



# VALLEY BROADCAST LEGENDS

Issue #125 "Honoring the Past, Sharing the Present, Embracing the Future in Media"

February 2022

## President's Message: You Never Know Who You'll Meet

by VBL President **Jim Drennan**



As I've said before, you never know who you're going to find yourself living with in a place where I now live: the Sunrise of Carmichael assisted living facility. My prime example: a lady named **Vish**, (short for Visnja). Vish talks often of her beloved father, how he was a friend to all when the family lived in Croatia, and how he had to spirit the family out of Croatia to escape the Communists and make it to safety in

Southern California where he became a contractor.

"That's a great story," I said to Vish at lunch the other day. "What was his name?" I asked.

"Artukovic," she replied.

So I decided to try my luck and Google the name Artukovic. What I found was startling. A *New York Times* article dated Jan. 19, 1988, was headlined: **Andrija Artukovic**, 88, Nazi Ally Deported to Yugoslavia, Is Dead. The article told of the final fate of Artukovic, "a former leader of the Nazi puppet state of Croatia who had been condemned to death for mass murder. ... He was 88 years old and had won a stay of execution on the ground of poor health."

I showed the article to Vish and she tearfully responded, "That's my father."

Most of the article corresponded with accounts Vish had given me: her family's decision to leave Croatia for the US after World War II, his successful life as a contractor in Seal Beach, his ultimate extradition to the former Yugoslavia, the size and names of her family. What she had not mentioned was that as an official in the Nazi puppet state of Croatia, her father was held responsible for ordering the machine-gunning of hundreds of civilians, with the killing of more than 700,000 other Serbs, Jews, Croats and gypsies. Vish denies any wrongdoing on the part of her dad.

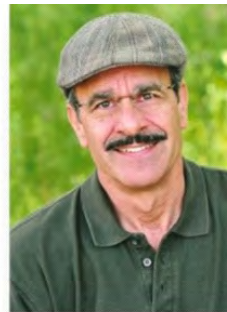
In any event, the battle over Mr. Artukovic's forced repatriation went on three decades while they lived their lives

Continued on next page

## Dave and Bob Reunion at February Meeting



**Dave Williams**



**Bob Nathan**

Valley Broadcast Legends is getting a head start on KFBK's centennial year (see related story elsewhere in this newsletter) at our February 10 meeting, as we'll be hosting a reunion of the fabled morning team of **Dave Williams** and **Bob Nathan**.

The Zoom event begins at 11:00 a.m. Watch your email for the Zoom link, going out a day or two in advance.

Dave and Bob ruled Sacramento's morning airwaves in the 1980s and early 1990s, winning every conceivable "best of" award for local radio news personalities. The team first came together in 1981 at KGNR, then were lured away by KFBK in 1985. With their easy-going, friendly patter in between hard news and traffic

Continued on next page

## What, Zooming Again?

Yes, we're Zooming again.

We heard from around 50 members when VBL World Headquarters conducted a poll in mid-January to determine willingness to attend an in-person meeting on February 10. Sixteen of you responded yes, some very enthusiastically. Unfortunately, the Club Pheasant requires a minimum of 50 to reserve the large banquet room. They do have a smaller room, but it wouldn't work for the equipment and space needed for a hybrid presentation. And with the omicron variant having all of us on edge, the difficult decision was made to once again do a Zoom-only meeting for February 10.

Let's all think a good thought as to our April meeting!

# Feb. Program: Dave and Bob

Continued from previous page

reports, it was almost as if you could hear Dave and Bob's voices coming from every clock radio and car stereo system in the greater Sacramento area.

A Sacramento native and graduate of Grant High School, Dave was one of those kids who always knew he wanted to be on the radio. He made that dream come true, landing an air shift while still a teenager at KROY during its Top 40 heyday. Dave left KFBK in 2000 to take a gig at KABC in Los Angeles, and is still in the radio game, hosting the morning show at KLIF in Dallas. He describes himself thusly in his LinkedIn profile: "I do three things as well as anyone in the business: inform, entertain and relate."

Bob was born in San Francisco and grew up in Sacramento, graduating from Kennedy High. He considers his real education to have taken place during

his extensive travels and three years of living in the Middle East and Europe, working odd jobs that ranged from cook to entertainer. Bob was the PD at KTOB in Petaluma before joining KGNR. He currently lives in Folsom and over the years has been active in local theater.

That's Thursday, February 10, at 11:00 a.m. via Zoom. Don't miss this rare opportunity to catch up with two local broadcast personalities who have truly earned the status of legend.



Dave and Bob coffee mugs were highly sought-after listener prizes during the height of their popularity on KFBK. These days they've been known to turn up on eBay.

## Officers

**President:** Jim Drennan

**Vice President:** Michael Guiliano

**Treasurer:** Ron Middlekauff

**Secretary:** Allen Chamberlin

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Walt Shaw

**In Perpetuity Our Founder**

Harry Warren

**Newsletter Editor:** Joyce Krieg

**Webmaster:** Allen Chamberlin

**Audio-Visual:** Bud Kress

**VALLEY BROADCAST  
LEGENDS**

P.O. Box 601861  
Sacramento, CA 95860-1861

## President's Message

Continued from previous page

(Vish was a high school teacher), had their families and maintained her father's innocence. But finally he was forced to return to Croatia and face prosecution.

The night I found the article, Vish was full of plans for me to publicize her father's fate. The next morning she failed to even mention it.

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A fellow resident with happier memories of the past is **Faye**, the widow of *Sacramento Bee* photographer **Leo Lebauer**. Faye had a career with the state's seismic safety commission, and fondly remembers climbing to the top of the Golden Gate Bridge as one of the perks of the job. She also remembers her husband's boss, **Eleanor McClatchy**, as a wonderful, unassuming person who treated her people to the first performance of the Music Circus every year

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Finally, a quest to report. **Adelle** is a retired teacher who once was a good friend of KCRA-3's **Otis Turner's** wife **Naomi**. She has lost contact with Naomi and wonders where she is now ... whether she's even alive. If you know what's become of Naomi, contact me at [jdren88799@aol.com](mailto:jdren88799@aol.com) so I can pass the word on to Adelle.



# “All in the Family”

by VBL President **Jim Drennan**

When high school teacher **Mary Richardson** first visited the KCRA/3 newsroom back in the 1970s, she was struck by the absence of women. Of the 60-odd people in the newsroom, only three were of the female persuasion. One reason, according to a staffer at 3, was that women “tended to cry” when covering emotional stories.

(Another excuse for limiting women back in the Dark Ages was that they weren’t expected to understand such hard subjects as finance and crime and that thus lacked credibility when covering same.)

Mary took the job anyway and soon she was covering **Lynette “Squeaky” Fromme’s** attempted assassination of **President Gerald Ford** (without a tear in sight). She went on to co-anchor 3’s 5:00 and 11:00 p.m. newscasts, and in 1978 moved to Boston’s WNAC (now WCVB). After four years, she was promoted to co-anchor of the station’s *Chronicle* magazine show, traveling New England and the world in search of interesting people and places. She left her on-air job in 2010.

Mary contracted Alzheimer’s disease and died from it after a seven-year battle at the end of 2021. She was the mother of three children, and her husband **Stan Leven** said of her, “Mary never let Alzheimer’s define her or slow her down. She was as real as real could be, a force in motion and always gracious, stopping to talk to her fans.” Mary took the time to lead and serve with a number of charities over the years, hosted Boston Pops broadcasts, and won a slew of awards during her long and distinguished career.

Said one colleague of her, “Mary was an incredible force, a groundbreaker and role model to all who followed.”



# The Legends

Membership as of Jan. 30, 2022

John Archer • Julie Archer  
 Jay “DJ Jay” Arnold • Stan Atkinson  
 Linda Bayley • Vic Biondi  
 Bill Bishofberger • Thomas Blazowski  
 Matias Bombal • Tom Buck  
 Allen Chamberlin • Don Chandler  
 Mark Chiolis • Chris Cochran  
 Jim Drennan • Curt Foley  
 Vicki Fox • Gary Gerould  
 Dennis Grayson • Cyndy Green  
 Michael Guiliano • Kristine Hanson  
 Bud Harmon • Fred Harris • Jerry Henry  
 Betsy Hite • Rich Ibarra • John Jervis  
 Rick Kavooras • Richard Kermickel  
 Tip Kindel • Jan “Neely” Klevan  
 Kim Kline • Ward Koppel • Bill Kreutzer  
 Bud Kress • Joyce Krieg  
 Eleanor Kuechler-VanAcker • Bob Lang  
 Dick Leeson • Dee McCafferty  
 Michael McCarron • Jeanne Marie  
 Lizette Martinez-Hopkins  
 Michael Messmer • Dana Michaels  
 Ron Middlekauff • Bob Miller  
 Alan Milner • Joyce Mitchell  
 Keith Moon • Ray Nelson  
 George Nyberg • John D. O’Brien  
 Alan Oda • Deborah Pacyna  
 Mary Jane Popp • Tiffany Powell  
 Craig Prosser • Rich Raymond  
 Bruce Riggs • Jay Rudin Beth Ruyak  
 Bill Schmechel • Walt Shaw • Dann Shively  
 Barbara Souza • Roy Stearns • Barry Stigers  
 Bob Suffel • Steve Swatt  
 Gregory VanAcker • Gregory Virtue  
 Tom Wagner • Frank Wallace • Marla Wells  
 Adrian Woodfork • Dennis Yoder  
 Jan Young

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We’ve always thought of **Mary Jane Popp** as a tough lady, but too tough for morphine? Apparently so.

On a recent Monday, Mary Jane and hubby **Rick** were out walking their dogs when MJ spotted a neighbor walking her dog across the street. Mary Jane turned to wave hello, tripped and fell. The result: severe bruising from elbow to shoulder and a broken arm. And none of the painkillers they gave her—including morphine—really worked. As of this writing, MJ is being heard on KAHI via reruns until the pain lessens to the point where she can tolerate it while working as her own talent and her own engineer.



Through all this, Mary Jane is grateful for one thing: “My arm may be broken, but my mouth still works.”

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Word has just reached the VBL news desk of the death of **Shirley Duncan**, widow of **Charlie Duncan**, whom we lost in 2017. Charlie was the beloved kiddie show host Cap’n Delta on KOVR-13, as well as one of the “Fab Four” founding members of VBL. No other details were available as of press time.



# So . . . When Is KFBK's Centennial, Exactly?

by VBL Newsletter Editor **Joyce Krieg**

Good question! Depends on who you ask.

When I was working at B-K (1978-1993), we *always* considered February 2, 1922, to be our anniversary. That was the day Sacramento's first radio station, KVQ, signed on the air, a joint venture of **Carlos McClatchy**, son of *Bee* publisher **C.K. McClatchy**, and Hobrecht's, a local legacy business now known as Hobrecht Lighting.

Thus, I had grand plans for VBL's February 10 luncheon, assuming we would piggyback onto whatever celebration KFBK would have just done. I pictured a reunion of former staffers . . . vintage photographs up on the big screen . . . old airchecks echoing off the walls of the Club Pheasant . . .

When I discovered current station management and the KFBK Facebook alumni group wasn't planning to celebrate the centennial until September 17 . . . well, my enthusiasm collapsed and melted away, much like the Stay-Puft Marshmallow Man at the end of *Ghostbusters*.

Why September 17? Well, that's the date a station actually bearing the KFBK call letters made its first broadcast.

Details, details. Or, as one member of the alumni group told me in private: "This will give us more time to put something together."

The KFBK of September 17, 1922, was a joint venture of the *Bee's* arch-rival, the *Sacramento Union* (which could explain why the McClatchy-owned KFBK clung to the KVQ origin story for so many years), and the Kimball-Upson sporting goods store. KVQ lasted less than a year, going silent in December of 1922. Three years later, the *Union* had lost interest in this new-fangled medium and McClatchy, wanting to get back into the game, was able to buy out the *Union's* half share in the venture. By 1929, the James McClatchy Company had full control of KFBK. This ownership relationship lasted until 1987, when McClatchy divested itself of its broadcast properties. KFBK and its

sister FM station, KAER, had their first new owner in 58 years, Group W, Westinghouse Broadcasting.

As KFBK's then-promotions director, I have clear memories of our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration on February 2, 1992. **Gene Berthelsen's** Cats-n-Jammers Dixieland band set the festive mood, along with a huge sheet cake. We hosted station tours throughout the day, attracting a steady stream of listeners, plus TV coverage. We were at the top of our game that winter day in 1992: an incredible talent lineup that included **Dave Williams** and the

morning team, **Rush Limbaugh**, **Tom Sullivan**, **Kitty O'Neal**, traffic with "**Commander**" **Bill** and **Joe Miano**, **Gary Gerould** calling the Sacramento Kings' play-by-play, and a promotions director known as "**Blitz**." No one could touch us when it came to dominating both ratings and ad revenue. We privately referred to ourselves as "the 50-thousand watt flamethrower".

I also have vivid memories during that 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of thinking ahead to KFBK's centennial. I pictured a community-wide extravaganza at the Convention Center, dignitaries from far and wide, speeches and proclamations, music, food, maybe a parade? A fireworks show? I mean, this would be a big, big deal, right? And I vowed that no matter what, I would be there, maybe not organizing the epic celebration like I did in 1992, but definitely in the thick of it.

Well, I'm still here, alive and more-or-less kickin'. What none of us saw coming was the digital revolution. Who could have predicted that in 30 years, traditional broadcast and print media would be rendered pretty much irrelevant by a tiny silicon chip? Who knew that by 2022, we'd all be walking around with a pocket-size electronic device delivering everything radio once provided: music, news, traffic, weather, sports, all that and more.

We thought the good times would last forever, didn't we?



## Our Anniversary Video

VBL's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary video is now available for your online viewing pleasure. This PowerPoint presentation originally aired at the December meeting and features highlights from our first 20 years, plus an "In Memoriam" section honoring members who are now in that big broadcast booth in the sky. To watch the video, go to: <https://vimeo.com/670073911> and then click the "Play" button. Please note that there's a 10-second delay before the automation begins. It will appear the first slide is hanging, but have patience—the video will begin.