SPERDVAC goes on vacation in December! There will be no meeting or newsletter until January. We wish you all a happy holiday season.



Volume 19, No. 11 The Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy Nov.-Dec. 1993

Convention marks SPERDVAC's 19th anniversary



Jimmy Durante and Frank Sinatra won't be at the SPERDVAC convention this month, but Durante radio show producer Phil Cohan will join us. For a listing of many of the radio pioneers planning to attend the Nov. 12-14 convention, see page 3. (Photo taken Feb. 1, 1946. Courtesy Phil Cohan)

MEMOS FOR MEMBERS

induction ceremonies at the decision had been made. meeting for Jan 8 will be at the public.

At press time no Los considering the possibility of Angeles area radio station was airing the live broadcast at 6 scheduled to broadcast the p.m. PST, but no definate Radio Hall of Fame Nov. 7 in Honorary member Norman Chicago. KPCC-FM (89.3) was Corwin will be one of the The Feb. 12 and March 12

inductees Radio's AII Considered will also be All of our meetings begin at 12 honored. Larry King will MC noon, are free the program.

SPERDVAC's membership South Pasadena Public Library.

National Public meetings are planned for the Things Lutheran Church in Van Nuys.

> and open to the general



Naomi Lewis (In memory of Dick Mack) **Dorothy Geiger**

(In memory of Milton Geiger) Hy Averback

(In memory of Bob Sweeney and Jerry

Hausner) Tyler McVev

(In memory of Lou Krugman)

Herb Ellis

(In memory of Bob Sweeney & Lou Krugman)

Tim Behrens & Amzie Strickland (In memory of Frank Behrens)

Norman Corwin

(In memory of Byron Kane, Fletcher Markle & John McIntire)

Elliott Reid

(In memory of Howard Duff & John McIntire)

Bill Cook

(In memory of Bob Crosby)

Glenhall Taylor

(In memory of Jerry Hausner)

Jean Gillespie

(In memory of Byron Kane, Howard Duff &

Jerry Hausner) Joe Thompson

(In memory of Jerry Hausner)

Barbara Fuller

(In memory of Bob Jensen & Lenore Kingston)

Bill Lally

(In memory of Lenore Kingston, Jerry

Hausner & Lou Krugman)

Veola Vonn

(In memory of Hanley Stafford & Frank

Nelson)

Jeanette Nolan

(In memory of Jerry Hausner & Carlton E.

Morse)

Bill Stulla

(In memory of J. C. Lewis)

Mary Jane Croft

(In memory of Elliott Lewis, Howard Duff,

John McIntire & Jerry Hausner)

Audry Marsh

(In memory of Andre Baruch, Mari Bell Sharbutt and Lenore Kingston)

Bill James (In memory of Tom Hanley) Lillian Buyeff

(In memory of Lou Krugman and John

Dehner)

Betty Lackow

(In memory of Carlton E. Morse)

Elizabeth Miller

(In memory of Marvin Miller)

Lew Lauria & Betty Lou Gerson

(In memory of Lenore Kingston)

Ace Bryson

(In memory of Lenore Kingston)

Mickey Smith

(In memory of Richard "Peavey" LeGrand)

Tony Randall

(In memory of Charlie Warburton)

Nathan Scott

(In memory of Walter Schumann, Leith

Stevens & Wilbur Hatch)

Bea Wain

(In memory of Andre Baruch)

Lucille Meredith

(In memory of John McIntire & Jerry Hausner) Russell J. Folsom **Bob Hite**

John H. Bunker **Gary Papers** Alice Backes

William Conrad

John Guedel Casey Kasem

Walt Staves

Dr. R. S. Richards Gerold Clemonsen

Sharon Douglas Helen Garrison

Jack Brown Lucia Silvestri Seaman Jacobs John Wrisley June Foray

David Richardson Tom Seslar **Bob LeMond**

Ivan Curv Betsy Weinberg

Jonathon Hole Dick Murphy Gil Stratton Jr.

Stuart Lubin Dan Healy

Mary Jane Croft Lewis Art Gilmore

SPERDVAC is very grateful to these individuals who have contributed \$50 or more to our organization during the past twelve months. Donations, made payable to SPERDVAC, should be mailed to membership chair Carrolyn Rawski. (See SPERDVAC Directory.)

Convention features old and new radio

SPERDVAC will celebrate its 19th anniversary this month when we gather Nov. 12-14 for our annual old-time radio convention.

As always, the convention emphasizes radio of the past, but there are some nods in the direction of the new. The SPERDVAC convention will include re-creations of old-time radio programs Night Beat and Jack Armstrong plus a Bickersons routine written for the occasion and a presentation of Himan Brown's new sers We, the Living.

Convention registration begins Friday, Nov. 12, at 5:30 p.m. The evening banquet and program begin at 7:30. Jay Livingston and Ray Evans will present a revue of many of their award-winning songs and tell some of the stories behind their creations.

Herb Ellis will direct a re-creation of **Night Beat**. Frank Maxwell will portray Randy Stone. The cast features Betty Lou Gerson (who is substituting for Joan Banks, who will be unable to attend), Shirley Mitchell, Barbara Fuller, Alice Backes and Rita Lynn. Dick Tufeld will serve as announcer and Ross Murray and Ray Erlenborn will perform sound effects for the show.

Saturday morning our registration table opens 8:30. At 9 a.m. John Rayburn will present an entertaining look at radio news and sports broadcasts. Gisele McKenzie will, beginning at 10:30 a.m., discuss her musical career. She will include audio and video excerpts of her work.

We have set aside the 11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m. portion for lunch. There are several restaurants available in the area.

A re-creation of Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy begins at 1 p.m. The episode "Phantom of the Sawdust Trail," originally aired July 25, 1947, will star

Charles Flynn

Flynn, who starred on the series for 12 years, will be joined by Amzie Strickland, Carl Boyer, Jack Lester and Art Hern. Lone Ranger announcer Fred Foy will perform the announcing chores of the show.

Kay St. Germain and arrangerconductor Van Alexander will host a panel discussion of big band radio broadcasts. Their presentation runs from 2:45 to 4 p.m.

Morey Amsterdam will join us at 4:15 to discuss his writing and

performing work in radio and television. Amsterdam will also talk about some of the poopular songs he wrote. His presentation will conclude at 5:30.

A no host bar will open at 6 p.m. Following the cocktail hour, our evening banquet and program begin at 7.

Clint and Scott Comerford have written a new visit with John and Blanche Bickerson. Phil Rapp, creator of the Bickerson characters, has kindly

Continued on page 3

Convention guests

These radio pioneers plan to join us at the SPERDVAC convention:

Ace Bryson Sol Saks Alice Backes Himan Brown Barbara Fuller Jeanette Nolan Parley Baer Burgess Meredith Mel Morehouse John Rayburn ընըըօթեր ընթը Jeanne Bates ROSS MURRAY FRANK "JUNIOR" COGHLAN Ray Erlenborn DON DIAMOND June Foray Charles Flynn Gred Goy Gladys Holland Richard Beals Stacy Keach Sr. Don Messick EDDY KING Peggy Webber Sean McClory Jerry D. Lewis Art Dorn Dick Tufeld Charles Michelson Carl Bover Bob O'Brien William Alland Jack Brown Jay Ranellucci Phil Cohan Tyler McVey Esther Geddes Lina Romay Don Knotts Lew Lauria Betty Lou Gerson Amzie Strickland Art Gilmore George Pirrone Frank Thomas Larry Rhine Pot Wolsh Hazel Shermet Morey Amsterdam Kay St. Germain Van Alexander WILLARD WATERMAN Bob Mott BILL ZUCKERT IVAN CURY CHARLES FLYNN Gary Floyd Clint Comertord Jack Lester Gisele McKenzie

SPERDVAC convention

Continued from page 3

given us permission present this comedy routine. Parley Baer will appear as John Bickerson.

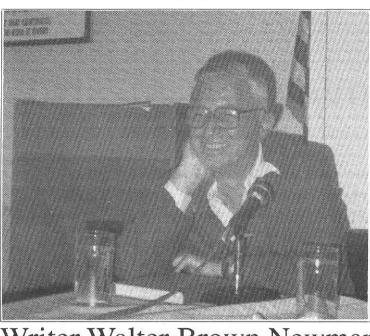
Legendary radio director Himan Brown will present an episode from his new radio series **We**, **the Living**. The Saturday evening program will star Burgess Meredith, Jeanette Nolan and Elliott Reid.

On Sunday our brunch program

begins at 9 a.m. Radio-cartoon voice pros June Foray, Richard Beals and Don Messick will be our special guests.

For the benefit of those planning to leave Los Angeles on Sunday afternoon, we expect to conclude our convention by 11:30 a.m.

The convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza, 5985 W. Century Blvd., Los Angeles. Free shuttle service is available from LAX.



Walter Brown Newman told SPERDVAC about his radio writing career in 1989.

Writer Walter Brown Newman dies

Radio writer Walter Brown Newman died Oct. 14. He was 77.

Newman was teaching navigation during World War II when he saw a bulletin board notice announcing a play writing contest for members of the armed forces. He was one of the first prize winners.

"I said to myself, 'Some day this war is going to end. If I get a chance, I will write,'" he told SPERDVAC in a 1989 interview.

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.

Newman wrote numerous radio scripts while practicing his new-found art, then presented a suitcase full of them

to the Sam Jaffee Agency in Hollywood. Within a few days several of the scripts were sold.

"Those scripts would go for anywhere from \$250 to \$400," he said. "Suddenly I had money and I was a real, live writer."

Newman wrote for comedy shows, including **The Halls of Ivy**. Most of his radio writing credits are for dramatic programs, including **Suspense**, **Escape** and **Columbia Workshop**. He also wrote the first radio **Gunsmoke** script.

After the radio era ended, Newman wrote for television and films. He received Oscar nominations for "Cat Ballou" in 1965 and "Blood Brothers" in 1978.

Hugh Douglas dies



Long-time radio announcer Hugh Douglas, 78, died in his sleep Sept. 1.

Douglas was an announcer at CBS during the forties and fidties. His credits include CBS Radio Workshop and Have Gun, Will Travel.

Perhaps his most famous words on the airwaves were included in a TV tuna commercial: "Sorry, Charlie!"

In 1987 Douglas returned to the SPERDVAC microphone when he served as announcer on our re-creation of **The Great Gildersleeve**. The photo above was taken on that occasion.

Passing Parade: Radio actress Fran Carlon, 80, died Oct. 4. Her credits include regular roles on Big Town and Mary Marlin plus appearences on Inner Sanctum, Mysterious Traveler and other shows originating from New York. . . Edith Meiser, 95, died Sept. 26. Formerly a Broadway stage actress, she wrote numerous Sherlock Holmes scripts in the thirties and forties. . . Charlotte Lawrence, 72, died Oct. 20. She was an actress on Lux Radio Theatre, Suspense, CBS Radio Workshop, and many more of Hollywood radio's top network shows.

Old Time Radio Fans!



Join us for the 1993 SPERDVAC Old Time Radio

Convention

Friday - Saturday - Sunday November 12, 13 & 14

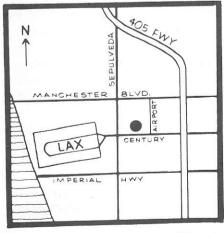
RE-CREATIONS WORKSHOPS BANQUETS PANEL DISCUSSIONS COLLECTORS' ROOM

Himan Brown Burgess Jeanette (CBS Radio Mystery Theater) Meredith Nolan

Morey Amsterdam A Don Knotts

Jack Armstrong re-creation Stars Charles Flynn and a cast of radio pros

Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Hotel



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Night Beat re-creation
Stars Frank Maxwell with Betty Lou
Gerson, Shirley Mitchell, Barbara Fuller,
Rita Lynn & Alice Backes

Gisele McKenzie
June Foray
Richard Beals and many more!

Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy P. O. Box 7177, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7177 (310) 947-9800

SPERDVAC 1993 Old Time Radio Convention Registration Form [] Non-member [] Member #____ Address City State Zip Day phone Night Phone Special diet requirements_____ NOTE: If you wish to be seated with your friends, please send all reservations in together. **CONVENTION RATES:** 1. Complete convention package (Friday, Saturday & Sunday) \$115.00 3. Saturday daytime activities (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) \$15.00 TOTAL: [] check here if you worked in early radio.

Send checks or money orders, payable to SPERDVAC, to: SPERDVAC Convention, c/o Chester Allen, 13415 Egbert St., Sylmar, CA 91342. For additional details or to volunteer convention assistance, call Larry Gassman at (310) 947-9800.

You're invited to the . . . 1993 SPERDVAC Old Time Radio Convention!

SPERDVAC's 1993 Old Time Radio Convention is set for November 12, 13 and 14. The convention site is the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza, 5985 W. Century Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90045.

Registration begins at 5:30 p.m. Friday. The dinner and the program begin at 7:30 p.m. The Collectors' Room will be in operation Saturday from 9:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. Our Saturday workshops and panel discussions run from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. One afternoon presentation will feature actor-writer Morey Amsterdam. There is no lunch planned as part of the convention package. However, we have allotted the 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. slot for lunch. Our Saturday evening banquet and show begin at 7:00 p.m. We plan to conclude the Friday and Saturday night presentations at about 10:30 p.m. Sunday's brunch and program will run from 9:00 until 11:30 a.m. (Check out time for hotel patrons is 12 noon.)

Scheduled activities include banquets on Friday and Saturday evenings. There will be three radio show re-creations. Friday night we will present Night Beat with Betty Lou Gerson, Shirley Mitchell, Barbara Fuller, Alice Backes, Rita Lynn and Frank Maxwell.

Charles Flynn, radio's Jack Armstrong, will star in a Saturday afternoon re-creation of Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy. Don Knotts and Ivan Cury, both from the Bobby Bensen radio show, will also be on hand. Another Saturday event will be a panel on big band broadcasts with singer Kay St. Germain and arranger-conductor Van Alexander. Gisele McKenzie will appear at 10:30 a.m.

Saturday evening's banquet will include a production of the upcoming radio series We, the Living. It will be directed by the program's creator, Himan Brown, known for his earlier work on Inner Sanctum, The Goldbergs and CBS Radio Mystery Theater. The show will star Jeanette Nolan and Burgess Meredith with Elliott Reid.

During meals and presentations, SPERDVAC will observe the "First Nighter Policy"—smoking in the outer lobby only, please! Admission to the complete convention is \$115. For the benefit of those unable to attend the entire weekend, we are offering rates for specific events, which are indicated on the registration form. Registration packets will be distributed at the door. Your cancelled check will serve as your receipt.

Because of the popularity of our guests and re-creations, we highly recommend advance reservations. We cannot guarantee seating availability for those who do not purchase tickets prior to the convention. Members and guests who wish to be seated together during banquet meals must send their reservations in together. We are not able to alter seating arrangements during the convention.

Dealers' tables will be available, for \$20 each for SPERDVAC members and \$30 each for non-members, for those who wish to sell radio-related items in our Collectors' Room Saturday. (Unauthorized sales of unlicensed radio broadcasts are prohibited.) Dealers wishing to attend events outside the Collectors' Room must register for those events. To reserve a table, contact Catherine Passarelli at 10615 Butterfield Road, Los Angeles, CA 90064.

The Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza has accommodations available for those who wish to stay overnight. The special SPERDVAC convention rate is \$78.66 per room per night, including 14% bed tax for one or two persons. The rate for three or four persons per room is \$90.06 per night, including 14% bed tax. To take advantage of these rates contact the hotel directly and specify you are attending the SPERDVAC convention. The hotel also offers a special \$4.00 per day parking rate for tickets validated by SPERDVAC. Campers, motor homes and trailers may park in the valet parking lot behind the hotel. Valet parking is \$9.00 per day. Shuttle service from Los Angeles International Airport is available free by phoning the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza from the airport. Their number is (310) 642-7500. The hotel has a gift shop and a Budget Rent-a-Car counter in the lobby.





McGee's Closet is a free service to our members and honorary members. Send your wants in OTR-related material to McGee's Closet, c/o Barbara J. Watkins, P.O. Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91031. Please specify desired taping format (cassette or open reel).

Wanted: Information or tape of the Mel Blanc Show of Jan. 7, 1947. Show title is "The Broken Caruso Record." Contact: Clyde Smith, (800) 342-3748, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. EST.

Wanted: Need a copy of a Lone Ranger log. Contact or send immediately. Payment of current price absolutely promised if sent immediately. Contact: Bob Sabon, 308 West Oraibi Dr., Phoenix, AZ 85027.

Wanted: Source of supply for tapes, records or electrical transcriptions of 1930's **Seth Parker** radio series by Phillips H. Lord. Episodes needed for a proposed Lord Museum Exhibit at Northeast Historic Films of Bucksport. Contact: Norman C. Gallant, 385 Western Ave., Augusta, ME 04330.

Wanted: Cassette copy Theatre Guild on the Air (aka U. S. Steel Hour) "Prologue to Glory" 5-11-1952. Will buy. Contact: Susan Bluttman, 4601 Connecticut Ave., NW, Apt. 521, Washington, D.C. 20008.

For Sale or trade: 500+ open reel tapes of science fiction shows. Contact: Bill Mueller, 18645 Hatteras St. #167, Tarzana, CA 91356.

For sale: The following open reel tape recorders: Realistic TR 300D, model 14-700, 3-motor, 3-head, logic control; Wollensak model T-1500; Roberts 1640; General Electric TP-1300BWD-A; Sony TC-500, multimotor; Realistic TR 100, stereo component music center; TEAC A-2050, 3-speed; TEAC A-1500. Would like to sell all together. Contact: Bill Hardin, (714) 522-5722. Free: Monthly Program Guides: KPCC Pasadena, 1984; KCRW Santa Monica, 1983-1993. You pay UPS shipping cost of approximately 12 pounds. And, Wanted: Episode 25 of McTeague on open reel or cassette. For sale: SONY open reel tape recorders, 2-speed stereo, 7-1/2" reels, excellent condition, Model TC-660, \$275. Write for complete specifications and information. Contact: Don Schubert, 22935 Fonthill Ave., Torrance, CA 90505-2834, (310) 325-6072.

SPERDVAC Directory

All articles and artwork © 1993 by SPERDVAC unless otherwise indicated. Published monthly except December by the Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy, a California non-profit public benefit corporation. Membership is open to all U.S. residents. Dues are \$25 for the first year and \$15 for renewals. Annual subscriptions to the Radiogram ONLY are \$15 in the U.S., Canada and Mexico and \$20 to other countries.

SPERDVAC INFORMATION AND OFFICIAL BUSINESS: P. O. Box 7177, Van Nuys, CA 91409-9712. (310) 947-9800.

MEMBERSHIP AND RADIOGRAM SUBSCRIPTIONS, CATALOG PAGES AND LIBRARY ORDER FORMS: Carrolyn Rawski, 7430 Gaviota Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91406-3041.

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AUDIO SPERDVAC CATALOGS: Contact Bob Herman, 1329 Garrison Ave., Port Orchard, WA 98366-3321 (206) 876-5850. (For blind members only.)

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

ACQUISITIONS: (Discs, tapes & printed materials): John Gassman, Box 1163, Whittier, CA 90603. (310) 947-9800 for both General and Archives Libraries.

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The publisher's price is \$39.95 + tax & \$3 shipping. But for all SPERDVAC fans the special price for a postage-free, autographed copy, is just \$35.00! A savings of more than \$8! But hurry. This is your last chance at this special low price.

Here's how to get your copy! Send your check to:

Robert Mott Box 1173

Arroyo Grande, CA 93420

Please specify how you would like your book autographed. And to all of my friends at SPERDVAC, have a wonderful and joyous holiday season!

Covering war news with

Bob Trout

by Dan Haefele

Covering war-related events during World War II as they were happening meant for Bob Trout that he had to work with few notes. "There wasn't much use in taking notes in with us," he said in a 1992 interview.

"Following the events of the war hour by hour almost every day, I had in my mind all the details of recent events. We relied on what came in on the news wires, which was often sparse. That meant a lot of repetition and sometimes ad libbing while praying inwardly that something would come to me soon and I could grab it and read it."

Most of Trout's shortwave broadcasts to the states originated from a studio rented from the British Broadcasting Corporation.

"We had a news studio that Paul White, the news director at CBS, had built as the war was nearing in Europe," he said.

The studio was a glass enclosed room situated next to the director's office, which was also glass walled. "We could throw signals back and forth," the veteran newscaster explained.

News director White, in New York, was responsible for arranging the reports from various points in Europe, which were aired live via short wave radio.

"Paul had on his desk an implement which was known as 'Paul's Piano.' He could push buttons and get London or some Asian ports, perhaps, and after D-Day he had (available) other points all over Europe," Trout explained.

"But he'd have to set it up ahead of time," he said.
"Let's say he wanted somebody in London to come on the air quickly. It wasn't all that quick because the person in London would have to get the telephone call from Paul

Continued on next page



War news from Bob Trout conclusion

in New York and go over to the BBC, which was several blocks away, and go up to the newsroom. The arrangements had to be made technically.

"We had a little studio of our own in the BBC building which was used by the American networks," he added.

"The newsroom was a room with teletype machines with the wire services coming into us. The room lead right into the news broadcasting studio where the broadcasting would normally be done. For something like the D-Day arrangement I was using a microphone with a long cable. I would read the material as it came in on the teletype writers," he said.

Behind the scenes, Trout had to be concerned with writing reports which would be approved by the British military censors.

And, there were off-the-air arrangements which helped keep his broadcasts on the air.

"I'd go to the studio 10 or 15 minutes early," he explained. "A voice would come on (over the earphones) — an Englishman who I talked to every day but I never met -

and he's say, 'Hello, London. This is Tech.' He was somewhere between London and the coast — I don't know where — in England.

"He'd ask me for a voice level and he'd check details with me before I was going to go on. Then he'd say, "All right, London. I'll cut you through now.' Paul or someone would say 'What have you got?' and I'd tell them what my piece was about so it could be introduced properly... Then he'd throw a switch and I could hear the program from New York."

CBS had to purchase blocks of broadcast time from the BBC. "New York would have to buy a certain length of time. A minimum amount of time was ten minutes," he said. "My spot would take maybe two minutes, so I would have eight minutes left over. We would use that (time) mostly before I went on. We could use that time to arrange the next assignment that I was to have."

Trout lives in Madrid, Spain and is employed by ABC. Last year he returned to the states to cover the political conventions, a tradition for him since the early part of his career.

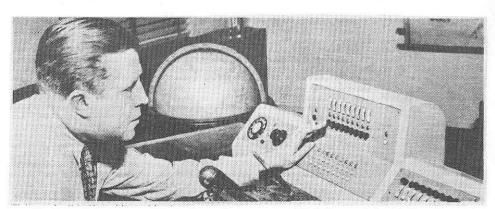
"I was working for a little independent station in Virginia — it was my first radio job," he recalled. "CBS was so small they didn't even have a station in the nation's capitol. ... CBS bought this little station and moved it to Washington and I was one of the two survivors. I went along with the property and went on the network then."

The station, which became WTOP, was temporarily off the air during the 1932 conventions. Unable to cover the events. Trout listened to them on the radio.

"I thought, 'Oh, this is marvelous. I wish I was there,' he recalled.

"The station reopened Oct. 20th, just before the 1932 election, and I did work on the election coverage, which was Roosevelt's victory over Hoover," he explained. "But I didn't get to go to a convention until four years later. . . I've never missed any of them since then."

This article is based on a telephone interview with Bob Trout conducted by John and Larry Gassman for their program on KPCC-FM, Pasadena.



Paul White, Director of News Broadcasting for CBS during World War II, at the control board he used to connect reporters broadcasting from Europe. The device was known as "Paul's Piano."

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Locate shows in SPERDVAC's libraries Send 98 cents in postage to Carrolyn Rawski Her address is in the SPERDVAC Directory



SPERDVAC

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Actor Vincent Price dies



Vincent Price during a rehearsal for **The Saint** at NBC in 1950.

Famed actor Vincent Price died Oct. 26 at age 82.

In addition to his film career, Price appeared frequently on radio. He was appearing in various theater productions in New York during the late thirties when be began acting on radio soap operas.

Later he would guest on such shows as the Rudy Vallee Show, Lux Radio Theatre, Hollywood Star Playhouse and Family Theatre. He was a guest on several of radio's top comedy shows, including The Jack Benny Show, Sealtest Village Store and Duffy's Tavern.

For three seasons he was the star of the radio detective drama **The Saint**.

During World War II, Price appeared on many of the Armed Forces Radio Service programs. Several times he was a guest on **Command Performance**.

Mr. Price served as one of the hosts of the **Sears Radio Theatre** series Elliott Lewis produced in the late seventies.

In 1984 he donated his radio show transcription discs and master tapes to SPERDVAC.