

*FRIENDLY  
 RETIRED  
 OPTIMISTIC  
 GENTLE PEOPLE  
 SEE BE ESSERS*

*October 2009*

## Best Laid Plans—CBS Alumni Picnic September 10th

CBS Alumni Fall 2009



*Julie and Peggy Davis with Frog Cookies  
 Photo by Brigit Drake*

Here's the thing – Each year we monitor the beginning of the school year so we can schedule our picnic after the kids are in school. That's just what we did this year. On the day after school started, my friend, Julie, and I arrived at Clover Park in Santa Monica at 10:15 am with balloons, the picnic sign, easel, green plastic tablecloths, duct tape to hold them in place, and three dozen frog cookies baked by Julie.

Driving into the parking lot, we noticed there were an unusual amount of cars and, alas, SCHOOL BUSES! In our lovely shaded picnic area were a ZILLION high school students milling around and having a great time. I found out from one of the teachers they were “celebrating” the first day of school? Who knew?

Julie and I scurried around finding other tables... all in the sun and about 40 yards apart, but we started tying down the balloons and duct taping the tablecloths anyway. Turned out we all ended up at one table, partially shaded.

Some of us laid out blankets under the trees and attempted to lower ourselves down into a sitting position, all the time wondering if we could get back up again!

Our “diehard” group included Jerry Colet, StanThorsen, Ben Wolf (Stan and Ben took pity on the rest of us and had tuna fish sandwiches instead of their last year's choice of Sardines), George and Judy Sunga, Cappy Cappleman and Bob Norvet, Tom and Rosemarie Goodwin, Dee Baker, Julie and me, Brigit and Jim Drake who brought their darling two-year-old granddaughter, River, (she didn't seem to have any problem with the blanket seating arrangements).

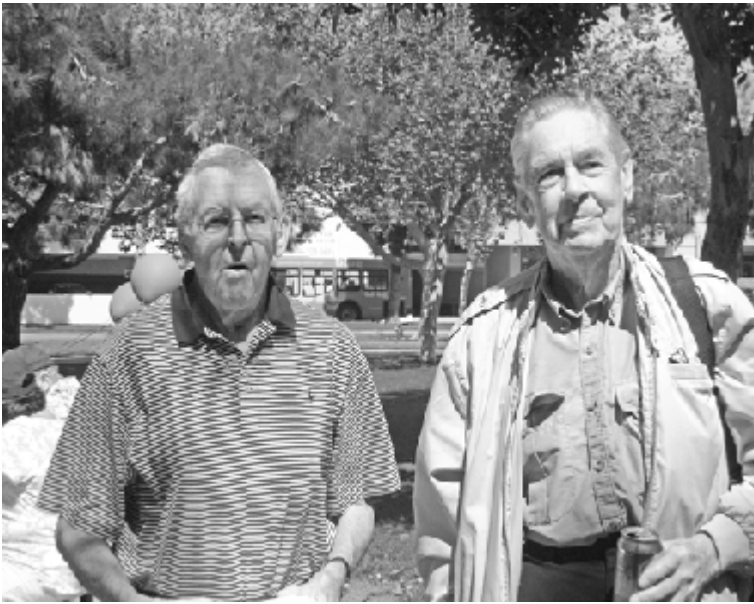
Dan & Roz Gingold arrived but had to leave as they were not able to be in the sun. Sorry guys. In spite of the various obstacles, we had a good time and enjoyed the heck out of the Frog cookies. See more pictures on next page. ~ *peggy davis*

***Mark your Calendars!***

**Sunday, Nov. 1st, 11:00 AM.**

Gala Luncheon at California Yacht Club, Marina Del Rey.

See Reservation mail-in application on page 8.



*Bob Norvet and Cappy arrive at picnic*



*Peggy Davis, Jerry Colet and George Sunga enjoy shady spot under a tree. All Photo's on this page by Brigit Drake.*



*Judy Sunga, Tom and Rosemarie Goodwin*



*Ben Wolfe sat down on the blanket but couldn't get up.*



*Newest dues paying addition to CBS Alumni. Jim and Brigit Drake's granddaughter, River.*

**COLUMN ONE: By  
Dan Gingold  
NTG REDUX**



*When last we read about “Granny,” Nils Thor Granlund, in the Summer newsletter, he was happily chug-a-lugging a quart of Wilshire Club soda. This was his routine following each act on “Hollywood Road to Fame,” the amateur show he hosted on KNXT in the early 50’s sponsored by Wilshire Club beverages. There’s more to the story.*

The Wilshire Club commercials were done live on-camera by Bill Harpel, one of the great early TV announcers, gifted, funny and just a bit wacky. Bill had perfected a technique of pre-recording his script on a “wire” recorder (no tape in those days—and before teleprompters,) then playing it back through a tiny earplug. When the stage manager (me) cued him, he would start the machine with his (shoeless) toe and repeat back the words he had recorded earlier. It made for a flawless presentation.

Unfortunately, Bill never anticipated “Murphy’s Law” (what can go wrong will go wrong.) And so it did one evening. I threw him his cue. He tripped the button on the machine with his stockinged toe and opened his mouth to speak. OMG! His toe had mistakenly found the “fast-forward” button. The machine took off at full speed, leaving Bill speechless, eyes popping with surprise but no words coming forth from his slack jaw. There he stood, momentarily helpless in a classic case of on-camera panic. Fortunately, the moment passed and, ever the pro, he gathered his wits and ad-libbed his way through. I never knew what happened to the recorder after that near death experience, but I suspect it suffered a final mortal contact with his foot, this time encased in his size 11 boot.

Footnote: Harpel, like many announcers, had a wickedly sharp sense of humor and an insatiable appetite for practical jokes. One memorable stunt, which I admit to aiding & abetting, almost cost us Wilshire Club’s sponsorship. Granny’s habit of guzzling soda direct from the bottle after each act prompted Bill to smuggle in a bottle of vodka. After Granny would hit the soda bottle, a prop man retrieved it until the next act. And each time, off stage, Bill would top off the bottle with a splash of vodka. It wasn’t long before Granny became slightly unstable, his speech tongue-tangled and a puzzled ex-

pression crossed his happy-confused face. And though he heroically held his ground to show’s end, he never guessed what was happening, even as he saw us all choking back our thinly disguised mirth.

In the booth it wasn’t all that funny. Director Elbert Walker had a painful task of pacifying the outraged agency suits. But before long they, too, had to admit it was quite a show. Why we weren’t all fired I’ll never know, but one thing we learned for sure was that Wilshire Club and Vodka was never going to make it as a popular cocktail.

## **Columbia Square Update**

A public hearing on plans for revitalizing the Columbia Square site will be held Thursday, November 12, at Los Angeles City Hall. Anyone interested in attending and speaking in support, please contact Sheila Gonzaga, Marathon Communications at (323) 655-4660. The hearings are vitally important to the success of saving the “Square” and all positive (passionate) testimony from veteran CBS people will help.

Frog Committee members George Sunga, Dan Gingold and Jim Hergenrather have met with the owner/developers of Columbia Square to express our firm support for their plans to preserve the original building. We provided them with historical, anecdotal and graphic material, including a DVD of the “Sentimental Journey” video produced by Dan and Phil Ronney. They had little or no prior understanding of the historic nature of the Square and were both impressed and excited about the suggestions we made for restoration. We will continue to meet with AREA PROPERTY PARTNERS and their PR representatives, MARATHON COMMUNICATIONS to offer positive input. *Dan gingold*

# Cappy's Corner—The Golden Age of Television

## “Famous Places Where We Worked”



In addition to 1313 Vine, Columbia Square, TV City, and Studio Center we produced programs on remote from many famous venues.



### PAN PACIFIC AUDITORIUM

This was a landmark structure that once stood in the Fairfax District at 7600 Beverly Boulevard near the site of Gilmore Field, an early baseball venue predating Dodger Stadium. Studios 36 and 46 at TV City now stand on the site of Gilmore Field.

“Pan-Pac” opened in 1935 and was noted as one of the finest examples of Streamlined Moderne Architecture in the United States. The green and white façade faced west, was 228 feet long and had four stylized towers and flagpoles meant to evoke upswept aircraft fins. The auditorium sprawled over 100,000 square feet and had seating for up to 6000.

Throughout the following thirty years the Pan-Pacific would host the Ice Capades and the Harlem Globe Trotters, serve as home to the Los Angeles Monarchs of the Pacific Coast Hockey League along with UCLA ice hockey, UCLA men’s basketball, professional tennis, car shows, political rallies and circuses. General Dwight Eisenhower spoke to a crowd of over 10,000 there in 1952 just before being elected President.

In November 1960 we televised Vice President Richard Nixon addressing a national audience. There were only three participants seated on the podium and I became involved in a rather animated discussion with the Los Angeles Fire Department over the construction of the platform.

We wished to use stage “parallels” to support the floor of the platform as we had many of these available in our Carpenter Shop. The Fire Department insisted on steel “Patent scaffolding”, which seemed a waste of money. Finally we yielded to their demand. When the televised program was over, dozens of audience members jumped up on the platform to shake hands with the speakers. I nearly had a heart attack. The stage parallels would have collapsed under all that weight, but the Safeway scaffolding held. This was what is now called “a learning experience.”

### THE AMBASSADOR HOTEL



The Ambassador was located at 3400 Wilshire Blvd. and occupied over 23 acres. The hotel and its’ facilities were regularly used as a set for television and film, perhaps fitting for a place where six Academy Awards ceremonies were held. For decades the hotel’s Coconut Grove was THE hot spot for live entertainment on the West Coast, where people like Bing Crosby, and Barbara Streisand had their start. Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis, Jr. Gene Kelly, Judy Garland, Louis Armstrong, Nat King Cole and Julie Andrews all played The Grove.

Presidents Hoover, Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon stayed there.

In 1968 Senator Robert F. Kennedy made his California Primary victory speech in the Embassy Room. Once again, the Los Angeles Fire department had warned us that many political organizations rent a room smaller than they really need, and that the room could be mobbed. This time we placed our cameras on higher metal scaffolding and at their advice padded the ends of the platform so that if there were a mob rush people would not be injured if they ran into it. When the Senator was shot by Sirhan Sirhan in a pantry nearby we were able to get a hand-held camera into the hallway and our platform cameras captured the ensuing pandemonium with no reported injuries. It’s hard to believe that was over 40 years ago.

Next issue: More famous locations where we worked.

# Memories of Columbia Square



By Tom Bernstein

**This is a continuation of Tom Bernstein's "Memories of Columbia Square" from our Fall Newsletter.**

The parking lot, a unique status symbol at most major studios, was always something special – my name on my own parking space.

Network Radio drama and entertainment programming finally died (killed by something called TV), and KNX Radio Management, Programming, Sales and Promotion/Publicity, moved into the tower (the studios and newsroom were already there). I ended up in a tiny cube on the third floor (thanks George!).



A KNX retirement tradition, was giving you your name-plate, framed, and in effect, retiring your parking space with you. Mine hangs over the TV on my own trophy room.



My next promotion took me up one floor (4th) to work on the Housewives Protective League radio program, coordinating tie-ins for the program's advertisers with their retailers. Nicer office over the courtyard. From there, I ventured out to see what the world was like beyond CBS.

Some good times, some not so, but I always yearned to return some day, and I did. In 1985, was privileged to join the sales staff of KNX NEWSRADIO, Southern California's most prestigious radio station. Although I saw Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney record shows for Network Radio (barely – they blocked the studio windows so couldn't see Bing without his hair piece – he wore a hat, or the way overweight Rosemary), I'm sorry I missed the Columbia Records era.



Dan Rather and Tom Bernstein pose in front of old microphones. Photo courtesy of Tom Bernstein

On my return, the occupancy of Columbia Square had changed dramatically. Gone were Personnel (now Human Resources), Finance, Legal (to TV City), Columbia Records (to Century City), and Paley's West Coast Office. KNX FM had come out of the closet and now occupied most of the 4th and all of the 5th floors. The Penthouse, once CBS West Coast Headquarters, was now the security and building maintenance office. The once marvelous Sunset Blvd. entrance and Courtyard had long been closed and fenced in. Admission into the building was now through tight security at the artist entrance. What was left of Network Radio moved into the old Studio One space in the Tower.

Dan Rather visited Columbia Square on at least two occasions, and each time couldn't have made a better impression. During the first, he was available to everyone. He came to the KNX newsradio conference room and spoke to the assembled staff, then graciously posed for pictures with anyone who wanted one. He did his evening newscast, live, from Columbia Square's tower roof, before being suddenly called back to cover a major hurricane in Florida. For his next visit, KNXT hosted a big, client party for him in the courtyard. Again, he couldn't have been more cooperative and charming.

Bob Crane was no longer the main attraction on the second floor, but KNX NEWSRADIO won numerous Golden Mikes, Marconi, Peabody and many other prestigious awards which were displayed throughout the second and third floors - the Peabody's and Marconi's, proudly in George's office.

## *CBS Alumni Tribute Fund*

*A tribute has been made in honor of Jane Cappleman  
By Roxie Evans.*

*Thank you for your generous contribution.*

### **THE CBS ALUMNI TRIBUTE FUND**

Your CBS Alumni Committee has made available to the membership a special way to express wishes for recovery from an illness, honor special occasions or remember friends and loved ones who have passed away. It is called the CBS Alumni Tribute Fund.

You may contact Ebba Johnson (818.782.8244) for further information. She will provide a user-friendly form for you to fill out. Return the form along with a contribution made out to the CBS Alumni Tribute Fund to Ebba and she will take care of the rest. The recipient will be notified of your contribution to the Tribute Fund and your thoughtful remembrance will be acknowledged in the newsletter.

Your contribution will be placed in the CBS Alumni Tribute Fund to be used specifically for the support and acquisition of materials for our archives, reproduction of photographs, storage, graphics and text for a permanent display to perpetuate the legacy of our wonderful history.

### **TLC NEEDED**

The following members have had some rough times lately:

Bob Schulz fell and broke his knee. He is currently in rehab receiving Physical Therapy at The Center Park West, Wilbur Ave. Room 16A, Reseda, CA 91335, Phone 818.788.3533. Visitors welcome.

Bob Wagner was injured when he was hit by a SUV while riding his bicycle. He had to go through skin grafting on his shin. His cell phone is 714.943.5874

Terry Hensey suffered a double aneurysm of his aorta and the loss of circulation required the amputation of his right leg below the knee. According to Jan, he is making good progress. Email: [scouse@bellsouth.net](mailto:scouse@bellsouth.net), cell 904.910.0345

Mike Kane is recovering from a severe case of the Shingles. Email: [maish@dc.rr.com](mailto:maish@dc.rr.com), phone: 619.360.1812

I'm sure they would love to hear from you.  
~Peggy Davis

### **NEW MEMBERS**

**Michael Brockman** – was the only person to head up Daytime & Children's Programming for all three networks – ABC, CBS & NBC. And, Late night at CBS. He is currently Assistant Treasurer and Board Member for the Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters.

**Karen Winchell**—currently Mgr. Guest Relations, TVC. Previously Bob Norvett and Cappy Cappleman's Executive Assistant.

## YOUR COMMITTEE

**George Sunga, (Pres.) & Judy Sunga**  
(First Lady) 2430 Rinconia Dr., Los Angeles, CA  
90068 (323/467-7220)

**Jerry Colet** (e-mails & e-mail changes) 2051  
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**Tom Richmond**, (Correspondent/  
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**Ebba Johnson** (Communications)  
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**Philip Ronney** (Newsletter Editor) 18411  
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4601)

**Stanley Thorsen** (Consultant) 4379 Mentone  
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(310/839-5451)

**Ben Wolf**, (Dues) 1480 Canfield Ave. #204,  
Los Angeles, CA 90035  
(310/ 201-8453)

**Dan Gingold** (Member at Large)  
3540 Beverly Ridge Dr., Sherman Oaks,  
CA. 91423 (818/784 4368)

**Charles Cappleman** (Member a Large)  
5420 Garden Grove, Tarzana CA. 91356  
(818/342-1302)

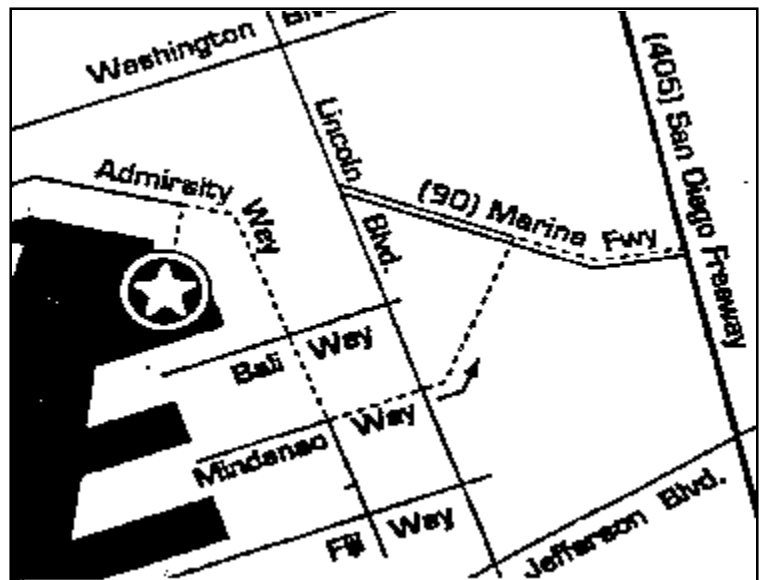
**Bob Schulz** (emeritus member) 15448  
Greenleaf St. Sherman Oaks, Calif. 91403.  
(818/783-2302)



(left to right) Que Card Guy, Larry Neely, Jimmy Rice, Ray Charles, Don Helvey and Glen Campbell, Photo from Don Helvey



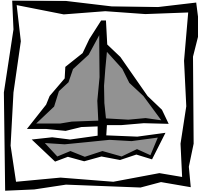
CBS Strike—(L-R) Dick Oldaker, Unknown Lady, Don Helvey and his children. Photo supplied by Don Helvey who now lives in Payson, Utah He wants to be remembered to his former co-workers.



Map to California Yacht Club. Check next page for reservation mail in coupon.

# THE CBS ALUMNI

proudly presents



## Our 24th ANNUAL LUNCHEON



come join us at the  
California Yacht Club  
4469 Admiralty Way, Marina del Rey  
Sunday, November 1, 2009  
Attitude Adjustment Hour **11:00A**-No Host Bar  
Luncheon at **12:15PM**

### *Le Menu*

*Mixed Green Salad with Pears & Caramelized Walnuts*

*Breast of Chicken stuffed with Spinach & Feta  
In a White Wine Butter Sauce*

*or*

*Sauteed Catalina San Dabs*

*or*

*Oven Baked Vegetarian Lasagna served with Italian Vegetables  
(vegetarian)*

*Dessert: Warm Apple Pie A-La-Mode served individually with Ice Cream  
Coffee and/or Iced Tea*

**Cost: 39.50 per person, includes tax and tip**  
*Relatives and friends welcome*

**CALIFORNIA YACHT CLUB REQUIRES PAYMENT IN ADVANCE NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 23rd.** Please fill in the form below, include your **check made out to CBS Alumni** and mail to: **Ben Wolf, 1480 Canfield Ave. #204, Los Angeles, CA 90035** before **October 23rd** at the latest. Choice of entrée **may not be changed** at the luncheon table. Reservations are made in the order received, so why not write your check today? **Tickets not available at the door.**

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Number of people @ \$39.50 \_\_\_\_\_

**Please print all information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken \_\_\_\_\_ Sand Dabs \_\_\_\_\_ Lasagna \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken \_\_\_\_\_ Sand Dabs \_\_\_\_\_ Lasagna \_\_\_\_\_

Mail receipt to: Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address (ok to publish in Newsletter) \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Guests: