bliss will also be featured.

Live music will be performed by Ian Whitcomb and his Roaring Twenties Band.

Reservations may be made by phoning the Press Club at (213) 849-3737 or (818) 846-2350. Tickets are \$50 per person.

## PUBLISHER RELEASES NEW SHERLOCK HOLMES CASSETTE

Simon and Schuster Audioworks is releasing the seventh in a series of 26 cassettes, each featuring two complete broadcasts of **The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes**.

The two **Holmes** stories on the upcoming cassette are "The Case of the Out of Date Murder" from September 17, 1945 and "Waltz of Death" from April 29, 1946.

Each cassette features introductions recorded by performers who were associated with the radio series. The late actor Ben Wright appears on the upcoming cassette.

Simon and Schuster will release a new cassette four times each year until 1994, when the final cassette in the series is available. The **Sherlock Holmes** broadcasts include portions of the shows from the 1944-45 season, the complete 1945-46 season, and part of the 1946-47 season.

They are available at B. Dalton Bookstores, Waldon Bookstores and from some independent bookstores.



Bob Legionaire brought his badge, handcuffs and gun but didn't need them to arrest our attention when he performed in "Arsenic and Old Lace" at the SPERDVAC Convention. He will be similarly attired February 25 when the California Artists Radio Theatre presents a live 90 minute adaptation of "Front Page" on KPCC-FM, Pasadena beginning at 8 pm.

## REEL TO REEL TAPE

Our tape is U.S. Government Surplus, Ampex 641 or equivalent, 1800 ft. length, spun onto a CLEAN REEL which allows us to check for edge damage. All reels are HAND picked with BOTH HANDS to insure quality. 100% replacement guaranteed!! 40 reels with new white boxes \$66. 80 reels with new white boxes \$120.

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## LESTER, HOLE GUEST FEB. 10

Chicago radio performers Jack Lester and Jonathan Hole will be our featured guests at the next SPERDVAC meeting. We will meet at 12 noon Saturday, Feb. 10 at Western Federal Savings and Loan, 12175 Ventura Blvd., Studio City.

Mr. Lester appeared on many of the popular children's programs which originated from Chicago. Mr. Hole's radio credits include Chicago soap operas, **Dragnet** and **This Is Your FBI**. He also appeared on **Lux Radio Theatre** during its early days in New York.

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

**DEADLINE**

**MARCH ISSUE**

Feb. 20, 1990

**SPERDVAC**

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*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.*

# Radio in Review



*By Chris Lembesis*

**BEHIND THE TUBE: HISTORY OF BROADCAST TECHNOLOGY AND BUSINESS.** By Andrew Inglis. Focal Press. (80 Montvale Ave., Stoneham, MA 02180). 1990. Clothbound. \$37.95.

We who enjoy the programs of a bygone era appreciate the artistry and the production values that made radio what it was. But there was also a technical history behind this medium, and it is just as important.

This new work, written by an industry professional who was a part of some of those developments, presents insights into the development in telecommunications, ranging from the origins of radio, to cable TV to home video. But it is the area of radio's development that draws our attention in this very large volume.

The early experiments leading to the development of radio and the pioneers behind it leads off this book. The founding of the corporations: AT & T, GE, RCA, NBC, CBS, is well documented, and the story of how radio programming was transmitted AND received is fascinating.

One of the strong points of this work is the terminology of the principles of broadcasting (transmitter modulation, station service and range at night, frequency allocations, etc.) and they are clearly explained with associated charts or graphs. But the real prize Inglis presents for OTR buffs, is an explanation of how a radio studio functioned, including the various microphones used.

Though this is a great overview, it could have had more information or statistics on the technical end of radio history. For example, how and why the 16" ET was used and the organization of the recording departments of the networks, the various line and air check services, Class A and B lines, and the difference between the RCA 44 and 77 mikes and their proper applications, etc. could have been covered.

These are important areas, in terms of broadcast technology history. But until such a detailed work is published on a specific era of radio history, this is still a fine work to have. Thanks to Phil Sutherland, Associate Editor of Focal Press, for the advance unbound review copy of an important work about broadcasting's past.

**BROADCAST VOICE PERFORMANCE.** By Michael Keith. Focal Press. (80 Montvale Ave., Stoneham, MA 02180) 1989. Softbound. \$24.95.

From the same publisher, Focal Press, is another interesting title that is not about radio history per se, but a textbook on the effective use of the human voice for broadcasting. What caught my attention were the first three chapters which presented a fine overview of announcing from Radio's Golden Age.

The author presents interesting insights on how radio was structured, and the announcing styles of the early newscasters, sportscasters, and personalities. They could be floral or low key but had the ability to stir the emo-

*Cont. next page . . .*



## Radio in Review cont. . .

tions of their listeners. Actual script excerpts are shown that indicate when a newscaster paused for effect. Interesting photos and charts are also included in this text, including a CBS Radio announcer audition analysis checklist.

In last month's Radiogram, it was announced that writers Robert Hilliard and Michael Keith were preparing a book on radio's early days. That new book should be eagerly awaited, as the same Mr. Keith wrote this title. Until it is written, enjoy this one, even though only a part of it has anything to do with radio's past.

### **RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING: 1920 - 1983.**

By George Hill and Lenwood Davis. Garland Publishing, Inc. (136 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016). 1984. Clothbound. \$20.00.

Though overlooked by many, religious broadcasts were a very important part of radio's earliest days. Many are aware of Father Coughlin and other ministers of the airwaves. And of course there were the dramatic series, with a religious message or theme that many of us enjoy on tape, such as **Family Theater**, **The Eternal Light**, and **The Greatest Story Ever Told**.

This work attempts to list what was written about religion and broadcasting, from its earliest days, to the present. The areas covered include books, dissertations and theses, and magazine articles. This work is well researched in its breakdown of topics.

There are a few omissions of some very important works on religious broadcasting that should have been included in this volume. As an example, **The Eternal Light** by Morton Wishengrad (Crown: 1947), **American Scriptures** by van Doren and Carmer (Boni & Gaer: 1946), **The Old Fashioned Revival Hour and The Broadcasters** by Elwin Wright (Fellowship Press: 1940), and a few others. Otherwise, it is well organized for those researching religious radio history.

Printed on acid free paper and well bound, perhaps in time a revised edition will add more historical data. Thanks to Vance Allen of Garland Publishers for this important work.

**FROM XYZ TO ABC.** By Fred Foy. Privately Published. (Order from SPERDVAC, Box 1587, Hollywood, CA 90078). 1986. Softbound. \$5.

Here is a delightful autobiographical work by one of the best announcers of Radio's Golden Days, Fred Foy. Through words and photographs, Fred shares what it was like working in radio and how he entered that medium. We remember him for announcing on **The Long Ranger**, **Sgt. Preston** and **The Green Hornet**, but he did other shows and this work highlights some of them. From the title of his book, we find that Mr. Foy continued working in TV, most notably as Dick Cavett's announcer.

SPERDVAC has had the pleasure of having this book available at our meetings for the last four years, but ironically, it has never been reviewed. Here's a great edition for your library, affordably priced.

**THIRTEEN FOR CORWIN.** Introduction by Ray Bradbury. With contributions by Studs Terkel, Charles

Kuralt, Norman Lear, Norman Cousins, Erik Barnouw, Philip Dunne, Peter Davis, Richard Goggin, Jerome Lawrence, James Brown, Robert Lee, Leonard Leader, and Earl Robinson. USC School of Journalism. (University Park GFS 315, Los Angeles, CA 90089-1695). 1985. Clothbound. \$15.00.

In 1985, on the 75th birthday of radio legend Norman Corwin, the Department of Journalism at USC asked some of his many admirers to reflect on radio's history. That's an impressive list of names listed above, and the most found it difficult to resist writing about what Norman Corwin meant to broadcasting . . . and to them. From that we have 13 beautiful essays of what radio meant to them.

From Charles Kuralt . . . "They had a book of Corwin's plays in the school library in North Carolina. I read it at 13 and knew what I wanted to try to do with my life." Studs Terkel . . . "He was the bard of radio's Golden Age. It was no contest." From Ray Bradbury. . . "Because of him I re-discovered Whitman, Wolfe, and indirectly, Shakespeare and Shaw. In sum he gave me the greatest gift any man can give another: to dare to speak in great tongues.

Last month, two works, one of and one by Norman Corwin, were reviewed. This volume completes an excellent trilogy of a man who has left us richer and wiser in a complicated and uncertain world.

Only 90 copies still remain. It is a handsome volume printed on Mohawk Superfine, and a fine addition to add to your collection. Thanks to Sue Prock, Administrative Assistant of the School of Journalism, USC, for this wonderful work.

For those who joined SPERDVAC after our last Convention, the following titles are available until sold out. Please make out your check to SPERDVAC and send to the Hollywood Box. I will fill your order ASAP.

**GREAT RADIO PERSONALITIES IN HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS.** Softbound. \$8.00.

**RADIO COMEDY.** Clothbound. \$20.00. Out of print, these are the last.

**DON'T TOUCH THAT DIAL!** Clothbound & shrinkwrapped. \$15.00.

**THE ONE MAN'S FAMILY ALBUM.** Softbound & 25 signed by Mr. Morse. \$9.00.

**FRED ALLEN - HIS LIFE & WIT.** Clothbound. Very few left. \$15.00

**ON A NOTE OF TRIUMPH.** Softbound. Norman Corwin biography. \$7.00.

**FROM XYZ TO ABC.** Softbound. Fred Foy looks back. Only \$5.00.

**STAY TUNED.** Clothbound. 2 left from convention. \$35.00.

**LISTENING GUIDE TO CLASSIC RADIO PROGRAMS.** Softbound, some signed. \$7.00.

**DORFSMAN & CBS.** Clothbound. CBS art exec showcases his career. \$25.00

These are offered first come, first serve. All will be become valuable collector's items in time. Please include \$2.00 postage for each title ordered.

For readers attached to the sounds of today's West Coast radio, a new book has been written called **WHEN**

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# Radio in Review cont. . .

**RADIO WAS BOSS**, by Bill Earl. It is a picture and words scrapbook of the West Coast's most "Boss" radio stations and their deejays of the Silver Era. Order from: Research Archives, 633 No. Taylor Ave. #18, Montebello, CA 90640. The cost is \$6.50. It highlights selected Top 40 AM stations and their stars. Sixteen stations are profiled. Call letters, tower locations and description, location on the dial, format, transmitter site, memorable personalities and years, notable memorabilia, and other information are covered in this publication.

Calendars seem to be the "in" thing at bookstores, especially when they follow a specific theme. For we OTR fans, here is one to kick off 1990 in fine style. Available from member Terry Salomonson, who also received the Alan Rockford Award last year, is an oldtime calendar featuring photographs and information about radio history for each month. All the photos are in black and white and it comes in a brown cover spiral bound for easy flipping from month to month. The cost is \$12.50 + \$2.50 shipping. Collectors might want to consider having two to avoid marking their one copy. Either way, it's a different way to enjoy our hobby.

Also available from Terry are two program logs that should be an important addition to a collector's library. **THE LONE RANGER LOG**, and the just released **CHALLENGE OF THE YUKON LOG** should answer just about any question about these radio favorites. For fans of the **LONE RANGER**, there is information about 2,603 recorded programs, a synopsis of the first 713 shows and 2,199 script titles with correct broadcast dates. At 106 pages in length, this is a very well researched work. It is published softbound, and the cost has been reduced to \$17.50.

The **SGT PRESTON** log covers all 1,260 broadcasts. Here's the twist that makes this log unique. There are script titles listed that were produced, but not aired! And script titles written, but not produced! This log indicates all the 15 minute programs, as well as the more familiar 30 minute episodes, script authors, program titles and more. It is also published softbound, and complete in 29 pages. Concise and well done, it sells for \$7.50. Both logs may be ordered together for only \$20.00 + \$3.50 shipping. Send to: Audio Classics, P.O. Box 1135, St. Charles, MO 63302-1135.

For **LONE RANGER** fans especially, having this log, along with Reg Jones' **THE MYSTERY OF THE MASKED MAN'S MUSIC**, and Dave Holland's **FROM OUT OF THE PAST** will complete an excellent trilogy and the works do not run into each other with redundant information.

Charles Ingersoll, who wrote **Minnesota Airwaves 1912 Through 1939 and Radio Trivia**, reviewed last month, passed away on December 23rd. A recipient of the Alan Rockford Award, and publisher of **Radio Dial**, an OTR fan magazine of the past, he was a credit to the hobby, and will be missed.

For readers who would like to see how Old Time Radio

was recorded, how about a guided tour, via video, of some of the artifacts of that bygone era? The Audio Engineering Society has announced the release of a video title: *An Afternoon With Jack Mullin*. Mr. Mullin introduced the tape recorder to America after World War II and was Bing Crosby's recording engineer for **Philco Radio Time** and the later **Bing Crosby Show**. The cost is \$29.95, in VHS only. Order from: The Audio Engineering Society, 60 E. 42nd St., New York, NY 10165.

**A Directory of Broadcast Archives**, compiled by Dr. Donald Godfrey, is now in the preparation stage, with publication this year still scheduled. This work will showcase academic and private institutions that have original radio recordings for research or enjoyment. Dr. Godfrey wishes to thank those who responded to his questionnaire in helping to structure this book. This WILL be a definite work on a part of radio history.

Of all the various OTR publications, the **Old Time Radio Digest** is a favorite of many. This publication presents a balanced look at our hobby. Program reviews, various conventions, and other features make this a magazine to enjoy. Expertly edited by Bob Burchett, it is starting its seventh year of service to the hobby, for the hobby. #36 has just been released with a cover tribute to Mel Blanc that is most touching. The latest issue will be offered at each meeting, or write to: Royal Promotions, 4114 Montgomery Road, Cincinnati, OH 45212. \$12.50 brings you 6 issues and great reading!



**WANTED:** In about 1946 or '47 I was the announcer on the Coca-Cola SPOTLIGHT BANDS radio show. It originated at Camp White in Medford, Oregon, starring Alvino Rey and the King Sisters, broadcast on the Mutual network. If anyone has a copy of the show I would sure like to hear from them. Although I did several of these shows when Mike Roy (the series announcer) was on vacation, I never heard them because they were broadcast live. Contact: Bob Shannon, 15549 Sherman Way, #204, Van Nuys, CA 91406.

**FOR TRADE:** I am an OTR tape collector and an avid listener of OTR. I am very interested in hearing from other collectors in the Champaign-Urbana or east-central Illinois area, particularly those who would be interested in swapping tapes. I have about a thousand cassettes of OTR so there is a good variety to swap from. Contact: John D. Anthony, 1210 Magnolia Lane, Rantoul, IL 61866.



# Hugh's Hues

By Hugh Anderson

Can anyone picture urbane, witty John Daly, who was moderator for seventeen years on TV's "What's my Line?" laying in the sand reporting the assault on the Anzio beachhead during the invasion of Italy?

John Charles Daly, Jr., was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1914. His mother brought him and his older brother to America when his father, a mining engineer, died. They settled in Tilton, N.J. where John finished high school in 1930. He went on to Boston College and worked as a switchboard operator to help with expenses but had to leave because of finances. He worked as a clerk for a wool firm, performed for the Peabody Players, worked in Washington D.C. as a transit schedule engineer (or bus counter as he described it), worked in Boston at WLOE and finally went back to Washington and WJSV in 1937.

He moved to CBS and the White House seat in October. His ability to ad lib masterfully was most important in his selection to cover the President. In 1938, Daly was selected as the best announcer in Washington D.C. Frank Blair of WOL placed fourth. In 1940, Daly was the presidential announcer for CBS. A year later he was the CBS special events announcer for the entire U.S. That year Robert Trout went to London to relieve Ed Murrow and Daly became **The World Today** reporter. His coverage of the army training camps while they conducted war games was used as material for the program **Spirit of '41**. He was the CBS announcer who first told us the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. From **The World Today**, he transferred to the **Report To The Nation**, moved to London and eventually covered the 1943 Sicily invasion.

He landed on and reported from the Anzio beachhead during the Italian invasion. He was the first to report the air bombardment of Monte Cassino; gave an eyewitness account of the fall of Messina; and covered the surrender of the Italian fleet at Malta. Daly returned to the U.S. and participated in the "D-Day" invasion by reading eyewitness reports of the storming of the beaches.

He covered the 1944 political conventions, delivering a big scoop in broadcasting President Roosevelt's decision to name Harry S. Truman as his running mate in lieu of then Vice President Henry Wallace. *Broadcasting* magazine describes it thusly: "With public interest in the 1944 campaign at fever pitch, the networks canceled all commercial programs that would have interfered with their coverage of the Republican and Democratic conventions, and utilized more than 300 reporters, technicians and officials at each political gathering. At the Democratic convention in particular, radio scored a few scoops including a live broadcast of a major news conference that caught the competing media by surprise. Senator Samuel Jackson (D-Ind), the convention chairman, had called a conference to read Roosevelt's letter about Vice-President Henry A. Wallace who was replaced by Harry S. Truman as FDR's running mate. CBS received Jackson's permission to have the letter read over the air, and just before the conference began, John Daly, CBS reporter-analyst, walked in with a small black bag that had a line trailing from it. No-

body paid much attention until the conference began and Daly pulled a microphone out of the bag and placed it in front of the senator. While the CBS network heard Jackson live, the other networks and newspaper reporters took notes. Thus amid some protests, a mainstay of modern broadcasting was born." (This report was the first live report of a major news conference.)

On April 12, 1945, at 5:49 PM Eastern War Time, he was first to report: "We interrupt this program to bring you a special news bulletin from CBS World News. A press association has just announced that President Roosevelt is dead. All that has been received is that bar announcement." Daly was picked to make the announcement since he had come to know the President quite well while accumulating five years as the CBS White House correspondent.

On July 7, 1947, John Daly was a "reporter" on the **CBS Is There** program that recreated historical events as told by reporters on the scene. Don Hollenbeck was the anchor with Daly, Ken Roberts, Harry Marble and Jackson Beck as reporters. The name was changed in 1948 to **You Are There** and ran into 1950. The show later transferred to TV with Walter Cronkite as reporter, 1953-1957.

Daly participated in the coverage of the Korean War, the 1952 and 1956 political conventions, and was named Vice-President of TV news, special events and public affairs at ABC in 1953. He covered the Nuremburg Trials, the Berlin Airlift and the Army-McCarthy Hearings.

Daly's television credits include:

America's Town Meeting, Moderator, April-July, 1952.  
Celebrity Time, Panelist, 1948-1950.

The Front Page, 1949-1950, as Walter Burns, editor of the Center City Examiner. His past experience as a journalist on radio was determined to give the role authenticity.

It's News To Me, Moderator, 1951-1953. The program was revived as a summer replacement for "Person To Person" in 1954 with Walter Cronkite as moderator. ABC News, Monday-Friday, 7:15-7:30 PM, October 1953-May 1959, as anchorman. This was while he was moderator for CBS' "What's My Line."

Open Hearing, Moderator, 1954.

The Voice of Fierstone, Narrator, 1958-1959.

We Take Your Word, Wordmaster, 1950-1951.

What's My Line, Moderator, 1950-1967. Radio's Arline Francis was a panelist for the entire seventeen years beginning with the second show.

John Charles Daly, Jr., received every important award in broadcasting, including several Peabody Awards, five Sylvania Awards, and an Emmy Award in 1954 for "best news reporter or commentator."

It's still hard to visualize John Daly lying in the sand on the Anzio beachhead.

February's Famous Fact: On February 28, 1847, the First Railroad was charted and on February 23, 1931, Mickey Mouse was banned by censors in Copenhagen, Denmark.

"I'm goin' back to the wagon, boys. These shoes are killin' me!"





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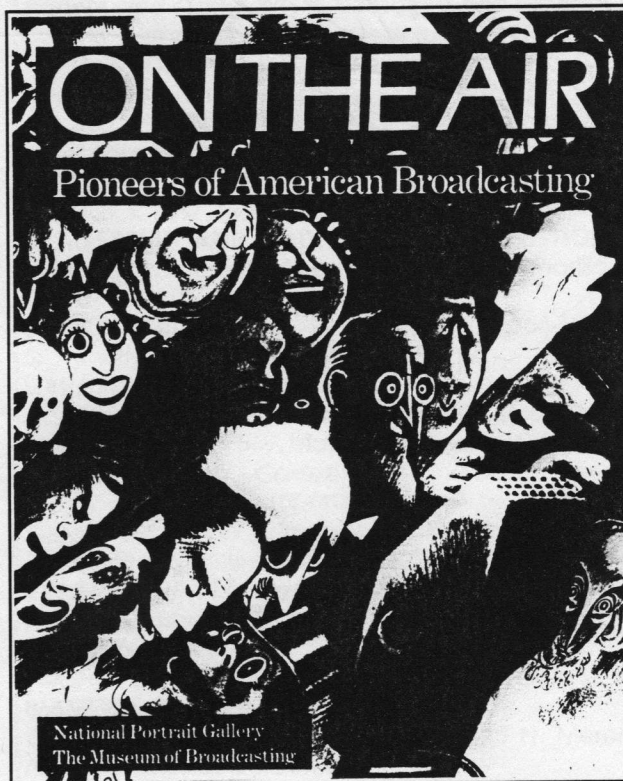
— *American Heritage*

This entertaining cultural history provides biographies and photos of all the major figures including Burns and Allen, Jackie Gleason, Lucille Ball, Edward R. Murrow, Walter Cronkite, Ed Sullivan, Bob Hope, Orson Welles, Amos 'n' Andy, Fibber McGee and Molly, and Alfred Hitchcock.

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## MEMOS FOR MEMBERS

Members are receiving with this newsletter a ballot for the upcoming SPERDVAC Board of Directors' election. Please read the instructions and send us your ballot.

Please note that two SPERDVAC libraries are temporarily closed until we are able to secure new volunteer librarians. We are seeking replacements to cover Archives open reels 1-1000 and General Library cassettes 501-1001.

We are also looking for assistance organizing the radio broadcast scripts housed in our storage facility. When we get the needed help we will be able to release many new additions to the Printed Materials library.

Radio actor Willard Waterman guested Jan. 18 on the *Larry King Show* over the Mutual airwaves. Our thanks to the *King* staff for airing clips of Waterman's radio work from the SPERDVAC collection and for their nice plugs for our organization.

HBO has been airing "*On the Air*", a series on show biz hosted by Dick Cavett. One episode salutes OTR with photos of vintage radios supplied by member Clyde Bengé and radio film clips provided by Frank Bresee.

Our thanks to KGIL radio and John Swaney for doing two segments on OTR and SPERDVAC recently. We've heard from a number of listeners in the San Fernando, CA area as a result of the air time given the subject.

Vern Carstensen, guest at last month's SPERDVAC meeting, has given us discs and scripts of the **Damon Runyon Theatre** and **Box Thirteen** radio series. We are thankful for the radio veteran's kind donation and will work to make the material available as soon as our small group of volunteers is able to complete the duplication work.

Thanks also to Scott Corbett for his donation of several glass transcriptions of various programs.

The estate of former CBS sound effects man Jack Dick recently donated a collection of nearly 200 twelve inch sound effects records.

Our coverage of the SPERDVAC convention was made more challenging by the disappearance of a camera used to photograph many of the convention events. Members with good photos to share with SPERDVAC should contact editor Dan Haefele. We'll gladly make copies from negatives and return them in good condition.

We expect to have copies of Ken Greenwald's book, **The Lost Adventures of Sherlock Holmes** at our February 10 meeting. The stories are based on radio broadcasts of the popular series. Beginning next month we should be able to offer copies via mail.

SPERDVAC always welcomes loans and donations of radio broadcast transcriptions. The donations are tax deductible. We also need more members to assist us by dubbing from open reel to either cassette or open reel.

SPERDVAC's computer used for membership information and *Radiogram* labels passed away during the Christmas holiday season. We've adopted a replacement and **hope** data is properly and accurately stored in the

new iron monster. If you know SPERDVAC members who did not receive their January newsletter we would appreciate knowing about it. We want to make sure we have the correct addresses on file.

## SPERDVAC DIRECTORY

All articles and artwork ©1990 by SPERDVAC, unless otherwise indicated. Published monthly 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:** Box 1587, Hollywood, CA 90078 - (213) 947-9800  
**MEMBERSHIP AND RADIOGRAM SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Duane Harding, 443 Appletree Court, Camarillo, CA 93010

**RADIOGRAM EDITOR:** Dan Haefele, 4366-D, 136th St., Hawthorne, CA 90250, (213) 973-5060

### LIBRARIES:

**GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 1-499:** Bob Steinmetz, PO Box 669, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

**GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 500 and up:**  
Temporarily closed

**GENERAL LIBRARY - Open Reels, No. 1 thru 499:** Don Keith, Box 5861, Glendale, CA 91221

**GENERAL LIBRARY - Open Reels, No. 500 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

**Cassettes 501-1001:** Gary Mollica, 135 N. Meredith Ave., Pasadena, CA 91106

**Cassettes 1001+:** Bruce Miller, 1616 Harper, Redondo Beach, CA 90278

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*The Fifth Army's radio station on wheels in Civitavecchia, Italy 1944.*

## THE WORLD'S FIRST MOBILE RADIO STATION

*By Dan Haefele*

Vern Carstensen's radio career began accidentally and before it was over he made an important yet not widely recognized impact on both the radio field and on America's war effort during World War II.

"My radio career started by accident at the University of Iowa," he told SPERDVAC last month. "I was studying business with a minor in advertising. One of my advertising professors asked me to attend the announcer auditions one night. I went over - just as a lark - and doggone if I didn't win the audition!"

Working as an announcer at the University's WUSI, he still wanted to go into the advertising field. "But the radio bug had bitten me," he explained, "so I did part time announcing on a station in Davenport." He later moved on to a station in Rock Island, IL.

Carstensen went to Chicago in an unsuccessful attempt to gain employment in network radio. There he learned that a new station was going on the air in his hometown of Clinton, Iowa and was soon employed at KROS - "the 'Keep Right on Smiling' station."

"It was a small station where you did everything," he recalled. "It was great experience that served me well later on."

The young announcer was on his way to KROS one memorable Sunday that changed his life. "When I got to

the station all Hell had broken loose. It had just come over the (news) wire that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. I spent the next 36 hours at the radio station, moving from the newsroom to the announcers' booth."

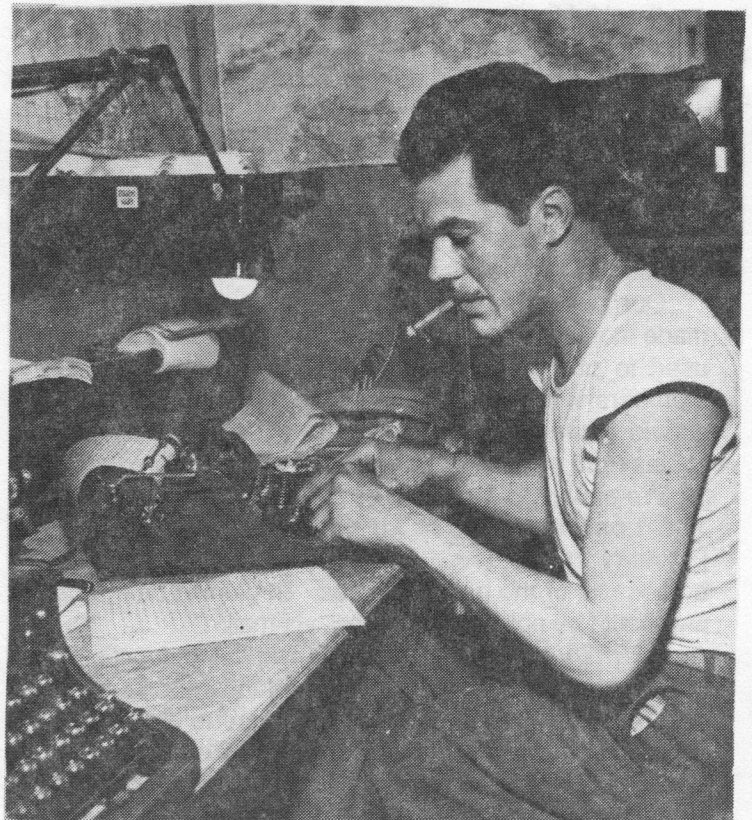
Shortly after that experience Carstensen enlisted in the military. In October 1942 he was sent to North Africa. While stationed at Casablanca he learned Andre Baruch had set up a radio station to broadcast programs to American soldiers. He wanted to join the station staff but no additional personnel were needed.

A few months later he was assigned to go to Algiers with General Eisenhower to set up a new radio station. "We didn't have any equipment there yet, but they gave me carte blanc for personnel. I was able to pick anybody I wanted for staff while I was waiting for equipment.

"Meanwhile," he continued, "I was able to get two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon on a Moroccan station. . . They had a red haired Moroccan engineer who couldn't understand a word of English and I couldn't understand a word of his language." They communicated via gestures.

His programs were comprised of news and a disc jockey show using records borrowed from navy ships.

When the needed equipment arrived Carsten-



*Sgt. Bill Griskey prepares a script for **Out of This World**, a dramatic show performed from the Mobile Studio.*



sen and his crew assembled a new station and quickly got it on the air. But after a few months he was outranked by Andre Baruch. "He was a captain and I was a lieutenant," he told SPERDVAC.

When Gen. Mark Clark was preparing to invade Italy, Carstensen was offered the opportunity to assemble a new station to entertain the troops there. "Because I had had invasion experience they asked me if I would like to take the station with Gen. Clark. He insisted on taking the station with him. I jumped at the idea."

Carstensen's staff set up a new station in Naples, then learned many of the troops couldn't receive the signal because the Fifth Army was moving on too rapidly. "I had the idea that if they could have mobile kitchens and mobile bakeries, why couldn't they put a radio station on wheels?

"Gen. Clark thought it was a great idea but his signal office didn't think it was quite that great," he said. "I went back to our station and my chief engineer and I spent the rest of the night drawing pictures and came up with reasons how and why it would work."

The military supplied the equipment and a small piano was located in Naples. The crew built an eight by twelve foot mobile studio with a small table and microphone and the piano. (They are shown in the cover photograph.) A second truck was fitted a mobile transmitter. It was equipped with turntables and also housed the record library. They were parked next to each other with windows aligned so that cues could be thrown from one studio to the other.

"Every time the front line would move a little, we moved too," he said.

The American Expeditionary Station, which went on the air with a 250 watt transmitter October 25, 1943, was keen competition to Axis Sally. "We would kid her a lot," he recounted. "And she knew our names and told us we were about to be bombed." The GIs increased their air time to 16 hours daily and began dedicating programs to her. They often taunted Axis Sally with nicknames, including "the glamor Girl of the Goering Goons" and "the Nazi Sea Witch."

Lt. Carstensen was MC on numerous shows, including **The Old Oaken Bucket**, a musical request and dedication program. His stage name for that show was "the big drip."

Sgt. George Piros hosted **Juke Box**, a take-off of **Duffy's Tavern**. Listeners were entertained between records by a character identified as George, who allegedly spoke from a beer joint in Passaic, NJ.

The station's three announcers were Sgt. Dick Wesson, Pvt. Charles Range and Sgt. Bill Griskey. Griskey also authored a program titled **Out of This World**.

Unlike the other armed forces stations, theirs did not normally carry the programs offered by the Armed Forces Radio Service. Carstensen told SPERDVAC he insisted the staff create and perform their own shows. Informality at the mobile station was the norm. Staff members wore uniforms only when there were important visitors.



*Sgt. Walter Kirk, Pvt. Johnny Rapp (former gag writer), Sgt. Earl Cady (musical director), Sgt. Leroy Nathon, Sgt. Bill Griskey, Pvt. Charles Range (former CBS engineer in New York), Sgt. Dick Wesson (former CBS announcer), Sgt. George Piros and Lt. Vern Carstensen (station manager).*

In addition to their on the air jobs, each staff member had specific duties to perform whenever it was necessary to dismantle the station and move it closer to the troops. "They knew exactly what to do," he said. "It worked like clockwork. . . Within minutes we could shut down. It took us about an hour to set up and get back on the air."

"It was the most interesting and rewarding experience I had in radio," he added.

Following the war Carstensen began an association with actor Alan Ladd. The movie actor wanted to form his own radio production company to distribute a syndicated program. Joined by Bernie Joslin, owner of the Mayfair Restaurant chain, Ladd formed Mayfair Productions and created the **Box Thirteen** radio series.

"Alan was in love with radio," he said, noting that Ladd had done many successful guest spots on radio before his film career began.

Ladd's wife had a controlling influence on the **Box Thirteen** series. "She had good story sense," he observed. "She was always in the control booth giving suggestions. . . She knew what she was doing."

Carstensen was the program's producer and announcer. He also did some acting on the series and was in charge of casting. "That was easy because everybody wanted to be on the show. all I had to do was pick the best one for a particular role," he said.

**Box Thirteen** began in 1948 and there were 52 weekly episodes. They were recorded and edited at NBC





GI demonstrates, left, his combination mess kit and radio set and, right, attachment to his jeep, creating an "auto radio".

in Hollywood.

The following year, Mayfair began syndication of **Damon Runyon Theatre**, featuring John Brown as Broadway the narrator. After that series ran 52 weeks Mayfair discontinued syndicating radio programs.

Mr. Carstensen, who has been made a SPERDVAC honorary member, has donated transcriptions of the **Box Thirteen** and **Damon Runyon Theatre** programs. a few shows are either missing or incomplete, but we hope to obtain them from other sources, then add the entire run of both series to our tape library. Our guest has also given SPERDVAC bound volumes of radio scripts.

## University of Georgia Presents. . . Audio Production Workshop

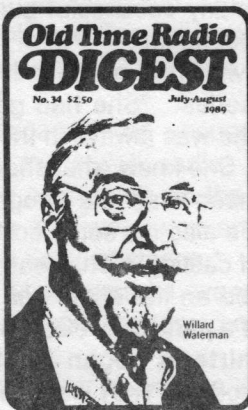
Noted radio director Himan Brown headed a three day workshop on radio production late last month at the University of Georgia. Joining him were actress Mercedes McCambridge and actor Paul Hecht plus Sam Dann, writer of many scripts for the **CBS Radio Mystery Theatre**.

The *Himan Brown Audio Production Workshop*, held at the University's Center for Continuing Education in Athens, presented sessions on directing, writing and critiquing of radio scripts. There were also sessions on production skills, marketing and funding.

The marketing and funding workshops were lead by Marjorie Van Halteren, winner of three Peabody Awards for her radio work. She also participated in a panel discussion on the future of radio drama. Joining her was Gene Craven, station manager of WUGA, Athens.

Henry Howard, president and chief recording engineer for *Audio Craft*, presented the radio production skills workshop.

At the session's Saturday evening banquet Mr. Brown directed a radio show recreation featuring Mercedes McCambridge and Paul Hecht. The previous evening the *Audio Production Workshop* presented a panel discussion in which Brown and McCambridge discussed their work in the radio industry.



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## WAR OF THE WORLDS SPECIAL NOMINATED FOR GRAMMY AWARD

A radio special presented in 1988 on the 50th anniversary of the famed 'War of the Worlds' radio broadcast has been nominated for a Grammy in the Spoken Arts category by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

**The War of the World's 50th Anniversary Production** premiered on over 230 radio stations on October 30, 1988. Jason Robards played the lead on the 60 minute special.

The broadcast, which was repeated by many stations again last October, was a production of the Freeland, Washington based Otherworld Media. Executive producer Judith Walcutt said a "unique combination of multi-media talents" was responsible for the show's success. "We needed to recreate the illusion of a Martian invasion actually happening over the airwaves," she said. "By casting the instantly recognizable and authoritative voices of Steve Allen, legendary CBS newsman Douglas Edwards, and public radio reporter Scott Simon, we hoped to overcome, at least for a few wonderful minutes, our listeners' disbelief.

"Randy Thom," she continued, "created astonishingly realistic sonic environments, using Lucasfilm technology. David Ossman, with thirty years of radio experience, found a way of making the horrific events unfold in a surprising natural way. We took a lot of listeners for a very good ride."

"On-the-spot radio news was a brand new thing fifty years ago," director Ossman said, noting the original Wells production was a satire of the way radio covered fast-breaking news events. "The panic that followed Wells' broadcast obscured the fact that the script skewered the military, politicians and broadcasters alike. I felt that the comedy and satire should be brought forward in the updated version and consequently we took on everything from NPR, CBS and CNN to 'Top Gun' and 'Star Wars'."

The Grammy nominated program also featured actors Rene Auberjonois and Hector Elizondo, Philip Proctor of "Firesign Theatre" and NPR program host Terry Gross.

Otherworld Media produced an hour long "radio movie" titled "The Door in the Wall" during the Christmas season. Currently under production are a dramatization of *Gulliver's Travels* and a comical saga of Hollywood's Golden Age, "The George Tirebiter Story."

### Renewal Time???

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

# STAY TUNED

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*"There are those who now say that the 'gee-whiz' or 'glamorous something special' hallmark of broadcasting has dissipated. They say that broadcasting is only one small but inseparable part of our current culture and economy. The authors of STAY TUNED, however, are not convinced that we should dismiss the special nature of broadcasting that easily. We believe that it is special, even if its shape has changed."*

—from the preface

Beginning with the development of print media and a short discussion of the telegraph, the telephone, and other related electrical communication industries, this book details the inventions and innovations that led to radio broadcasting after World War I and continues with changes and developments in radio, TV and cable broadcasting since that time. The authors use profiles of interesting people, inventions, and institutions to bring this historical book to life. Features include: a unique narrative glossary, a chronology of key events in broadcast history, research material, and historical statistics. An extensive guide to further reading is included at the end of each chapter. The lengthy bibliography contains more than 600 entries, a third of them from sources published in the last decade.

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## Mates for Your Half Shows?

Have you ever been irritated to find an incomplete tape or transcription of a radio broadcast? SPERDVAC may be able to help. We would like collectors across the nation to give us a list of half shows they possess, particularly those on disc and good sound quality tapes. We will serve as a clearing house for the information and hope to aid in pairing half shows to that additional programs may enter circulation.

Collectors can help us process their data more easily by submitting information on 3 x 5 lined index cards. Here's an example of the preferred format, based on a half show we have.

LET GEORGE DO IT 10-24-1947  
 "The Horse Said Yes" Part 1 of 2  
 Glass transcription  
 Collector: SPERDVAC  
 Box 1587  
 Hollywood, CA 90078  
 (213)947-9800

When compiled, we will publish a list of those shows we were unable to match, in hopes that mates for partial programs will surface in the future.

### 1990 SPERDVAC MEETINGS

*Regular Meetings: 12:00 NOON*

February 10 - Western Federal Savings

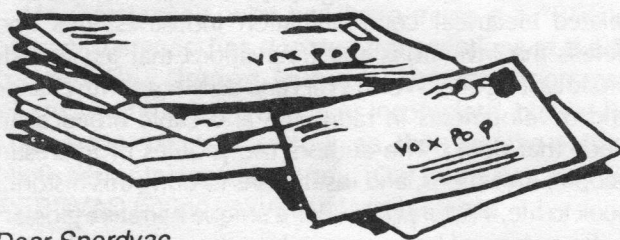
March 10 - Western Federal Savings

April 21 - Buena Park Public Library

*Locations:*

Western Federal, 12175 Ventura Blvd., Studio City

Buena Park Library, 7150 La Palma Avenue, Buena Park



*Dear Sperdvac,*

The November issue was inspirational and therapeutic. It took me back fifty years to those wonderful days of early radio. I read the entire paper before retiring one night and drifted off to sleep into another world of experiences in radio from the 1930's - 1950's in San Francisco, New York and Hollywood.

Having known the cast of **One Man's Family** so many years it was a joy to see Mike Raffetto's picture - 90 years young!

Congratulations on your 15th anniversary and thank you for preserving so much for those of us who participated and the dear devotees!

Gratefully & Sincerely, *Helen Andrews*

## PLEASE VOTE SPERDVAC BOARD ELECT ION



President Larry Gassman presented a \$1000 donation from SPERDVAC to singer Bea Wain for The Society of Singers. The organization aids musical performers in financial need.

## VOX POP



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Dear Mr. Gassman,

What a surprise and delight to receive your contribution to the Society of Singers through Bea Wain and André Baruch.

Thank you on behalf of us all in the Society and please know we will make every effort to merit the confidence expressed by your gift. It is a particularly special gesture knowing you are helping us realize our goals to help those singers less fortunate who are desperately needy.

Your support means a great deal to our singers and to me as it validates my work and inspires my enthusiasm.

Only the best,

*Ginny Mancini*  
Ginny Mancini  
President



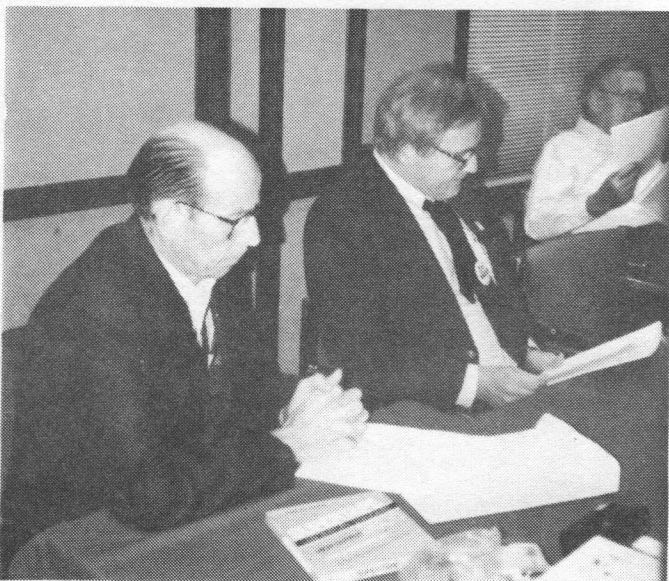
## SPERDVAC SCRAPBOOK

# CONVENTION CELEBRATES OUR 15TH ANNIVERSARY

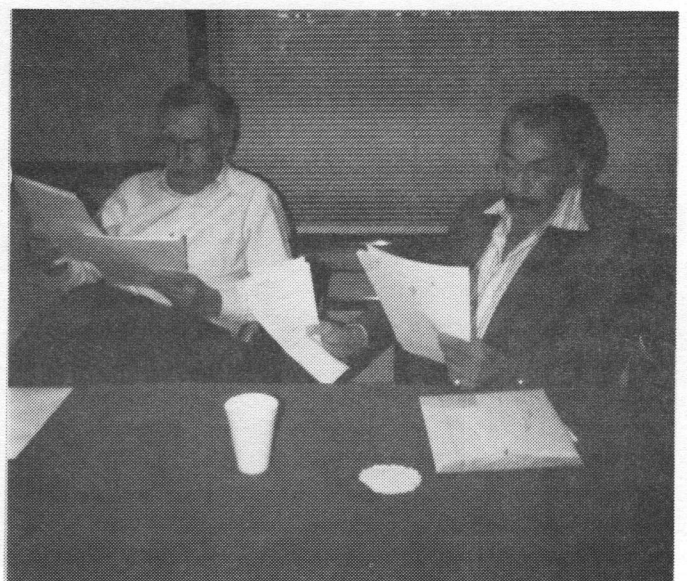


SPERDVAC gave it's Byron Kane Memorial Award to Ray Erlenborn (who served as sound man on the **Sherlock Holmes** recreation), Tyler McVey and Parley Baer.

## SHERLOCK HOLMES REHEARSAL



Announcer Art Hannes, left, also played a role in the Friday night **Holmes** recreation. Ken Greenwald directed.



Charles Flynn, left, was Dr. Watson and Sherlock Holmes was impersonated by Boris Aplon, right.

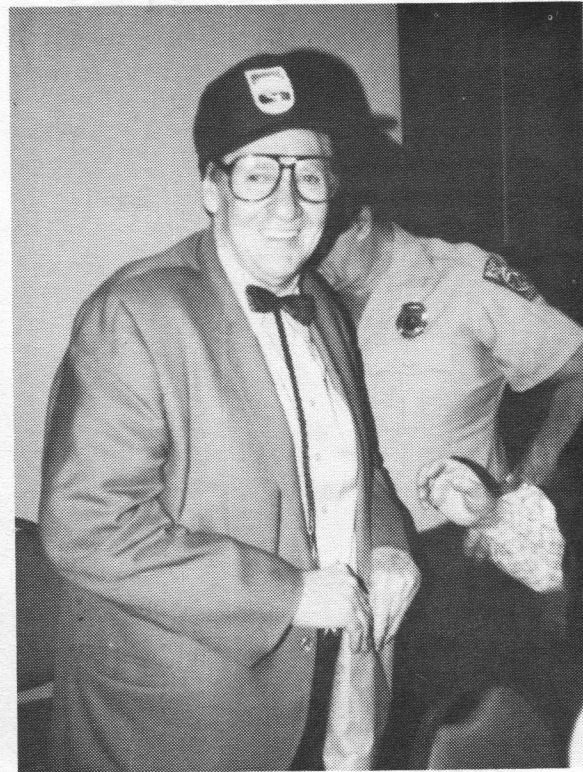


# SPERDVAC SCRAPBOOK

## **"ARSENIC AND OLD LACE"**



*Members of Peggy Webber's California Artists Radio Theatre prepare for a Lux style presentation of "Arsenic and Old Lace"*



*Pat Buttram joined the cast of the CART group saluting Lux Radio Theatre.*



*Writing for radio was discussed by a team of four experts: Sheldon Stark, Jerry D. Lewis, John Dinkel and Lou Pelletier.*



# '89 OTR CONVENTION A HUGE SUCCESS



*Dr. Thomas Greenfield, Tom DeLong and Robert Taylor discussed their books related to OTR.*



*Frank DeVol, Lina Romay and Ray Briem recalled Big Band broadcasting. John Gassman moderated the panel.*



*Announcer Art Hannes, left, also played a role in the Friday **Holmes** recreation.*

*Robert Easton doubled roles and held a conversation with himself in two distinctive dialects, much to the audience's delight.*



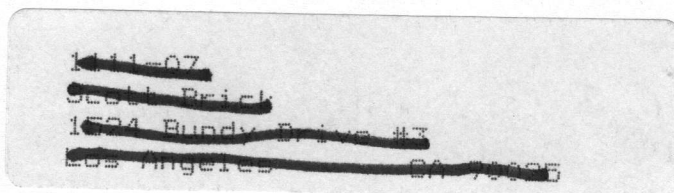
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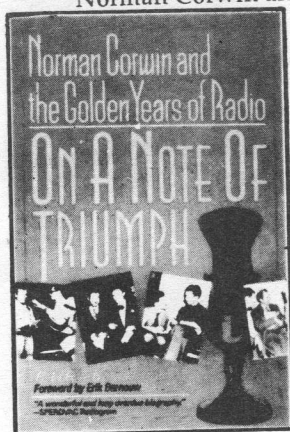
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