

CONVENTION '89 EDITION

SPERDVAC



Vol. XV, No.11 The Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy November 1989



Director Tom McKnight, left, with Nigel Bruce, center Ben Wright and Basil Rathbone before a broadcast of **Sherlock Holmes** about 1942. (Can anyone identify the lady in this picture?) SPERDVAC will recreate a 1944 **Holmes** broadcast at our convention Nov. 10th. See story on page three.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

We need another librarian for the General cassette library, 500+. We plan to split the library at 1001, so it will have three separate sections run by three librarians. If you wish to volunteer, please let us know.

We will also be adding a new librarian to the Archives open reel library beginning with reel 1001. SPERDVAC needs a volunteer librarian for this position, too.

The November SPERDVAC convention is almost here. You will find many of the details regarding guests, workshops and recreations on page three. For the most up to date information, call us at SPERDVAC: (213) 947-9800.

At press time we had received confirmation that these radio pioneers will be joining us at the convention: Don Stanley, Dresser Dahlstead, Frank Bresee, Richard Chandlee, Truda Marson, Richard Wilson, Sharon Douglas, William Alland, Amzie Strickland, Art Gilmore, Art Hannes, Bob Shannon, Charles Flynn, Elliott Reid, Frank Thomas, Gaylord Carter, George Pirrone, Glenhall Taylor, Howard Caine, Hugh Douglas, Ivan Ditmars, Jack Brown, Jack Kelk, Jay Ranellucci, June Foray Donovan, Kay St. Germain, Marty Halperin, Andre Baruch, Bea Wain, Bill Zuckert, Gladys Holland Zuckert, Nelson Olmsted, Parley Baer, Phil Cohan, Ray Erlenborn, Richard Beals, Tyler McVey,

and Veola Vonn Nelson.

Members and radio fans unable to attend either of the banquets may still join us during the day. The cost is \$10.

There are neither words nor Radiogram space to properly thank the many people who have made our first fifteen years so successful. Our deepest thanks.

Until 1990, please keep in touch.

SPERDVAC DIRECTORY

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SPERDVAC INFORMATION AND OFFICIAL BUSINESS: Box 1587, Hollywood, CA 90078 - (213) 947-9800

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

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AUDIO SPERDVAC CATALOGS: Contact Bob Herman, 1640 S.W. Old Clifton Rd., Port Orchard, WA 98366 (206)876-4809

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

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NOVEMBER CONVENTION SALUTES SPERDVAC'S 15TH ANNIVERSARY

Reservations are still available for SPERDVAC's 15th anniversary convention, set for Friday, Nov. 10 and Saturday, Nov. 11 at the Viscount Hotel in Los Angeles. Telephone reservations may be made by calling us at (213) 947-9800. We are unable to guarantee seating for all events to those who choose to purchase tickets at the door.

Highlights of the annual salute to early radio include a **Sherlock Holmes** program recreation and a tribute to **Lux Radio Theatre**. Panel discussions focusing on various aspects of the collecting hobby and radio history will be featured both days of the convention.

Registration begins at 2 PM Friday. At 2:30 that afternoon our first panel discussion begins. Hosts of early radio and music programs will be featured. Slated for participation are Chuck Cecil, popular host of the syndicated "Swingin' Years" program and Southern California Old Time Radio rebroadcast hosts Bobb Lynes, Barbara Watkins and John Gassman. SPERDVAC would like to hear from hosts of similar programs in other parts of the country. We would like to have them participate in this presentation.

Friday's 4 PM panel is entitled "Meet the Authors." Robert Taylor, art and book critic for the *Boston Globe*, will



Charles Flynn will be Dr. Watson.

Robert Taylor, art and book critic for the *Boston Globe*, will join us to discuss his new work, *Fred Allen-His Life and Wit*. Dr. Thomas Greenfield will discuss his book *Radio: A Reference Guide*. He is the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Bellarmine College in Louisville, Kentucky. From Southport, Connecticut, writer Tom DeLong will join us to discuss his two books, *The Mighty Music Box* and *Pops*, his biography of Paul Whiteman. Thomas Dady is flying in from Minneapolis to share his knowledge of collecting rare books on radio history.

"The Adventure of the Dog That Howled in the Night," a 1944 **Sherlock Holmes** radio adventure, will be featured during our Friday evening banquet. Actor Boris Aplan, radio's Ivan Shark, will star as Holmes and Charles Flynn, known in his Chicago radio days as **Jack Armstrong**, will recreate the role of Dr. Watson. Art Hannes, announcer on the Ed Sullivan television program and on thousands of radio broadcasts, will serve as the program announcer. Radio musical conductor Ivan Ditmars is scoring musical bridges and is recording them for our use in this production. Ken Greenwald will direct the presentation and Ray Erlenborn will provide the sound effects.

Friday's cocktail hour begins at 6:30 PM and the banquet commences an hour later.

A Dealers'/Collectors' Room will again be open during both days of the convention. The room's hours of operation are 2-6 PM Friday and 9 AM to 6 PM on Saturday. We have allotted time between panels to permit guests the opportunity to visit the room. As in previous years, unauthorized sales of radio broadcasts are prohibited.

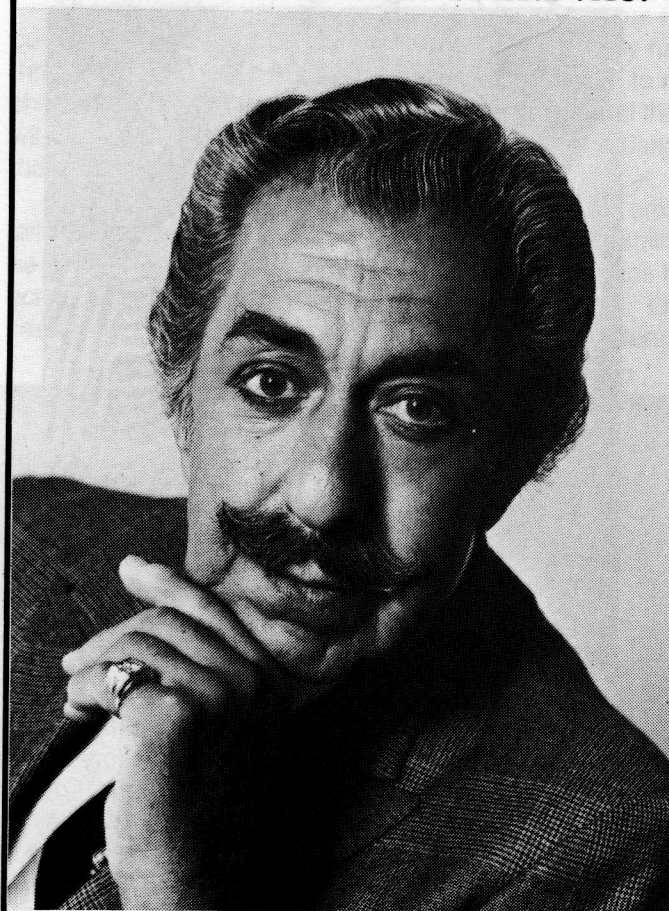
Saturday's convention schedule begins with an announcers' panel at 9 AM. Vern Carstensen, announcer on **Box 13** and **Damon Runyon Theatre**, will participate.

Writing radio drama will be discussed by John Dunkel (**Romance of the Ranchos, Suspense, Escape, Gunsmoke**), Jerry D. Lewis (**This Is Your FBI**), Lou Pelletier (**The FBI in Peace and War**) and Sheldon Stark (**Straight Arrow, Green Hornet, Sgt. Preston and Lone Ranger**). Their presentation begins at 10:30 AM.

We have reserved the 11:30 AM - 1 PM time slot for

Cont. on page 4...

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY SPERDVAC!



BORIS APLAN

Congratulations to SPERDVAC on your fifteenth anniversary. As an honorary member I am truly touched to have been so honored by such a dedicated group of loyal radio buffs. You have done so much to keep radio alive and in the minds of the public, to say nothing of how important you have been in keeping alive the names of those whose privilege it was to be an important part of that era of radio entertainment. I have had the privilege to meet and know some of the greatest names in our profession and to meet some of the greatest "fans," including you in SPERDVAC. My gratitude to you all.

NOVEMBER OTR CONVENTION (from pg. 3)

conventioners to break for lunch. We are serving no formal meal during that time. The Viscount has a restaurant available and there are a variety of food service facilities open nearby.

Actress Louise Fitch and others will discuss Chicago radio productions at 1 PM. Actor Harry Elders will also participate either in person or by telephone. Other Chicago performers have been invited but were unable to confirm their availability at press time.

At 2:30 PM sound effects man Ray Erlenborn will return to lead a discussion of Los Angeles area local radio of the twenties and thirties.

Then, at 4 PM SPERDVAC will present a panel discussion of Big Band remote broadcasting. Singer Lina Romay will return to the SPERDVAC microphones to recall her radio career, including work with the Xavier Cugat band. Orchestra leader Frank DeVol, who has worked with so many of radio's musicians, and KABC radio's Ray Briem, a former big band broadcast announcer, will join Miss Romay on the panel.

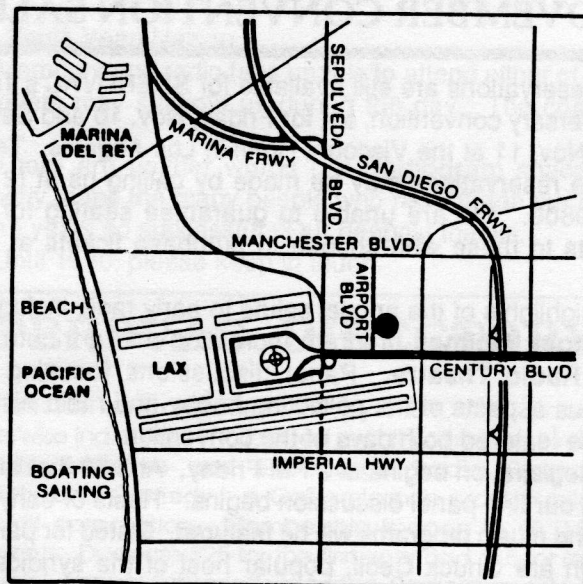
A cocktail hour begins Saturday at 6:30 PM and the concluding banquet begins at 7:30 PM.



Peggy Webber

Lux Radio Theatre will be saluted Saturday night by the California Artists' Radio Theatre's repertory company when they perform the comedy "Arsenic and Old Lace." Jeanette Nolan and Peggy Webber will play the roles of the murdering elderly sisters. The cast will include Dan O'Herlihy, Richard Erdman, Pat Butrum, Parley Baer, Linda K. Henning, Vance Colvig, Les Tremayne, Bob Legionaire, Shay Duffin, Elliot Reid and Paul Keith. **Lux** announcer John M. Kennedy will be on hand to furnish the opening, closing and commercial announcements. Cliff Thorseness will do the sound effects. Even though this play was never done on **Lux**, it was used on other shows of the era and we believe it is very entertaining.

SPERDVAC still needs volunteers to assist us for an hour during the convention. Members wishing to help or



requiring additional information may contact convention chair Larry Gassman at (213)947-9800.

Our fifteenth anniversary convention will be at the Viscount Hotel, 9750 Airport Blvd., Los Angeles. It's located near the corner of Century and Airport Boulevards, east of Los Angeles International Airport. From the San Diego Freeway (405), take the Century Blvd. exit, then turn right on Airport Blvd. The Viscount is on the right side of the street.

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.

Sundays in 1939 began with the Katzenjammer Kids. Like most of my eleven-year-old friends, I was hooked on Hans and Fritz. Unlike them, I was already developing a fascination with the front page of the Los Angeles Examiner, which in those days was full of intriguing words like blitzkrieg, panzer, and stuka. I couldn't figure Hitler out, but the Poles were easy to understand, and I rooted for them in Warsaw.

Other parts of the Sunday paper I went for were the sports pages, monopolized then by the football prospects of USC and UCLA, and the radio log. I was a great radio fan, and on Sunday morning I would look forward to the top shows certain to come out of the big Majestic in the evening, its orange dial tuned to KFI. This was one of those Sundays in the fall of 1939, but it was different.

My mother was driving me down Sunset Boulevard to the NBC studios in Hollywood. We were going to a radio show--not, in this case, to join the audience but to be in the show. I had auditioned successfully for a spot in **The Chase & Sanborn Hour** to replace a child star from the movies who had not yet learned how to speak the lines of a radio script without sounding like he was reading them. Having run through only a few pages with the director the day before, I was headed for a dress rehearsal of the show without having seen much of the script and with only hours left before broadcast time.

The new NBC building at Sunset and Vine was long, low, and green, streamlined like something out of *The Shape of Things to Come*. My mother got us past the guard, and we hurried down the long corridor to the main studios. The building featured four large audience studios, each seating about 350 persons. Later I was to identify these stages with the personalities who dominated them during the "golden decade" of radio.

Studio A, then home to Chase & Sanborn's Bergen and McCarthy, later became the property of Bob Hope and Fibber McGee & Molly. Studio B belonged then on Sundays to Jack Benny (and would later become my home on Tuesday evenings for **A Date With Judy**). Studio C was Bing's--for years it was the **Kraft Music Hall**. The cavernous D was best known as Red Skelton's playground (but which I would remember as the place of my dates with Baby Snooks on **Maxwell House Coffee Time**).

Before reaching Studio A, we passed G - the organ studio - where, unbeknown to us, One Man's Family was quietly and very privately rehearsing for its weekly visit with millions. I did not know then that I would be a member of Carlton E. Morse's "Family" from my twelfth to twenty-third years.

The A corridor was buzzing. **The Chase & Sanborn Hour** was number one then, having edged out such front-runners as Benny, Crosby, and Vallee. And Eddie Cantor too; eight years earlier on NBC he had launched **Chase & Sanborn** but was now signing off with his familiar theme - "I Love to Spend Each Sunday With You" - two blocks down Sunset at CBS. Charlie McCarthy had been on the scene for several years, sweeping all before him. The show was a variety hour of

the type pioneered by Rudy Vallee on his **Fleischmann Hour** in the early thirties. It was part music, part comedy, and part drama. Don Ameche was the M.C. who tied the segments together.

My business that afternoon was with Lionel Barrymore.

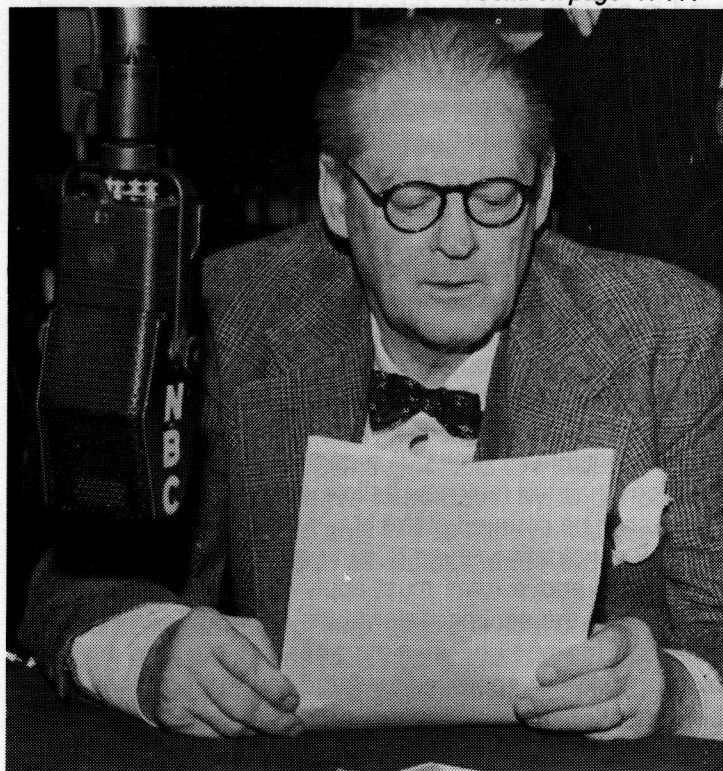
The great actor was doing a guest-shot as star of the 15 minute dramatic sketch. There was only one other role: a grandchild who prompted the old man to tell stories about his experiences in the Civil War. We checked in, and my mother retreated to the Client's booth, a glassed-in observation post above the control booth where she could be out of the way but keep a sharp eye on the proceedings.

I was taken onstage, not to the center microphone at the footlights, but to a small table back slightly and to the side of the large orchestra. A boom mike hung over the table, between two chairs--or rather, between my chair and, opposite me, a wheelchair filled with the familiar and formidable presence of Mr. Barrymore. He glanced at me and grunted. They gave a stack of cardboard sheets--the kind that laundries use for shirts--on which I found stapled the pages of script. (Clumsy to handle, but less rattle of paper, according to certain fussy directors.)

The voice of director Tony Stamford boomed from the control booth, asking for "a level." We began an easy run-through, interrupted for adjustments to the mike and to my chair, which had to be built up first with a cushion and then with a telephone book to get me close enough to balance the great voice on the other side.

Barrymore was all business; he had no time for small talk. If he was nervous about his new co-star's capability, he didn't show it. Instead, he increased my confidence by acting as though I was no less a professional than he. Occasionally, he would make a suggestion for a pause here

Cont. on page 17...



Lionel Barrymore

BOD Candidates Must Declare By Jan. 13th

January 13, 1990 will be the last day for members to declare candidacy for election to the 1990 SPERDVAC Board of Directors. Election for the seven director seats will take place at the annual meeting in March.

Election Chair, Catherine Passarelli asks that all wishing to be candidates send their declaration and candidate's statement to her at: 10615 Butterfield Road, Los Angeles, CA 90064. Attention: Election Chair. Candidates' statements must be in possession of the Election Chair no later than January 13, 1990. If there are any questions, the Election Chair may be reached at (213)838-6894.

Members wishing to run in the election for the Board of Directors must declare their candidacy to the Election Chair by January 13, 1990. Candidates' statements will be mailed with the ballots. The statements must be limited to 200 words, and may be accompanied by a black and white picture not to exceed 1 1/2" x 2". Any words in excess of 200 will be cut from the statements. Statements must be submitted to the Election Chair by January 13, 1990. The Election Chair is responsible for mailing candidates' statements with the ballots. Statements will be printed in reverse alphabetical order in the February 1990 Radiogram. Candidates' names will be placed on the ballot in alphabetical order. A candidate's name will be eliminated from the ballot if his/her membership dues are not current.

Ballots will be stamped with the corporate seal and mailed first class no later than the second Saturday in February. If the official ballot is lost or destroyed, no other ballot will be issued. All absent voter ballots must be received by the Election Chair no later than the Friday before election day.

Absentee ballots must be mailed in an envelope with the word "Ballot" clearly marked on the front. Ballots delivered in person must be taken to the place of the annual membership meeting held in March. No ballots will be accepted after 12:15 P.M. on that day. Absentee ballots will be placed in the possession of the Election Chair and remain unopened until all ballots are to be counted. No ballots will be counted prior to the official count.

A three-person team, all non-candidates, will count the ballots. One of the team must be the Election Chair. The results, which will include the exact count of votes for each candidate, will be announced prior to the end of the March meeting and will be published in the April newsletter.

If a tie should occur, a run-off between or among those tied will take place at the March meeting if a quorum is present (10% of the membership whose dues are current and are eligible to vote.) If a quorum is not present, the Election Chair will mail new ballots with the April newsletter. They shall be counted at the May meeting.

Any candidate wishing to campaign in anyway not covered in the above rules must apply to the Board of Directors prior to the second Saturday in February. Any candidate who campaigns in a manner not covered by the election rules or approved by the Board of Directors may be disqualified as a candidate.

REMEMBER: To be eligible to vote, members' dues must be current on January 13, 1990. Only members who are fully paid up on THAT DATE will receive ballots.



Send your wants in O T R-related material to McGee's Closet, % Barbara J. Watkins, PO Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91031

FOR SALE: Mint copy of The Big Broadcast (no dust jacket), best offer. Willing to trade also, send offer or catalog. Contact: Greg Seltzer, R.F.D. 2, Richmond, NH 03470.

WANTED: Information on whether Fred Stone read "The Wizard of Oz" over the radio in or about June 1939 as was reported in a local newspaper at the time. Any information about the broadcast or copy of it would be appreciated. Contact: Michael Aron Weinberg, 4408 Russell #3, Box 27-957, Los Angeles, CA 90027.

WANTED: To hear from any collector interested in trading old time radio programs on cassette. Contact: Lynn Wagar, Box 202 B.C.A. -43 Joymar, St. Cloud. MN 56301.

CONGRATULATION SPERDVAC!

JERRY DEVINE

I spent a solid year trying to crack radio. I found an Agent who was more tapped out than I was. His office was in a phone booth in the Stetson Building. (When you're on your ass it's never Irving Laraz) Finally, we made an opening happen on the summer Jello Show, in 1936. That turned it around. I spent the next six years on such diverse assignments as "The Shadow", "The Kate Smith Show", "Tommy Riggs", daytime soaps, etc. I wrote mysteries, jokes, dramatic sketches, you name it, I gave it to you by the yard.

My first solid shot came when I was engaged for "Mr. District Attorney", which I wrote and directed for three and a half years. I sequed from that to "This Is Your FBI", which lasted eight and a half years. I owned this one - wrote and directed the majority of segments. During the D.A. years I was politically active for Roosevelt, became president of the Radio Director's Guild, helped get them their union charter, etc.

My best summary of those radio years - even while we were still in it we knew how good it was.



Monte Frazier & Virgil Reimer provided the background sounds on *This Is Your FBI*. Producer /Director Jerry Devine is at right.



by Barbara
J. Watkins

Several people have written recently asking if there are other groups like SPERDVAC around the country which have tape lending libraries for their members. The answer is yes.

The Radio Historical Association of Colorado (RHAC) is one of several other clubs which allow their members to rent tapes through the mail. The programs are available on both open reels and cassettes. RHAC also has a printed materials library, a monthly newsletter and monthly meetings. Membership dues are \$10.00 for the first year and \$15.00 for renewals. For information, write to RHAC, P.O. Box 1908, Englewood, CO 80110.

The North American Radio Archives (NARA) was founded in 1973 and has a large open reel library and also a cassette library. These are two separate libraries with different content in each. There is also a printed materials library. The club has no regular meetings of its membership. Its publication, the NARA NEWS is published several times a year. Membership dues are \$15.00 per year. For information, write to NARA, c/o Janis DeMoss, 5291 Jacks Creek Peak, Lexington, KY 40515.

The Golden Radio Buffs of Maryland (GRB) is quite an active club in the Baltimore area. In addition to regular membership meetings, the club sponsors an old time radio museum exhibit. Members nationwide receive a bi-monthly newsletter and access to a tape lending library on cassettes. Membership dues are \$20.00 for the first year and \$15.00 for renewals. For information, write to Editor, c/o "On the Air", 3613 Chestnut Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21211.

The Old Time Radio Club (OTR Club) meets monthly in Cheektowaga, New York. Members receive a monthly newsletter, an annual magazine, access to open reel, cassette, and video and record libraries, plus a reference library. Membership dues are \$17.50 per year, plus a \$2.50 processing fee for new members. For information, write to Old Time Radio Club, Richard Olday, 100 Harvey Drive, Lancaster, NY 14086.

There are other groups which meet and provide services to their local members. In a future issue we will tell you about them and what they may have to offer to a prospective member who does not live in their area.

In the next issue we will tell you about some of the independent publications in the radio hobby and how you may subscribe to them.

Does anyone know if a group or a newsletter has ever been formed for fans of ONE MAN'S FAMILY? Send your questions, suggestions, and 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!

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE LIBRARIES?

By Richard Glasband
General Library Open Reels 500 +

The general library is the heart and soul of SPERDVAC's library network. Whether Cassette or Open Reel, this is where you get most of the shows you need to start or fill-in your OTR collection.

There are some shows in the General Library, Open Reels 500 + that we would like members to know about.

If you haven't rented a **SPERDVAC Presents** tape yet, do it now! I have to confess that I hadn't heard one myself until I became the librarian two hears ago.

These tapes are interviews and re-creations at monthly meeting and annual conventions. They are terrific. If you ever wondered what happened on the stage and behind the scenes of the radio shows to which you were listening, now you can find out. What about the actors? Who were they, what were they like? The soundmen? The writers, directors, sponsors, the agencies that ran the programming? You'll be fascinated hearing about these facets of broadcasting.

Our honorary members, those who participated in Radio's Golden Age, have shared humorous, joyful, tender and some sad moments with us. Many of these reminiscences have been unforgettable.

Some of the names may be unfamiliar, so let me tell you about some of the tapes that I recommend.

Reel #1116 is a **Whistler** re-creation with the great Marvin Miller. And, on the same reel is a **Suspense** re-creation with Joan Banks Lovejoy and Harry Bartell. These re-creations occurred at our 1984 Convention.

And **Escape** re-creation with the versatile late actor Vic Perrin, Richard Wilson, Lou Krugman and Peggy Webber highlights reel #1123. Also, there is a wonderful tribute to the legendary radio giant, Carlton E. Morse. Mr. Morse has been a good friend of SPERDVAC and attended last year's convention to participate on one of our panels. These programs highlighted the 1985 Convention.

And, one more, a most entertaining and delightful program was re-created at the 1988 Convention. It was **The Great Gildersleeve**. SPERDVAC was most fortunate to have a terrific cast and "Gildersleeve" himself, Willard Waterman. This is tape #1156.

When you order from the 500 and up Open Reel General Library, try to list your choices in numerical order. Also, list at least eight alternate selections. Remember, the cost of the order is \$6.25 (contains five tapes).

Even though you have thirty days, try to get our orders back as quickly as possible so that you can have another order of tapes and others can share the tapes you are returning.

When you find mailing labels in the box of tapes, please fill them out or attach your address label to them.

Enjoy your tapes and watch for this column in the Radiogram. Each librarian will discuss his/her library, some of the rules and tapes you should look into borrowing.

Happy Listening.

Hugh's Hues

By Hugh Anderson

November 25, 1960 is the day some say that traditional radio programming died; it was the day when four long-running serials on CBS came to an end. They were **The Second Mrs. Burton**, **The Right to Happiness**, **Young Doctor Malone** and **Ma Perkins**.

The daytime serials began in the early '30's to entertain the women at home. The sponsors were manufacturers of home and women's care products. The story lines were continuous as were the movie serials and romance fiction of the time after which they were patterned. The women must have loved them since they lasted on radio almost three decades. They are still in a force on daytime TV, giving American almost sixty years of social mirroring.

A few weeks ago I received a letter from Ms. Zenith Sambrini, a character on **Ma Perkins**. It could have come from "Kitty Kean", the lady detective or Lorelei Kilbourne who worked for Steve Wilson of *The Illustrated Press*. The letter's real author is Fran Carlon, who appeared on at least thirteen network programs. She wrote in response to a section in "Hugh's Hues". The letter is really to everyone in SPERDVAC and carries a sincere request.

My dear Mr. Anderson:

*I was interested in your column "Hugh's Hues," especially your paragraph on Virginia Payne. All of us who worked with her in Chicago and New York still miss her terribly. We have established a "Grant in Aid" for her at the Playhouse in the Park in Cincinnati where she died in '77 after being in "Oliver" there. When radio disappeared, she went back to the theatre. She was a tremendously talented actress as we all knew working with her on **Ma**. She was so young and played an old lady so beautifully.*

If anyone who remembers her and loved her and would like to keep her name alive, you can contribute to:

The AFTRA Memorial Foundation

ATTN: The Virginia Payne Grant-in-Aid

260 Madison Avenue

New York, NY 10016

It's a wonderful program for young people who are AFTRA members or children of AFTRA members. They are interns - getting training and also working in the big theatre for a season.

I was also delighted to read about Art Harn in another column. I remember him so well in Chicago radio. There was such a great group of people in that city in the late thirties - I always will remember them! My best to you all at SPERDVAC. You do a great job!

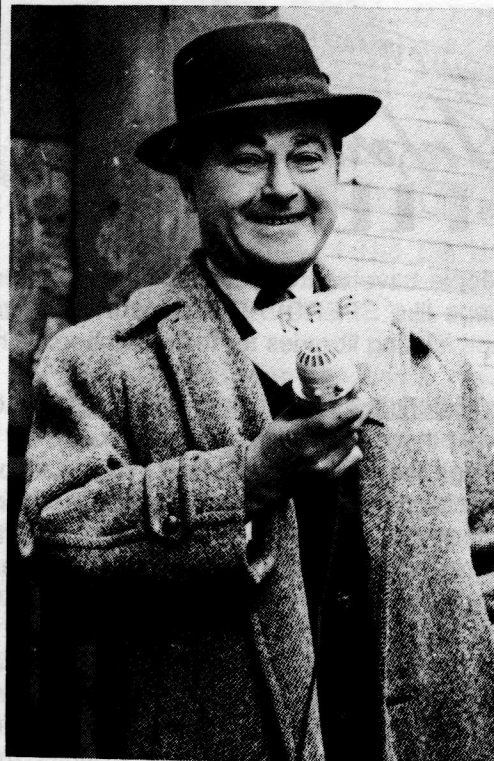
Sincerely,

Fran Carlon

With 1600 plus SPERDVAC members, \$8000.00 could be raised if each of us sent just \$5.00. It's not much individually but the total would help greatly with the young people.

Ms. Carlon lives in New York and was a guest at The Friends for Old-Time Radio Convention, October 19-21. She was a significant part of early radio, playing characters

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, SPERDVAC!



JERRY

HAUSNER

I am happy to salute SPERDVAC on its 15th Anniversary, along with hundreds of other radio fans. I was a radio actor for many years, when there was no such thing as tape recording, so I never got to hear any of the shows that were so much a part of listeners' lives. All our shows were done live, and not only once, but twice, because of the difference in time between the East and the West coasts.

We broadcast seven days a week, Sundays and Holidays. The big comedy

shows were done in front of large audiences, and some of them insisted that we wear formal clothes. . . All this for \$15.00. . . and sometimes \$5.00. . . or even a PROMISE of \$5.00 which we didn't get!

But now, thanks to SPERDVAC, and its library of old shows I have become a radio fan, and have been listening to shows on which I appeared forty years ago. . . But they are all new to me, because I had never heard them before.

So, my best wishes to SPERDVAC, and good luck for the next fifteen years!

in some of radio's top programs. May 15, 1933, NBC Blue: **Today's Children** as one of the daughters; Dec. 4, 1933, NBC: **Ma Perkins** as Zenith Sambrini; Oct. 3, 1934, WMAQ, Chicago and Jan. 1, 1935, NBC: **The Story of Mary Marlin** as Bunny Mitchel who was dissatisfied with her own husband and who had eyes for Mary's husband, Joe; 1935, NBC: **Girl Alone** as Ruth Lardner; March 29, 1937, CBS: **Our Gal Sunday** as Irene Galway who, with her husband, Peter, was close friends to Sunday; 1937, NBC Blue: **Attorney at Law** as Sally Dunlap, secretary to Terry Regan played by Jim Ameche; Circa 1939, NBC Red: **Kitty Keen, Incorporated** in the starring role; Circa 1940, CBS: **Big Town** as Lorelei Kilbourne; October 5, 1940, Mutual: **The Chicago Theatre of the Air**; Joan and Kermit as Joan with Olan Soule as Kermit; 1940's, Syndicated: **Blackstone**, **The Magic Detective**; 1943, NBC: **Lora Lawton** as Helen Hudson; January, 1943, NBC: **A Woman of America** as Sylvia.

The daytime serials were fashioned along lines that would appeal to the homemakers. Love, joy, disappointment, distrust, anguish, longing were all present, all to fit housewives' lives and dreams. **Mary Marlin** gave us anguish as well as steadfastness to carry on plus the character of a woman as a national leader. **A Woman of America** came along midway in the War and demonstrated what obstacles and hardships could be overcome by a woman

Cont. on next page. . .

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SPERDVAC!



CONRAD BINYON

Happy Birthday, SPERDVAC. Since its founding, fifteen years ago, untiring volunteers (well, maybe a littled tired now and then) have maintained an organization whose excellent library of historic radio transcriptions allows us golden age of radio aficionados, and the newer generation as well, to again experience our imaginations. Thank you for that as well as reuniting me with "parts" of my youth on audio tape that I thought had been lost to me forever. I am truly grateful for that contribution made to me by the members of SPERDVAC. Gosh, were I fifteen years old, I'd be doing radio again!

Hugh's Hues cont. . .

alone as were so many in America at that time. It helped set an example. In **Mary Marlin**, Mary's husband, Joe, disappeared in Russia in 1939 and Mary took Joe's place as senator from Iowa. The show as so popular in the early 40's that two networks carried the series and it had one of the highest afternoon ratings - as did **Ma Perkins**.

A Woman of America originally was set in the old west after the Civil War in an allegorical manner, as noted by J. Fred MacDonald in *Don't Touch That Dial*. The characters and events symbolically illustrated an idea or real people or events. Providence Dane was a pioneer woman with determination and strength who traveled west in a covered wagon. Her trials and exploits were monitored by their great granddaughter who suggested that her great grandma's experience were likened to the women of 1943 where "the women of America are once again fight-

ing side by side with their men in the factories, farms and homes". John Dunning notes that the setting later changed to a contemporary one with another great granddaughter as a newspaperwoman, but with the program kept the same theme.

During the war years, the general theme changed to reflect men leaving home and the women left behind coping as best they could. Changing attitudes and personal tragedy were to become focal points. A black soldier first appeared on **Our Gal Sunday** in mid 1942 and several times thereafter, inspiring spirited discussions between Sunday and her husband about a black soldier's loyalty to our country. John Perkins, Ma's son, was killed in early 1944, which brought on criticism from all corners. Program Supervisor Roy Windson of Dancer, Fitzgerald and Sample Advertising Agency argued that true-to-life situations should be included in radio soaps. His view was that this sort of thing happened to Mrs. America, so why not to Ma? Ma's strength to overcome such a personal loss and still carry on with the lumberyard was to give strength to her listeners.

Our Gal Sunday and **Ma Perkins** were just two of many daytime programs that co-operated with the Office of War Information to produce a week of programming explaining the war to the listeners. This material was called **Victory Front** on CBS and **Victory Volunteers** on NBC. Toward the end of the war, the OWI had radio characters appearing on programs other than their own to discuss war topics. May, 1945, was when Irna Phillips merged her two (**Today's Children** and **Women in White**) 15 minute serials that followed one another to allow the characters to visit one another for a full half hour to discuss rehabilitating wounded veterans.

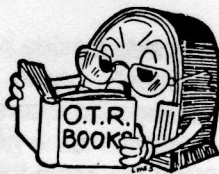
Serials were involved in allowing war spokesmen for the military effort or women leaders to make direct appeals to American women. This was done mostly through statements at the beginning of the program before the story began. **A Woman of America** was used for this purpose 21 times, more than any other serial.

Serials did their share during the war to help the women on the homefront contend with wartime conditions. Simple meals with non-rationed foods, making clothes last longer, shoe rationing, occasional soap shortages, dim-outs along our coasts, omitting references to automobile usage were among subjects brought into the stories directly or indirectly. But the emotional feelings our women-folk had at the time was the foundation. J. Fred MacDonald devotes fifty pages to "Soap Operas as a Social Force", in his book *Don't Touch That Dial*. It is an excellent review and an in-depth explanation of how these daytime programs became an integral part of our lives.

November's Notable News: November 15, 1806 - Zebulon Pike first sights the mountain to be called Pike's Peak; November 13, 1921 - Valentino appeared on the big screen in "The Sheik" and the word "swoon" was coined. You also may have forgotten but on November 25, 1973, the national speed limit of 55 miles per hour began.

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

Radio in Review



Welcome once again!

By Chris Lembesis

Starting off on a sad note, I recently became aware of the passing of Ray Poindexter. Ray was a broadcaster, educator, a member of SPERDVAC, and an author of two wonderful books about an era of radio history. ARKANSAS AIRWAVES tells the story of the development and personalities of radio in that state, including, of course, LUM AND ABNER. GOLDEN THROATS & SILVER TONGUES is a detailed look at the announcers who made our favorite shows so memorable. Some readers may have these titles. Though the second one is not out-of-print, as it was very popular.

Mrs. Poindexter has informed me that about 70 copies remain of ARKANSAS AIRWAVES and she would love to hear from SPERDVAC members if they wish a copy. The cost is \$15, which includes postage and handling. Write to: Mrs. Ray Poindexter, 204 West I Street, North Little Rock AK 72116.

In 1983, an interesting book was written called A DIRECTORY OF BROADCAST ARCHIVES. This softbound work listed the various institutions that held original radio discs and tapes. Going through it, I realized there were many locations of collections not included, but perhaps should be, to give the scholar or fan an opportunity to know what is available for study and where.

At the Broadcast Education Association Convention in Las Vegas last year, I proposed a revised and more up-to-date edition. Most recently, I was approached by BEA to assist in a revised 2nd edition. Working with Dr. Donald Godfrey, and other leading educators in Telecommunications and Journalism nationally, it is scheduled for Spring 1990 publication. Dr. Godfrey wrote the 1st edition, and this revised one should be eagerly anticipated.

This work will concentrate on four important areas:

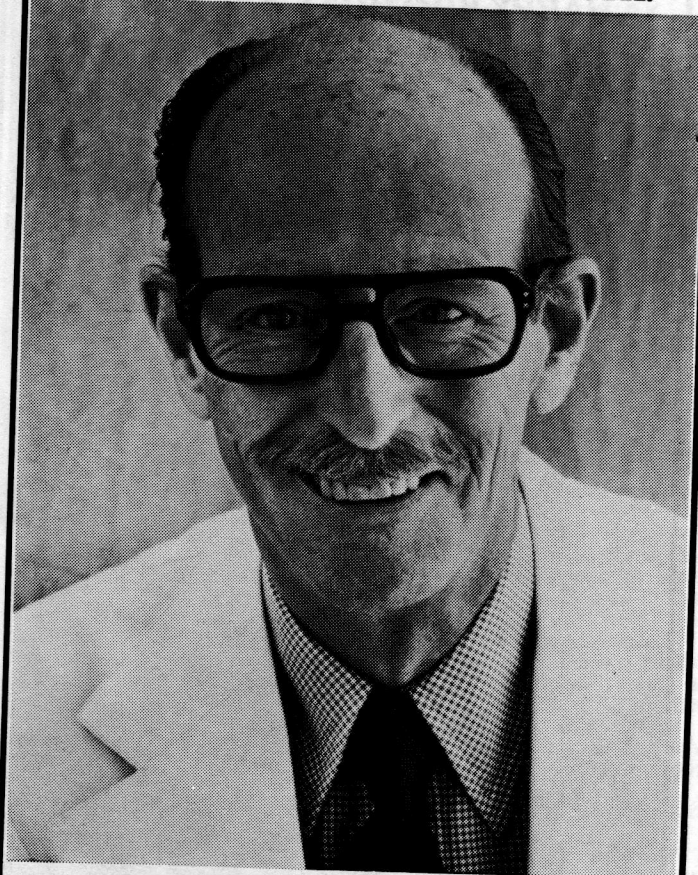
1. The expanded edition will up-date current listings.
2. It will identify major manuscript deposits besides audio/video.
3. A computerized survey will provide an index to program titles.
4. An assessment on how collections are being used and for what purposes.

SPERDVAC and its members are welcome to assist on this unique project as the more complete the information, the more valuable the publication. A questionnaire will be available at the convention if you wish to become active in any way with this project.

For those who cannot attend, but would like to assist, please write to: Donald Godfrey, PhD; Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Telecommunications; Arizona State University; Tempe, AZ 85287-1305. The appropriate form will be sent to you.

From Scarecrow Press, an announcement of two just completed works presently in the printing stage, and scheduled for review in January. The first, THE CHIL-

CONGRATS ON SPERDVAC'S 15TH!



ART HANNES

My gratitude to SPERDVAC's Board of Directors and all the precious volunteers who keep SPERDVAC's heart beating strongly, and to the membership at large for the energy and affection you so generously give to keep the memories and accomplishments of that marvelous era alive.

I think I can safely speak for all of SPERDVAC's honorary members when I express my feelings of luck and good fortune to have been a part of those golden years and to be welcomed into SPERDVAC by all of you who so fondly remember the past. You do us great honor and I believe all of those impressive names bordering SPERDVAC's letterhead will shout a hearty "Hear! Hear!" when I say a most heartfelt Thank You.

DREN'S HOUR: RADIO PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN, 1929-1956, looks like an important title of a specialized are of radio history. It is written by Dr. Marilyn Boemer of the University of North Texas.

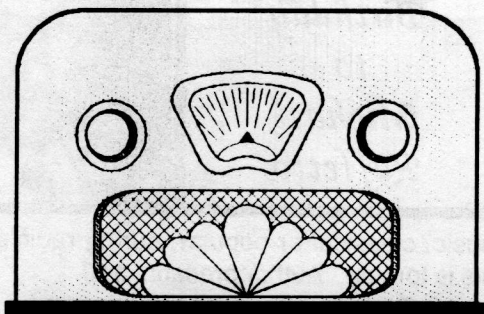
Last month the Radiogram ran an announcement for a new publication for the OTR collector. THE LISTENING GUIDE NEWSLETTER is a new and different approach for the fan or collector. Written and published by Bob Burnham, subject areas of interest and concern to the hobby are addressed in a straightforward and informative manner. The Premiere Issue has just arrived, and its contents merits an overview at this time.

This is an ambitious undertaking by one person. In his opening editorial, Bob discusses why THE LISTENING GUIDE was started. A separate article features an interview with announcer George Ansbro.

An in-depth article on The Tools of the OTR Collector goes into a serious area collectors now face. What is the future of open reel? Bob comments that quarter track is obsolete. He suggests collectors convert to professional half track and record at 7 1/2 IPS or faster. His argument is

Cont. on page 12 ...

SCARECROW CONGRATULATES SPERDVAC ON YOUR 15TH YEAR!



New

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR: Radio Programs for Children, 1929-1956
Marilyn Lawrence Boemer

230 pp. 1989 89-24133
ISBN 0-8108-2270-9 \$25.00

An overview of children's radio programming, the accompanying parental protests, and the possible effects of listening to the "blood and thunder," as well as a look at life in the radio era. Boemer describes 47 programs, all broadcast nationally from 1929 through 1956.

New

PHARMACY AND MEDICINE ON THE AIR
Mickey C. Smith

175 pp. photos 1989
ISBN 0-8108-2279-2 \$22.50

Spans the "Golden Age" of radio, roughly 1935 to 1960. Smith provides a detailed look at radio programs in which pharmacy and pharmacists were featured, ranging from little-known shows such as *County Seat* and *Family Doctor* to the popular *Great Gildersleeve*, *Fibber McGee* and *Molly*, and *Phil Harris/Alice Faye*.

New

THE GLENN MILLER ARMY AIR FORCE BAND: Sustineo Alas / I Sustain the Wings
(Studies in Jazz, 8)
Edward F. Polic

1,314 pp. 2 vols. 8 1/2" x 11" photos 1989
89-24047 set ISBN 0-8108-2269-5 \$127.50

Covers a small but significant period of Glenn Miller's life and music, from his enlistment in 1942 and the beginning of his Army Air Force Band in 1943, through its end in late 1945. Among the best-known recordings from this period are "The St. Louis Blues March," "Everybody Loves My Baby," and "Stealin' Apples."

Forthcoming

SWING LEGACY (Studies in Jazz, 9), **Chip Deffaa**

Also available

RADIO AND TELEVISION: A SELECTED, ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY, SUPPLEMENT TWO: 1982-1986

Peter K. Pringle & Helen E. Clinton

249 pp. 1989 88-23968
ISBN 0-8108-2158-3 \$27.50

RADIO AND TELEVISION, SUPPLEMENT ONE: 1977-1981: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography

William E. McCavitt, comp.

167 pp. 1982 82-5743
ISBN 0-8108-1556-7 \$17.50

A HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S TELEVISION IN ENGLISH CANADA, 1952-1986

F.B. Rainsberry

320 pp. photos 1988 87-28773
ISBN 0-8108-2079-X \$32.50

THE MYSTERY OF THE MASKED MAN'S MUSIC:

A Search for the Music Used on "The Lone Ranger" Radio Program, 1933-1954

Reginald M. Jones, Jr.

233 pp. illus. 1987 86-33872
ISBN 0-8108-1982-1 \$20.00



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Radio in Review cont. . .

sound as the key is in finding replacement parts as the years progress. Since consumer decks (with few exceptions) are no longer manufactured, finding parts will be next to impossible or expensive if found.

A pro deck means a longer life with available parts for a long time. Bob's least expensive approach is of course, cassettes, which most of us utilize. This article could have been more complete if a discussion of digital recording followed.

The immediate future in recording, this reviewer feels, is the DAT (Digital Audio Tape) and CD (Compact Disc). In a digital format, there is no head wear to start, and copies are identical to the original.

A Collector's Directory is next, and this gives an opportunity for collectors to meet by phone or mail. A list (though incomplete) of OTR clubs follows, and a Salute To column, honoring those who have contributed to the growth and enjoyment of the hobby. The first one named, Jay Hickerson, rightfully deserves it. Not only has he published HELLO AGAIN for 20 years, but Jay is also the driving force behind the Friends of Old Time Radio Convention since the beginning.

To close off this first issue, OTR Clubs are discussed, and SPERDVAC is the first one reviewed. Bob shares his thoughts on the differences he had with us at one time, but concludes the services we are providing are important. Interesting article. FREE copies of this Premiere Issue will be available at the convention, and a subscription would be highly recommended.

Available at the SPERDVAC 15th Anniversary Convention will be:

1. **NEWS FOR EVERYMAN.** A study of six radio commentators. Long out of print, these are the remaining copies. Reduced to \$25.

2. **RADIO COMEDY.** A detailed look at radio comics and their craft. Long out of print also, these are remaining copies. \$20.

3. **DON'T TOUCH THAT DIAL!** An outstanding favorite amongst collectors. This is a great overview of radio history. Get this one! \$15.

4. **STAY TUNED.** The title may be short, but the information between the covers is invaluable. A college text & OTR favorite. \$35.

5. **DORFSMAN & CBS.** A fabulous look at the career of Lou Dorfsman who designed the CBS Radio & TV promo packages. Reduced from \$50 to \$25!

6. **THE ONE MAN'S FAMILY ALBUM.** Carlton Morse's look back at this radio favorite. Some copies are autographed, most are not. \$9.

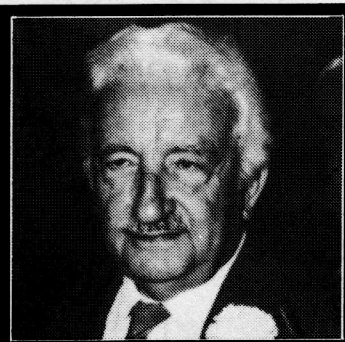
7. **GREAT RADIO PERSONALITIES IN HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS.** The title may be long, but the memories evoked will be even longer. \$8.

8. **RADIO: A REFERENCE GUIDE.** A great collector's reference, the author will be attending to personally autograph your copy. \$33.

9. **FRED ALLEN: HIS LIFE AND WIT.** A beautifully written biography of a radio favorite. We are fortunate to have the author with us. \$15.

10. **THE MIGHTY MUSIC BOX.** If your love was

*Happy
90th
Birthday
to
Michael
Raffetto*



music, classical or popular, during radio's golden years, this is for you. Author present. \$10.

11. **POPS.** The definitive biography of the King of Jazz, Paul Whiteman, who had a long and varied career in radio. Author attending. \$15.

12. **KILLER AT THE WHEEL.** Carlton Morse's first novel of reckless driving. This will hold your attention from start to finish. \$17.

13. **A LAVISH OF SIN.** Another entry from Carlton Morse, a novel of love, lust, murder and madness. Writing from the master storyteller. \$15.

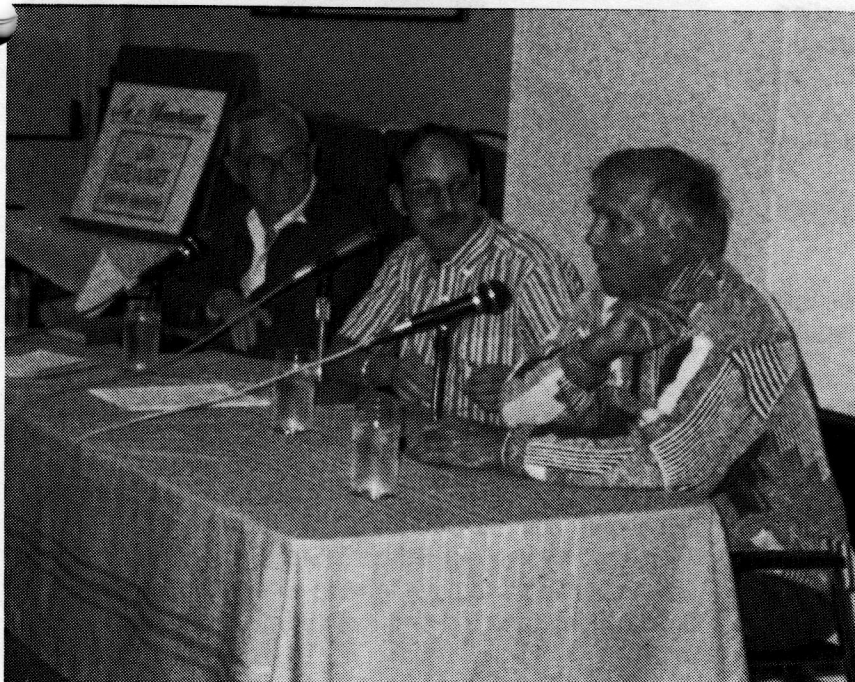
A big thank you to the publishers who have kept us informed of new titles. There are many, coordinating their author's for our conventions, advertising, and meeting those deadlines we all hate. In particular, a tip of the hat to Jennifer Kittredge, Senior Publicist, and Alice Baker, Special Sales, of Little, Brown and Company; to Rhonda Herman, Promotions, of McFarland & Company; to Lisa Mincey and Heidi Lumberg, Marketing, of Smithsonian Institution Press; to Rebecca Hayden, Senior Editor and Martin Kast, National Sales, of Wadsworth, Inc.; to Judith Lipner, Publicity, and Mary Rose Denaro, Sales Manager, of Greenwood Press; to Aya Betensky, Publicity, Scarecrow Press; to Vera Plummer, Special Sales, Oxford University Press; to Grace Houghton, President of Vestal Press; to Steve Ferrara, Vice President, Nelson Hall; and to those whose names have inadvertently been left out, a big thank you in making my work a little easier . . . and a little more enjoyable.

Next year promises to be an exciting one for SPERDVAC and the hobby itself. Presently in the writing stage or ready for publication, are studies of the following: OZ-ZIE & HARRIET, EDGAR BERGEN, RONALD COLMAN, FRANK SINATRA, GUNSMOKE, WILLIAM SHIRER, BENNY GOODMAN, ORSON WELLES, QUIZ PROGRAMS, and more.

This column will keep readers posted on all new releases. Your comments or criticism are always welcome. After three years doing this, I have learned more about the book business and about your interests in OTR collecting. Books make a great gift for young or old, and you might want to consider a few titles mentioned above for the upcoming holidays.

As a final announcement, if any of you enjoy reading or research, and might want to fill in at times as guest reviewer for this column, please reach me through the Radiogram. This column resumes in January with the best in OTR reading. Here is hoping that 1990 brings you health and happiness and of course, as always . . . Good Luck and Good Reading!

WRITING FOR RADIO



E. Jack Neuman, right, joked "I laughed when Walter told you he was teaching navigation. He walked up and down Ventura Blvd. for half an hour before he could find this building." Replied Walter Brown Newman, left, "My speciality was celestial navigation." The two guests at SPERDVAC's October meeting told moderator Dan Haefele, center, that they both began their writing careers after leaving the armed services during the World War II era.

E. Jack Neuman says that he has twice been hired for movie writing jobs because he was mistaken for his long-time peer, Walter Brown Newman.

The similarity in name (even if they are spelled differently) isn't the only coincidence in their lives. Both men began their radio writing careers when they left Uncle Sam's employment during the World War II era.

Sells Suspense script

E. Jack Neuman was in the U.S. Marine Corps during the war, earning \$35 per month. Radio director William Spier paid him \$175 for his story "The Strange Death of Charles Umberstein," which was broadcast on **Suspense** on Nov. 23, 1943.

Vincent Price, who Neuman says had never been on radio before, was the star. "He had just come from Broadway, where he had done 'Gaslight'," Neuman explained to SPERDVAC. "Both of us had a brand new experience." Subsequently he sold 75 more **Suspense** scripts.

"I was teaching navigation during the second world war," recalls Walter Brown Newman. "It was a very boring task. . . I noticed one day a sign on a bulletin board that

"You'd be amazed how many people I ran into who thought the actors made up the lines as they went along, including the actors!"

— Walter Brown Newman

said there was a play writing contest for members of the armed services. . . I began to make one up in my head as I worked. . . I was one of those who won first prize.

"I said to myself, 'Some day this war is going to end. If I get a chance, I will write,'" he said.

Staying with friends in Malibu after his discharge, Newman taught himself the art of writing radio plays. "I did this by listening to radio," he recalled. "I'd never done that before in my life."

Suitcase of scripts

He went to the Sam Jaffee Agency in Hollywood, where he presented a suitcase filled with radio comedies, mysteries and love stories to an agent. "I remember the recoiled movement he involuntarily made when he saw all these scripts," Newman commented.

Within a few days several of the scripts were sold. "Suddenly I had money and I was a real, live writer," he added. "Those scripts would go for anywhere from \$250 to \$400."

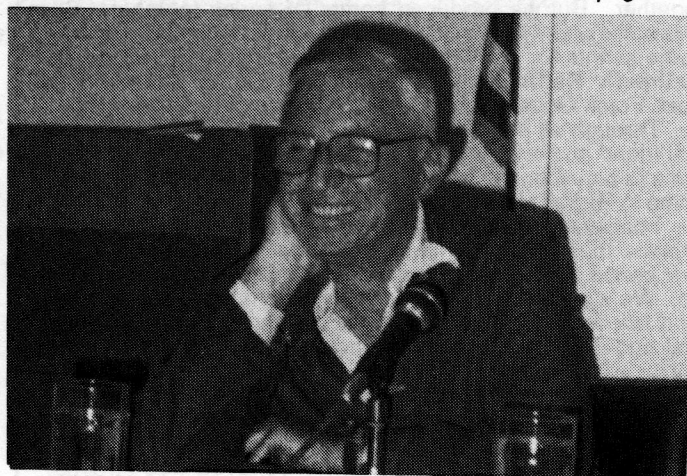
Motivations for plots

"One of the things that motivated me to write a lot of radio was a very unhappy marriage," E. Jack Neuman revealed. "I wrote constantly about two people that were physically attracted but otherwise had nothing in common."

"All we have to sell is excitement and enthusiasm," explained Walter Newman. "You can think of our scripts as transmission lines on which we try to send that thought to the audience. If you do it (right) the audience will get excited. And you can't fake it."

Both writers say they draw upon personal interests when creating stories. And each is in the habit of keeping an informal file of notes and ideas for future use.

Cont. on next page . . .



"I worked with Elliott Lewis the most. Elliott was, beyond a doubt, the superb actor on radio."

— E. Jack Neuman

"I put down whatever comes to mind - a character name, a gesture, a possible line of dialogue, a question to myself - down on file cards," Walter Newman added. "Sooner or later that fountain (of ideas) runs a little dry, so I start seeing if I can arrange them in some sort of sequence that can make up a story. Then I see where there are holes and gaps and try to fill them in."

Another important ingredient is a conflict which leads to the story's climax.

Last minute requests

E. Jack Neuman recalls many occasions when Bill Spier, director on **Suspense** and **Sam Spade**, would



FROUG: WRITING WITH NEUMAN

Editor's note: Recently we asked radio writer/director William Froug to recount some radio memories for us. He thought about his career for a moment, then came up with these anecdotes regarding new honorary member E. Jack Neuman and their efforts at writing radio together.

Dear SPERDVAC,

You can only lose your virginity once. I lost mine at CBS radio in the spring of 1946, May 26, 1946 to be precise. It was on my 24th birthday that the Pacific Network on the Columbia Broadcasting System broadcast my very first radio script.

It was for a Sunday night exotic adventure series called, at first, **A Man Named Jordan** and later re-titled **Rocky Jordan**. In fact, it was a rip-off of the movie *Casablanca*. Ric was now Rocky and *Casablanca* was now *Cairo*. It starred Jack Moyles as Rocky and was very popular on the West Coast, second only to the **The Whistler** in West Coast produced radio show popularity.

This particular episode was written in collaboration with my former college roommate and lifelong buddy, E. Jack Neuman. I was just out of the Navy and was living with E. Jack and his marvelous mother, known to us as Aggie. I loved her dearly; we both did. On her death bed many years later, she made me promise to look after Jack. In spite of this he went on to become a superstar Emmy-Award winning writer/producer. But I know Aggie would forgive me.

Anyway, our script had in the cast Howard Duff, Jerry Hausner, Virginia Gregg, Jeff Chandler (then Ira Grossell), Larry Dobkin, Paul Dubov and a host of the greatest actors in the history of radio. Gordon Hughes was the director, unless it was Sterling Tracy (The memory grows dim but the memories glow.) E. Jack and I understood after that glorious beginning (we shared the \$90.00 fee) that we were destined to go separate ways at least at the typewriter. We never wrote another script together. But we produced some TV series together. *Sam Benedict* and *Mr. Novak* come to mind. And E. Jack wrote some scripts for me when I was producing and directing **The Hallmark Radio Hall of Fame** with Lionel Barrymore as host, Frank Goss as announcer and casts of radio all-stars.

Through all these years, I think of E. Jack as my very special friend and only wonder, since he's got enough money and fame to bury Donald Trump, why he doesn't return to sanity and come to Hawaii and play golf with me.

I believe for all of us who worked in radio nothing will ever replace those glorious times, the creative excitement during that period of our lives when we had no idea what we could not do. We were young enough to risk everything every time out. And risk we did. What else is all creativity about except that first and most important of all the freedoms: The freedom to fail?

So when you dear folks at SPERDVAC hear our humble offerings, remember we were working out of our hearts. We didn't know about money (not at \$90.00 a script) or success. We only knew what we loved and what we loved was **RADIO**.

phone him with a last minute request for a radio script. "He would call me Saturday night at midnight," he said, "and say, 'We've got Barbara Stanwyck Monday night. Got something?' I'd have to write all weekend and get it to him Monday morning and it would be on the air Monday night."

When a completed script was accepted, the writer's work wasn't done, Walter Newman explained. It was common for writers to sit in on rehearsals. They added or cut lines after the script was timed.

Working with Colman

Both writers have memories of working with actor Ronald Colman.

"Working the show as good feelings at all times," Walter Newman says of the **Halls of Ivy** series. "It gave me a chance to use a lot of things that were in me.

"I'm fairly well read and self educated to a great degree," he continued, "and I could write about anything that interested me. My ideas would find a warm reception ... (from) Don Quinn and his agent/director, Nat Wolfe."

One of his first writing assignments, E. Jack Neuman recalls, was adapting classics for use on **Favorite Story**, the syndicated series Colman hosted.

"They took almost everything that was in public domain to make into a radio play. It was a great challenge all the time. I did stories like *Iccabod Crane* and 'The Man Who Sold His Shadow to the Devil,'" Neuman said.

"He was also one of the best liked comedians I've ever encountered," E. Jack Neuman added. "He gave beautiful readings on comedy lines without direction. He just naturally understood comedy."

High praise for actors

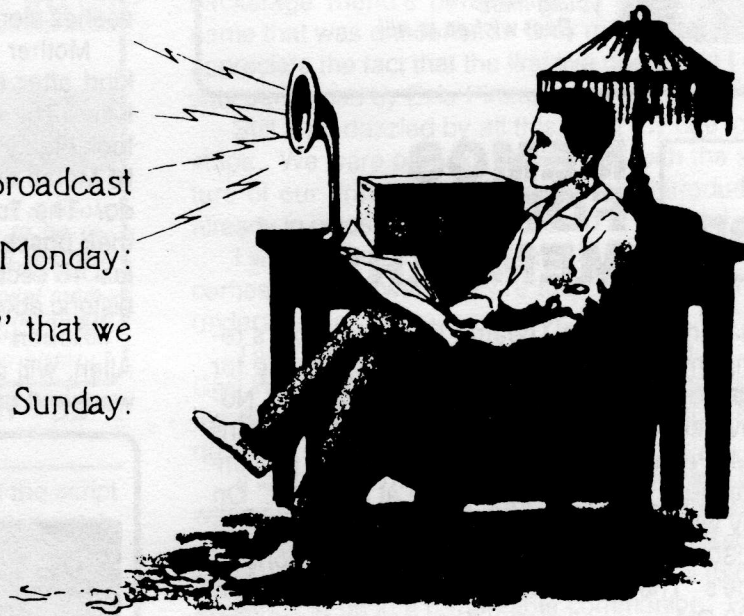
Newman and Neuman, who have both been made SPERDVAC honorary members, have high praise for actors and actresses who performed their works.

Which ones stand out in their minds? "They all stand out," E. Jack Neuman said. "What a bunch of actors! They would deliver the goods time after time."

"I feel the same way about it," Walter Newman added. "The radio actors could give you anything, and they could give it to you immediately."

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GIVE US A CALL

CONGRATULATIONS TO SPERDVAC!



FRANK BARTON

Congratulations to SPERDVAC on it's 15th anniversary. Wish I could say the same for myself. I retired in 1974 after 38 years with NBC, starting in San Francisco in 1936 at what was then KPO. We also worked at KGO and two networks prior to the split when the Blue network became ABC.

I am now living in the desert of Palm Springs and am enjoying fairly good health for an 80 year young man.

Best wishes to all!



MEMOS FOR MEMBERS

California Artists' Radio Theatre, Peggy Webber's repertory company of professional actors responsible for the **Lux Radio Theatre** tribute planned for our November convention, has moved its on the air productions to KPCC-FM, Pasadena. Their 90 minute stereo presentation of "Treasure Island" aired Oct. 29 at 5:30 PM. On Nov. 19 they will present "The Importance of Being Earnest" from 5:30 to 7:00 PM. Adaptations of portions of James Joyce's "The Dubliners" are set for Dec. 17 and Jan. 7 at 6:00 PM.

KPCC (89.3 FM) also plans a holiday marathon of old time radio productions. The station will air classic radio broadcasts, many of them Christmas oriented, beginning at 5 PM Dec. 24 and concluding at 5 AM Christmas morning. The station can be received throughout Southern California and in portions of Central California as well.

John Price, producer of the highly successful **Same Time. . . Same Station** which aired on KRLA, Pasadena in the early seventies, will be the featured guest at a dinner Nov. 6 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the **Peace for Today** radio series which is carried by KIEV, Glendale and KEST, San Francisco. His presentations covers five decades of American radio history. The dinner will be at the LePapillon Restaurant, 406 S. Myrtle, Monrovia. The social hour begins at 6:00 PM and the dinner is at 7:00 PM. The donation is \$12 per person. Advance reservations are required. Telephone reservations may be made at (714)668-0138 or (818)240-3765.

SPERDVAC takes its traditional holiday next month.

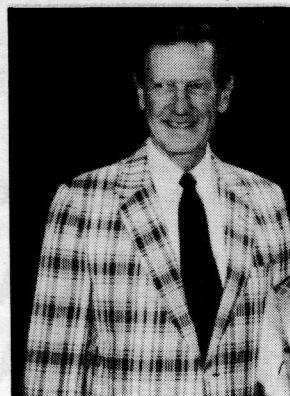
There will be no meeting and no Radiogram in December. Our organization's volunteers are taking just a bit of time off to recuperate from the convention and our many radio-related activities. Expect your next Radiogram to arrive with the new decade. Meanwhile, SPERDVAC wishes a delightful holiday season to the ever growing membership of over 1400. Thanks to you, we have had a successful fifteen years.

J., a member who quietly helps out behind the scenes and doesn't wish to be identified, poured some mighty impressive colors into the printing press. J. says thanks aren't necessary but those who know the behind the scenes story disagree. So, THANK YOU anyway!

Mother Nature's October nasty fit of temper was rather kind after all to honorary SPERDVAC member Bernard Katz. The radio musician tells us his San Francisco home took plenty of earthquaking and only a little breaking. Millie Morse and husband Carlton E. had more cleaning up to do. The Tuesday evening earthquake deposited many of their possessions on the floor of the 56 year old home in just 15 seconds. The chimney is gone but the rest of their historic abode remains intact.

Robert Taylor, author of the new book on comic Fred Allen, will appear on the Ray Briem Radio Program the weekend of our convention. Southern California listeners

HERE'S TO SPERDVAC! Without you, who would remember?



ART GILMORE

In 55 years I fear I have forgotten more than you have remembered.

It's been a wonderful half century - wouldn't have traded it for anything. So, THANK YOU, SPERDVAC, for re-membering and keeping some of those memories alive for future generations to see, hear and, I hope, enjoy.

can tune them in late Friday night (really 12 midnight, early Saturday, Nov. 11) on KABC (790 AM). A Gassman or two will be strolling around the studios with excerpts of Allen's radio work.

Our thanks to the many radio pros who sent messages of congratulations to us on the occasion of our Fifteenth Anniversary. We received so many that we decided to hold some of them for the January 1990 edition. Stay tuned!

SALUTE TO SPERDVAC'S 15TH YEAR!

MONTY MARGETTS

It wasn't until I was preparing for my Nostalgia Night appearance for Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters - going through my old, old scrapbooks - that I remembered, seeing the clipping of the Variety notice of my father's death in 1936, that, even though I am 77 years old, and did my first professional (paid!) appearance on radio in August 1929, I am a second generation radio performer!

My father, Roland Margetts, was an Englishman, born in Oxford and also a Christ Church man at Oxford University. He was the co-founder of the Vancouver, B.C. Sun Newspaper Circa 1912. (It is still the leading Vancouver daily.) He sold his interest subsequently and went to the Seattle Times.

When I was about three years old, he built a crystal set, and was forever intrigued with radio. In 1928, in Seattle, he started his own show on KOMO. He called himself "Big Ben" and he talked about everything under the sun. People didn't phone in, but they certainly wrote. He dived into all sorts of controversial subjects to the consternation of the station's owners. After a year, he decided he had done his bit on the air and went back to print.

DEDICATED TO SPERDVAC! THANKS!



BOB SHANNON

*I have compiled much of my comedy material into a book, **Leave 'Em With a Laugh** and an audio cassette to be released nationally in January, **The Wonderful World of Comedy** by Bob Shannon. I have dedicated the book to SPERDVAC. The forward reads, "This book is dedicated to the loyal members of SPERDVAC, the Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy. Their work on behalf of that by-gone era will forever be an integral part of radio history."*

I LOVE TO SPEND EACH SUNDAY WITH YOU (Continued from page 5)

or a different emphasis there. We read through the script once, perhaps a second time for the director's stopwatch, and our brief rehearsal was over.

As air time approached I waited in the wings, absorbed in all the activity around me. Waiting there also, not speaking or being spoken to, was a tall, rugged man dressed informally (for those days) in a checked sports jacket and plaid shirt open at the collar. He looked at me, smiled, but said nothing. The two of us watched and waited together.

The hour arrived, the red light flashed, and we were on the air. Ray Noble brought his baton down and we were drowned in the sound of a live, brassy stage orchestra opening the show. Don Ameche was on first, at the center mike, in dazzling smile and full command. He was introducing Edgar Bergen, who was waiting in the wings for his entrance. The limp, lifeless doll he had pulled out of a case suddenly became a person in white tie and tails. Out they went, to a roar of applause, and took over the studio. I was stunned, unable to comprehend that the Charlie McCarthy whom I had come to know so well through Sunday night radio had come out of - and later went back into - a suitcase.

Listening to Bergen, I heard my first big live audience laughs, the boffo kind that roll over a stage like a breaking wave. It was a sensation I still find hard to forget, quite unlike the contained sound that comes from a radio or television speaker. That audience was turned on in a way that only a handful of comedians could manage-Benny, Allen, Jojo, Durante, Brice among them. Bergen was a magician, and I was enthralled.

They came off to thunderous applause. During the commercial, I looked over my lines again. Suddenly, my

friend in the plaid shirt walked out on the stage to a warm hand. Apparently Ameche had introduced him as Someone-I didn't catch who. He strode out like a gladiator, planted his feet-oddly-some distance from the center mike, thrust both hands into his jacket pockets, and in a single gaze seized the audience. Now I was really baffled-what next?

From the orchestra came a crashing chord. Then out of the man's mouth came an incredible sound-the deepest, richest voice I'd ever heard. He sang with amazing power and dramatic force. What he sang I didn't know, and can't recall. What I do remember is the impact of my backstage friend's personality. I didn't recognize the name that was announced. Only much later did I come to appreciate the fact that the first live opera aria I ever heard was performed by Ezio Pinza.

Still a bit dazzled by all this, I got my cue to move onstage. We were on next. In keeping with the serious nature of our dramatic sketch, we were introduced quietly, already in place. Barrymore looked at me, and winked.

I was not nervous-kids seldom are. They take it as it comes, and do what they're told. They haven't come to understand all the reasons they should be nervous.

The "atmosphere" music, summoning up pictures of Civil War days, faded. Watching the control booth, I saw the director's finger point at me, and I addressed my first question to "Grandpa."

It is difficult now to recall what the story was all about. It was sentimental, simple, and - as we used to say - tugged at the heartstrings. The two of us simply talked with each other, Barrymore gradually weaving a spell that bound the audience to us in a remarkable communion. He captured me too, and brought a response that I probably didn't know was in me. He became Grandpa, and made it real for me.

I remember, perhaps more than anything, the stillness that came over the studio. A live audience is hardly ever really quiet; they cough and stir and sigh - they're always there. Toward the end of our piece, when Barrymore would pause for dramatic effect, those 350 people were utterly silent. When I had a line to speak into that stillness, I had the sense of a whole world waiting on my words.

Barrymore came to his last lines, the end of the story. As the music sneaked softly in under him, he closed on a note of quiet but intense pride. The strains of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* swelled briefly, then gave way to a lonely trumpet call, sounded from somewhere offstage.

There was a moment of complete silence. The audience, apparently reluctant to break the spell, finally began to applaud. The sound grew until it filled the whole studio. Barrymore grudgingly acknowledged the tribute, bowing stiffly from his wheelchair. As the clapping continued, he glanced my way, raised a gnarled arthritic hand, and bowed to me. I hesitated momentarily, not sure what to do-they had not coached me on this. Then, I bowed to Lionel Barrymore.

I was some years before I realized how honored I had been. That evening, driving home along Sunset in the incredibly warm glow of congratulation, I thought only that I would love to spend each Sunday this way, with "Grandpa" telling me a story while the whole world listened.

SPERDVAC



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

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JANUARY ISSUE

Dec. 20, 1989

SPERDVAC IS FIFTEEN!!



ROBERT "BOBBY" WINCKLER

As the Newsboy for Edward G. Robinson's "Illustrated Press" I am happy to cry, "extra, extra, read all about it. SPERDVAC is Fifteen!"

I was very pleased to become involved with SPERDVAC in January 1987, when asked to speak about my acting career. I think it's great that caring people are preserving and encouraging old time radio in today's TV/home video World.

As part of the Golden Age of Radio, I worked as a child/teen actor in hundreds of radio shows (and over 80 motion pictures) some including *Big Town*, *Lux Radio Theater*, *Screen Guild Theater*, *Amos and Andy*, *Al Jolson's Lifebuoy*, *Dr. Christian*, *Jack Benny*, *Your Hit Parade*, *Bob Hope*, *Hedda Hopper*, *Edgar Bergen*, and many others. I think back with fond memories of Edward G. Robinson coaching me for an audition during an east coast/west coast break on *Big Town*, Jack Benny's wife giving me milk and cookies during a rehearsal, Bob Hope and W.C. Fields frantically dealing with my spoiled-brat characters, etc., etc.

In fact, thanks to SPERDVAC, I've been taken on a trip down memory lane, remembering people and events in my past career which I haven't thought of in over forty years!

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