



# VALLEY BROADCAST LEGENDS

Issue #127 "Honoring the Past, Sharing the Present, Embracing the Future in Media"

June 2022

## Local TV News in a Post-Pandemic World

June 9 • Club Pheasant • Doors open 11:00 a.m. • Lunch service at 11:30 • Program begins at Noon

A quartet of local television execs will provide what is sure to be a fascinating and dynamic program at our next meeting on June 9. They'll be giving us an inside look at local TV news as we emerge from the pandemic and move forward.

Representing KOVR/KMAX will be **Deborah Collura**, recently named Vice President and General Manager Sacramento's CBS stations. Her new role represents a return to Sacramento, where she previously spent five years as the assistant news director at KCRA-TV from the late 1980s to 1991. She's also held executive positions at TV stations in Atlanta, Houston, Detroit and Charlotte, NC.



Another recently promoted TV executive is **Scot Chastain**, VP and GM of Fox affiliate KTXL. He brings more than three decades of local and network television experience to his new role, serving most recently as VP-GM of Nexstar's broadcast and digital operations in Lansing, Michigan, where he oversaw WLNS (CBS), WLAJ (ABC) and ELAJ (CW).



Joining us from ABC10 will be **Jill Manuel**, Director of Content since June of 2019. Jill has spent over 20 years leading broadcast TV newsrooms for FOX, Tribune, Scripps, and CBS, winning numerous awards including a Peabody, and multiple Emmy and Edward R. Murrows. An early social media adopter, Jill "transforms traditional newsrooms into multi-platform content creation centers, with an emphasis on using social media to connect and build relationships with audiences," as the KXTV website puts it.



Rounding out the panel will be **Ariel Roblin**, President and General Manager of KCRA 3/My58 since July 1, 2020. For the previous 10 years, she served as the President and General Manager of KETV, a Hearst ABC affiliate in Omaha. During her tenure at KETV, the station earned multiple honors, most notable being the Edward R Murrow Award for Overall Excellence. In 2015, Ariel led the charge to revitalize the 117-year-old historic Burlington train station after 40 years of vacancy, transforming it into a new home for KETV NewsWatch 7. This project earned several national and local honors, including the 2016 Nebraska Preservation Award.



Much like the April meeting, VBL will be streaming the meeting on Zoom for those of you who cannot attend in person. Look for the Zoom link in your email a day or two before the luncheon.

If you plan to join us in person—and we hope you do!—reservations are a must at least 48 hours in advance. If you absolutely have to cancel the morning of the meeting, do **not** call or email Allen. Call the Club Pheasant directly, 916/371-9530.



**RSVP for the June 9 Meeting:**

**Allen Chamberlin: 916/456-7654**

**VBL-geek@theguys.org**

**Menu: 1/2 Steak or Chicken Sandwich  
Pasta (Vegetarian or Meat Sauce)  
Shrimp Louie Salad**

**Cost: \$25**

**Reservations required by June 7!**

# Jim's Jottings: Having It Both Ways

by VBL President **Jim Drennan**



This is Jim's Jottings. I'm calling it that instead of the President's Letter because I don't know if I'm going to be president. So anyway, I'm just calling it Jim's Jottings by Jim Drennan. I'm just the kinda guy who likes to have it both ways, if possible.

I was faced with a real dilemma when it came to putting a future together for our club, to arrange another in-person meeting after 22 months of Zoom meetings.

Twenty or so Zoomsters was considered a decent turn-out, but not for a club with a membership of close to 100. There was a growing hunger for a return to a meeting at the Club Pheasant. Even though that entailed some risk of Covid. We polled members and assessed risks and the response pointed to support for a hybrid version, and so in April we unveiled the great experiment. The result: some 20 people signed up for the Zoom meeting and others braved the uncertainties of Covid and showed up at the Club Pheasant. There are no reports of a Covid super-spreader after our meeting at the Pheasant.

Returning was nostalgic as Mom Palamidessi stared down enigmatically from the wall. The place was alive with the sound of fellowship, the smell of steak sandwiches, and the feeling of home, even though this wasn't. Yes, some changes will have to be made and we have already gone to work on improvements to the hybrid situation.

What steps need to be taken to broaden and diversify our membership at the time when many broadcasters, salespeople, and engineers are quickly in and out of their jobs? VBL has always been up to the challenge from the very beginning. The challenges posed by the changing media landscape and the complications from Covid are only the latest examples. We're a flexible bunch and we'll prevail again. The club won't be the same but we're moving forward.

I want to offer hope, even though things won't be like they were before. That's how people grow.

## Congrats to Dana Michaels

Our own **Dana Michaels** can now add novelist to her list of accomplishments. Dana has just published *In Your Dreams*. She describes it as a contemporary, later-in-life romance "with moderate heat." Dana has worked as a musician, radio personality, voice-over talent and TV booth announcer throughout California and Alaska. Here in Sacramento, her voice was heard on KHYL, KRAK AM and FM, and 97KROY. She recently retired from the

California Department of Fish and Wildlife as an Information Officer.

*In Your Dreams* is available as an ebook and paperback on Amazon.



## Officers

**President:** Jim Drennan

**Vice President:** Bud Kress

**Treasurer:** Allen Chamberlin

**Secretary:** Allen Chamberlin

**Directors:** Walt Shaw, Anita Fein,

Kristine Hanson, Ward Koppel

**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

# Meet Our New Veep

by VBL Vice-resident **Bud Kress**



I feel it is a privilege and honor to serve on the board of this group and step up to the plate when needed. As our board goes through changes, I wanted to help. For those who do not know me and only see me at the meetings running around the Club Pheasant at times in pure panic, here's a bit about me.

I love radio and TV. I was born and raised here in Sacramento. Luther Burbank High, class of 1974, with college at CRC and Sac State. Those early career choices included Radio Shack, a store manager at age 22. That was where I meet a KNDE DJ, Chuck Hale, who was doing a remote at my store. It changed my life

That encounter started a friendship with many of Sacramento's greatest air talents and opened doors. In 1983, I made my on-air debut in the middle of the night at KWOD and in 1984 I moved to KPOP. That gig also included the joy of the technical part of the industry. Radio has been a part of my life since then. Moving up and down the dial, I worked at KAER/KGBY, KPOP, KROY, KRFD, KYBB, 1230KWG, 1240KSAC and 1430KMYC. My memories are priceless, especially at 1440 Ethan Way where I spent the majority of my on-air career in the halls of KFBK.

In 1989 I decided that radio needed to be part time (I like food and shelter), and for 33 years I was a public servant with the State of California. When I retired, I was in charge of the computer help desk.

Now, my career was not over. Remember, radio is in my blood. I took a part-time job in the network operation center at K-LOVE. That position evolved into full time and when I retired in January 2020, I fulfilled my goal of being a DJ and engineer, taking care of over 900 radio stations coast to coast. That was the best job I ever had and I am extremely grateful.

This story has only begun. Back in 2002, I started an internet station as a hobby, That 70's Channel, and in 2011 added That Christmas Channel. We celebrated 20 years this year. The success has been overwhelming; both stations generated over five million listeners last year and actually made some money. It pays the bills and royalties and is my most successful venture to date. I also serve on the board of my homeowners association in Rancho Cordova and share my home with my nephew and the best cat on planet, Jack.

Check out [That70sChannel.com](http://That70sChannel.com) and [ThatChristmasChannel.com](http://ThatChristmasChannel.com). It's just fun radio!

# The Legends

Membership as of May 31, 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 • Mark Chiolis  
 Chris Cochran • Jim Drennan • Anita Fein  
 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 • Mike Luery • Dee McCafferty  
 Michael McCarron • Jeanne Marie  
 Lizette Martinez-Hopkins  
 Michael Messmer • Dana Michaels  
 Bob Miller • Alan Milner • Joyce Mitchell  
 Keith Moon • Ray Nelson  
 George Nyberg • John D. O'Brien  
 Alan Oda • Sandy Ofsenek Helland  
 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  
 Bob Venditti • Gregory Virtue  
 Tom Wagner • Marla Wells  
 Dave Williams • Adrian Woodfork  
 Dennis Yoder • Jan Young





# Ron Middlekauff: 1961-2022

by Joyce Mitchell

*This tribute originally appeared on the website of the Northern California NATAS, [emmysf.tv](http://emmysf.tv).*

So devastating – that the Sacramento television community is stunned – and almost silent about the untimely death of former KCRA Photographer **Ron Middlekauff**, at the age of 60. Ron died of natural causes April 11, 2022. He worked at Sacramento NBC affiliate KCRA-3 for 30 years and was treasurer of VBL.



During his time at KCRA, Ron covered news, politics, entertainment and frequently went airborne as a photographer with Livecopter 3. He developed an early passion for the television business after being on the KOVR 13 *Cap'n Delta* Sacramento morning cartoon show when he was in elementary school.

“I remember sitting in that Arden Way studio, under the hot lights and the brightly colored sets, the big TV cameras and taking it all in,” wrote Ron on his website. “It fascinated me. So much so, it sort of gave me a passion

to want to go into the TV biz.”

The die had been cast. TV was going to be his future. Then came high school and in 1978, he got an internship at KCRA. Ron was hooked. He evolved into a persistent regular at the television station, taking odd jobs and volunteering on the night shift to help out however he could. And it paid off. He was mentored into becoming a photographer. And a damn good one.

“Ron had started at the station as a teenaged delivery person, then worked his way into the newsroom,” said former KCRA Political Correspondent **Steve Swatt**. “He eventually became one of the station’s most innovative photographers. For several years, Ron and I made up KCRA’s political team.”

Steve and Ron went everywhere together, from the California State Capitol to Washington DC, covering political conventions to Presidential elections. “He never missed a shot,” said Swatt. “He was more than a photographer; he was a great field producer, as well.”

As a kind of an innocent kid starting out in a fast-paced newsroom environment, Ron learned how to hold his own. He was mischievously played with by old-timers – but always in a good-hearted way.

Steve recalls a week-long satellite trip back in 1988, delving into different national issues before the June primary election. It started in Southern California and ended up in the Bay Area. Reports were shot, edited, and delivered live on-air. Afterwards, Ron and Steve would jump into the news car bound for the next destination. One night in Palmdale, dinner was a late night all-you-can-eat rib joint.

“Ron loved barbecued ribs,” said Steve. Ron had leftover ribs that he put in the trunk. Fast-forward four days to an all-day shoot with no lunch or food. Setting up for a live shot, Ron remembered the leftover ribs in the Styrofoam box.

Continued on next page

## In Memoriam: Ron Middlekauff

Continued from previous page

“Before we knew it, he had pulled out a green, unrefrigerated, mold-covered rib – convinced it wouldn’t hurt him,” said Steve. “Luckily, at the last moment, we talked him out of what might have become a dinner for the ages.”

A light story, mixed with sadness, as friends and former co-workers remember Ron. People are grieving because Ron had heart and soul. That big heart went on full display for the world to see when he rescued **Rodeo** – the 4-year-old Border Collie while flying and covering a massive storm with Livecopter 3. The dog had been stranded for hours on the roof of a house during the 1997 levee breaks and flooding.

It was dawn and the helicopter was hovering over Olivehurst. The crew spotted Rodeo perched on top of the home, flood waters quickly rising. To Ron and chopper Pilot **Michael Kidd**, it became clear the dog was going to drown.

The two decided to attempt a rescue. Kidd maneuvered the helicopter while Ron – with one foot on the skids and one foot on the roof of the house – grabbed the quivering pup by his collar. He managed to pull Rodeo into the helicopter before yelling “liftoff!” The dramatic story went national.

Middlekauff remained humble about the rescue of Rodeo – and all of his work. Of most importance, he felt blessed to have had a career that fulfilled him for decades. It brought smiles and yes – some tears. But he always stood proud of his work.

“Ron had several loves in his life; he loved anything space exploration-related; he loved movies and television; he loved shooting video from the helicopter and developed unprecedented skills in covering news from above,” said former Livecopter 3 Pilot **Dann Shively**. “But most of all, his love for his family was always his priority.”

Ron is survived by his son **Hunter**, numerous other family members – and a television community grieving together. The man, the photographer, the kind spirit embodied in **Ron Middlekauff** is deeply missed.

## Tom Hughes: 1929-2022

by VBL Board Member **Ward Koppel**

Longtime VBL member **Tom Hughes** passed away May 11 at the age of 92.

Born Billy Thomas Hughes in Rogers, Arkansas, Tom served in the U.S. Navy before enrolling in broadcasting school and earning his First Class ticket, as well as a ham radio license. With local television in its infancy, Tom had no trouble finding work constructing stations in Arkansas and Texas. He was hired by KCRA in 1960 to help build the 1,500 joint venture transmission tower in Walnut Grove. Twenty years later, Tom would work on the replacement for that tower, the 2,000 foot “Ghost Buster” tower in Walnut Grove. He spent most of his career at KCRA keeping the station’s transmitters operating, but also served as Acting Chief Engineer in the 1980s. Outside of KCRA, Tom was a Navy Reservist, retiring in 1989 as a Chief Warrant Officer 4. And he loved tinkering on his classic Jaguar XKE.

Tom had a few interesting encounters with drunk fisherman in the middle of the night near the KCRA towers in Walnut Grove. And in 1986, when flood waters surrounded the KCRA transmitter, Tom had to commute via boat to the transmitter building.

Tom retired from KCRA in 1992 but continued to consult with local stations, operating Hughes Technology until 2009.

Tom is survived by three daughters, six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. His wife of 68 years, **Ruth Nelle Bullock**, died in 2019.



# Frank Wallace: 1947-2022

by VBL Board Member **Ward Koppel**

VBL member **Frank Wallace** passed away January 25<sup>th</sup> at the age of 74. Frank worked in engineering at KOVR in the 1980s and 1990s. When I joined KOVR in 1989, live trucks were still operated by engineers, and Frank worked on the morning news with me. He made sure we got the live shot and kept me informed of any issues he was having in the field. My favorite was the morning he called on the two-way radio asking me to call CHP to report a traffic hazard. The sliding door on his live truck had fallen off and was now laying in the fast lane on Interstate 80!

Former KOVR photographer **Dennis Marin** says Frank “was a huge Plymouth guy. He had a pure white 69 Roadrunner that was his pride and joy.” Dennis added, “Most don’t know that he had an illustrious career in LA as a camera operator for CBS studios on the game shows, *Price Is Right*, *Let’s Make a Deal*, *Match Game*.”

Former KOVR engineer **Greg DuBray** remembers Frank “loved to fish, and **Marty Hernandez** and I met up with him at the Feather River a couple of times. Frank usually caught the most.”

Frank left KOVR for a job with the Los Rios Community College District before retiring. He really enjoyed being a part of VBL and attending our luncheons after he retired.



**Frank Wallace (left) with Craig Prosser at a VBL luncheon.**

# Maxine Carlin: 1955-2022

by VBL Newsletter Editor **Joyce Krieg**



Imagine the shock of logging into Facebook and discovering a dear friend of many years has died unexpectedly. That’s exactly how it felt for me the morning of April 1 when I made what I thought would be a casual check of Facebook and learned **Maxine Carlin** had passed away the day before. It was only much later than her friends were informed she had suffered a heart attack in her sleep.

Maxine was one of the “Fab Four” founders of Valley Broadcast Legends, along with **Harry Warren**, **Charlie Duncan**, and me. We were having lunch at the old Lyons restaurant on Howe Avenue in the spring of 2001 when we got to chatting about the Broadcast Legends group in San Francisco.

Somehow out of that discussion came the idea—hey, let’s start a group like that here in Sacramento!

VBL’s first secretary, Maxine came to nearly all of our meetings in the early years. She kept her membership current until 2015, when she moved to Mendocino.

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## In Memoriam: Maxine Carlin

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Maxine and I met in the mid-1970s, when we were both hangers-on at KSFM-Earth Radio 102. Both of us were determined to get a toehold into the hitherto boys-only club of rock radio, and were willing to work for free—me doing news, Maxine producing an events calendar. Somehow, we clicked, a friendship that would last nearly 50 years. I went on to become the first female news announcer at KFBK, while Maxine later ran the news department at KVYN in Napa.

But radio was only one of Maxine's passions. She loved airplanes and every September would find her at the Reno Air Races, where she served as a pylon judge and photographer. She worked in tasting rooms up and down the Napa Valley and definitely knew her way around a grape. An avid reader of Herb Caen's column, she took great delight whenever one of her witticisms made it into his column in the *Chronicle*. She was a big fan of The Beatles and Irish R&B artist **Van Morrison**, making pilgrimages to Liverpool and Ireland. And she adored animals, especially her rescue dog **Piper**.

In recent years, I wasn't able to get together with "Max" as much as I would have liked, what with her living in Mendocino and me being some 300 miles away in Pacific Grove. But Facebook kept the friendship alive as we frequently traded jokes or just updates on our lives. And now Facebook brought the shocking news of her death. **Don MacLean's** "bad news on the doorstep" for the digital age.

## Matías Bombal Is Alive and Well



Guess what? You're dead!

That, in essence is what Golden 1 told our own **Matías Bombal** in early May. Matías was in the middle of taking care of the myriad financial details surrounding the death of his mother in March. He'd instructed Golden 1 to close an account in the name of both his and his mother, and to transfer any remaining funds into another account in his name only at Golden 1. He gave the credit union a copy of his mother's death certificate.

Instead, they closed his personal account and listed Matías, not his mother, as the "dearly departed" in their computer system. And we all know what happens when a piece of erroneous information gets into a computer database ...

His first inkling something might be amiss is when he could no longer access online banking. Many frustrating phone calls, emails and in-person visits followed. Finally, Matías was able to meet with the branch manager and the glitch surfaced at last.

Taking it in good humor, Matías told the branch manager, "Look, I know sometimes I don't present well, but I am, in fact, alive ... evident by the fact that I'm standing here in person talking to you."

The odd and macabre story landed a spot on KCRA's nightly news on May 3, <https://www.kcra.com/article/bank-mix-up-declares-man-deceased-even-though-hes-alive/39922114>