



VALLEY BROADCAST LEGENDS

Issue #119 "Honoring the Past, Sharing the Present, Embracing the Future in Media" February 2021

President's Message: Seeing My America Again

by VBL President **Jim Drennan**



I've never thought of myself as much of a crier; I generally only burst into tears at the funeral of a loved one. That's why I kind of surprised myself on Tuesday and Wednesday, Jan. 19th and 20th. The tears started flowing on Tuesday night and then evolved into actual sobs on Wednesday.

And these weren't tears of sorrow; they were tears of joy and relief.

As you may have guessed by now, the trigger of the tears was the inauguration of Joe Biden as 46th president of the United States and all the pageantry that went along with it.

I saw my America again:

—In the beautiful Tuesday night memorial at the Washington, D.C., reflecting pool to the 400,000 Americans lost to the Covid pandemic ... the first such memorial to the Covid victims since it all began

—In the plea from the new president for a spirit of unity and an end to the politics of total destruction, for the sense of unity we will need to face the multitude of challenges threatening our very survival.

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"There, there, lie quiet now. You just had a bad dream."



Politics on the Agenda at Feb. 11 VBL Meeting

Politics is still the name of the game even with the Biden inauguration behind us, and that fact will be reflected in our Feb. 11 program. Start time is 11:00 a.m. via Zoom.

First, veteran political reporter and author **Steve Swatt** will bring us up to date on the big changes in Washington and how they may affect our lives. Our other guest speaker will be former *Sacramento Bee* reporter **Bertha Gorman**, the grandmother of the young woman who stole our hearts at the inauguration, **Amanda Gorman**. Bertha will give us insights into Amanda's fascinating story and how it is changing our perspectives of bright kids of color.



Steve Swatt



Bertha Gorman

Most of us know Steve, a long-time VBL member, KCRA alum, veteran political reporter and analyst and author of an award-winning book on California's political history. As for Bertha, her career rivals that of her illustrious granddaughter.

After leaving the *Bee*, she's held a variety of high-level government positions. She is currently President & CEO of Life Expansion and Education Project.

We've also set our April program, and we're delighted to announce that our featured speaker will be **Steve Kornacki**, that charismatic guy who works the vote tally board at MSNBC. I know he'll have a lot of tales to tell about how it was working the November and January elections, and how he manages to keep going with such energy through such long hours.

We also may learn how often he has to put on a new tie and change those khaki pants.

As usual, we'll be sending out an email message a day or so before the programs with the Zoom link. As usual, the programs get underway at 11 a.m. And again as usual, we think it will be worth the effort.

“All in the Family”: Too Many Losses

by VBL President **Jim Drennan**

The past few weeks have been a time of great loss to our Sacramento media family ... four people who made a great difference in our community, leaving behind memories of lives well lived.



John Iander

The first is a fellow I brought to Sacramento way back in the seventies when I was news director at KXTV/10 ... **John Iander** ... as a reporter and assignment editor. After a brief time at 10, John went over to KOVR/13, where he spent 35 years as a reporter, covering every major story imaginable with expertise and passing that expertise on to a host of young reporters along the way. John was diagnosed with cancer last January, but according to friends, “fought it like a warrior” until his death on Jan. 11 of this year.

We also lost one of our real Valley Broadcast Legends old-timers, **Burt Wilson**.

We hadn't seen Burt at our Club Pheasant luncheons since 2015, when Burt moved back to Binghamton, NY, to teach an Agni Yoga class there and work with Citizen Action, a volunteer organization that promotes economic justice. Shortly thereafter, he finished his first novel and completed another book with an ancient religious theme. He died on Jan. 6 of the Covid virus shortly before his 88th birthday.

Now here was a guy who lived a life that was full to overflowing. Wikipedia lists Burt as a philosopher, writer, broadcaster, jazz musician and former advertising executive. Burt was born in Stockton and received a BA degree in telecommunications from USC in 1955. While at USC, he served as writer and announcer for the pre-game and halftime activities.



Burt Wilson

Burt served in Special Services in the U.S. Army in Germany as a radio announcer and soldier show producer. After his return from Germany, he went to work as a commercial copywriter at KXOA radio and commercial writer/producer at KCRA/3. He then launched his own ad agency, Mediascope Advertising. One of his clients was Shakey's Pizza, which launched a lifelong friendship with owner **Sherwood “Shakey” Johnson**, as well as taking a key role in the early days of the Sacramento Jazz Jubilee. (For those of you new to Sacramento, Shakey's was a Sacramento institution right along with Tower Records and Frank Fat's.)

Eventually, Burt moved to Southern California to work in a number of advertising jobs. He also had a deep social consciousness and was involved in campaigns to improve conditions in riot-torn Watts, to defeat the Peripheral Canal proposal, and ... with **Cesar Chavez** ... to organize farm workers in the Coachella Valley.

Since 2006, he'd worked to defeat a plan to build twin tunnels in the Sacramento Delta that he felt would ruin the Delta. Burt was also in other causes too numerous to mention.

And then there's another legendary figure ... **Ed Gish**. Ed died on Jan. 13 after packing a lot of living into his 92 years. As friend **Sue Keil Vanderbeck** put it, “Eddie never grew old; he remained curious, funny, intellectually deep and could talk on any subject or current event with ease. He drew people to him like a magnet.” Now that would make a mighty fine epitaph.

C. Edwin Gish began his career as the nation's youngest full-time announcer for a network affiliate at KTFI, the NBC station in Twin Falls ID.

Officers

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Treasurer: Ron Middlekauff

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Directors: Kristine Hanson,
Walt Shaw

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Harry Warren

Newsletter Editor: Joyce Krieg

Webmaster: Allen Chamberlin

Audio-Visual: Bud Kress

**VALLEY BROADCAST
LEGENDS**

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Hooray for Us—We're Turning 20!

by VBL Secretary **Allen Chamberlin**

Originally our club was called Sacramento Valley Legends and considered itself an offshoot of the San Francisco Bay Area Broadcast Legends. But we always wanted to include San Joaquin, the foothills, and inter-coastal broadcasters. So it wasn't long before Sac was out and everyone was in. Plus, an internet domain name is better shorter than longer.

I wasn't a charter member, but came in the second year or so. My long-time friend **Joyce Krieg** (a founder) urged me to get involved (in some small part) because she'd moved to Pacific Grove and I could help our first president, **Harry Warren** with technical issues which she could not at a distance. In those days I was an adjunct guest attendee (if anything) because I didn't have 20 years in broadcasting. But the more I helped Harry with the club (and especially his computer), the further I got entrenched. It wasn't long before the (somewhat actual) by-laws changed, reducing the membership requirement to 10 years and the board formally boxed me in. When our first secretary/treasurer, **Bill Kreutzer**, decided to step down, I ended-up filling his secretary role. His treasurer shoes I could never be qualified to fill. We're blessed to have **Ron "Dues are Due" Middlekauff** doing that.)

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"All in the Family"

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After Army service, he eventually wound up in Sacramento where he became creative director at Gish Sprague & Associates, an ad agency. He also founded Shamrock Productions with *The Virginian* star **James Drury**, and formed a lifelong friendship with *Bonanza* star **Pernell Roberts**. He later moved to L.A. where he became director of on-air promotion of movies for TV at CBS and later to King World, where he wrote *The Mission Continues*, a documentary on the aftermath of the Challenger disaster, narrated by **Walter Cronkite**.

He later retired to Panama, where he lived for many years.

And finally, we'd like to mention the passing of a great lady, **Paulette Bruce**.



Paulette Bruce

Paulette left us on Jan. 5 after a short battle with lung cancer. Many of us knew her as Paulette Bruce Miller, one of the leading lights in Sacramento's public relations community. She may be best remembered for her role as one of *Sacramento Magazine's* "Dining Divas." For 25 years, she taught cooking classes in person and online.

One friend says she "left behind a veritable banquet of happy, well-fed customers and friends whom she taught in private homes and commercial kitchens and in her own home kitchen." Adds **Kitty O'Neal**: "She was sparkling and vivacious, smart and resourceful, and just so much fun to be around." You can't find a better tribute than that.

And finally, hats off to the legendary **Mike Luery**, who proved that retirement doesn't have to be the end of the line. Just hours after his retirement after many years of service at KCRA/3, Mike announced he was signing on as Assistant News Director for iHeart Media's Pacific Region, which includes Sacramento's KFBK radio. Now there's a guy who must love to work. Best of luck in your new career, youngster!

The Legends

Membership as of Jan. 30, 2021

Jerry Agresti • Bob Aldrich
 John Archer • Julie Archer
 Jay "DJ Jay" Arnold • Stan Atkinson
 Linda Bayley • Vic Biondi
 Bill Bishofberger • Thomas Blazowski
 Matias Bombal • Mel Boyd • Jim Brewer
 Tom Buck • Dick Cable
 Allen Chamberlin • Don Chandler
 Mark Chiolis • Chris Cochran
 Jim Drennan • Mike Duncan
 Claire Elliott • Curt Foley • Vicki Fox
 Bill George • Gary Gerould
 Dennis Grayson • Cyndy Green
 Michael Guiliano • Kristine Hanson
 Bud Harmon • Fred Harris • Jerry Henry
 Betsy Hite • Tom Hughes • Rich Ibarra
 Steve Jackson • 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
 Mike Montgomery • Keith Moon
 Ray Nelson • George Nyberg
 John D. O'Brien • Deborah Pacyna
 Mary Jane Popp • Tiffany Powell
 Craig Prosser • Rich Raymond • Rick Reed
 Bruce Riggs • Jay Rudin • Beth Ruyak
 Bill Schmechel • Walt Shaw
 Becky Shephard • Dann Shively
 Ken Shuper • Barbara Souza
 Roy Stearns • Barry Stigers • Bill Storm
 Bob Suffel • Steve Swatt
 Gregory VanAcker • Bob Venditti
 Gregory Virtue • Tom Wagner
 Frank Wallace • Marla Wells
 Dennis Yoder • Jan Young



Education and Enrichment Just for Seniors

by Bob Lang

Have you ever had the desire to research your ancestral history and provide your family stories for your grandkids? How about getting a perspective on things like current political events or American values or this crummy pandemic? Maybe you'd like to learn the ins and outs of your new iPhone or iPad without having to ask your thirteen-year-old grandson.

There's a terrific educational opportunity for seniors and retirees called the Renaissance Society being offered through California State University, Sacramento. If it weren't for Covid, it would be offered on the CSUS campus, but lately classes have been a virtual experience. With any luck, along with upcoming medical strides, it'll get there again.

The Renaissance Society has a 35-year history in the Sacramento area and boasts up to 1600 members, all retired people and those in our age group. It's not only an educational opportunity, but also provides a social outlet to lifestyles for those of us no longer active in the work environment.

Please Pay Your Dues!

If you've not already paid your VBL dues for 2021, please do so now. We're asking for just \$20 to keep our club going during this prolonged pandemic. If you're on PayPal, click on the "Send Money" tab. Indicate that you wish to send \$20 to Treasurer

Ron Middlekauff, ron@middlekauff.tv. You and Ron will both be notified that a payment has been made.

Or, you may always use the tried-and-true paper method. Make out a check for \$20 payable to Valley Broadcast Legends and mail to P.O. Box 601861, Sacramento, CA 95860-1861.

We're Turning 20

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And now here we are, 20 years later, determined to continue bringing broadcasters together to share memories and laughs, despite having to eat at home during Zoom meetings. And I remain unable to get anyone to run against me for the office of secretary/membership database manager/webmaster/and go-fer. Trust me, if you want the job, the go-fer part is fun and interesting. Otherwise, the rest of the job can be as meticulous as scheduling traffic, accounting for every second of on-air programming, or in the case of VBL, getting lunch orders correct—and lanyards returned.

Members can choose from a variety of educational topics that range from history, the arts, politics, technology, even music appreciation. Classes are taught by other members, those with a particular interest, an expertise, an experience in the classroom—the topics constantly evolve based on the interests of Renaissance peers.

Until the pandemic, classes were offered on the campus itself primarily on Fridays with additional classes on Saturdays and at satellite locations. For the past year, classes via Zoom have been the norm. Additionally, there are pop-up lectures and a weekly Forum featuring speakers

from within the community.

The Renaissance Society is also heavily involved with Sac State itself, providing scholarships and participating in other campus and student activities.

Membership for the spring 2021 semester is now available for \$60 and classes begin on February 8. Year-round membership is usually \$100. You may apply on-line at renaissa@csus.org or by mail at The Renaissance Society, CSUS 6000 J St., Mail Stop 6074, Sacramento, CA 95819-6074. For more information, contact the Renaissance Society office at (916) 278-7834 or by email at rensoc@csus.edu. Staff is currently working from home, so allow extra time for responses.

President's Message

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—In the inspiring conversation among three former rivals, **Presidents Clinton, Bush and Obama**, who all talked of how we can disagree on issues, yet remain steadfast in the knowledge that we are all brothers and sisters in the same family.

—In the eloquent recitation of her poem by young **Ashley Gorman**, who informed us that America "is not broken, but unfinished." (Turns out that Ashley is the granddaughter of former *Sacramento Bee* reporter **Bertha Gorman**.)

—In the closing scene of **Joe and Jill Biden** standing on the White House balcony watching fireworks light up the Washington sky.

There were many more memorable moments during the day and evening that served to make this feel like an American family reunion ... of all political beliefs, of all colors, of all parts of the country. It also served as a re-dedication to our precious, 240-year-old experiment in democracy.

To quote *The View's* **Joy Behar**: "It felt like a crazy family had kidnapped me and my parents finally showed up to rescue me."

To quote the new president: "Democracy has prevailed."



Advice to The Covid Generation

by Don Chandler

Covid19 found a home in Switzerland where pure air and clear water coalesce to deliver some of the most beautiful snow covered peaks and ski slopes in the world. My niece also found a home there. Her generation; as with the entire world, is bombarded by news of Covid19. She considers it the worst thing that ever happened and the beginning of the end of civilization. I sympathized with her but told her we will survive. She doubted me.

I shared an experience of one of my shipmates, who described horrifying details aboard two ships during WWII. Both were torpedoed and sunk, leaving him and his shipmates afloat in icy water and burning oil. That was a war **involving the entire globe, killing three percent of the world's population and seemed endless.**

I told my niece of my own experience during that time. I was nine years old in 1941. My father was appointed principal of Eklutna Boarding School in Alaska, located between Anchorage and Palmer. Our family sailed on the *SS Columbia* through the Inland Passage, arriving by rail in Eklutna the summer of 1940. One year later on December 7, 1941, the world changed. Soon, a squad of soldiers in training was bivouacked a short distance from Eklutna with no contact to the outside world. On that fateful day I had permission to walk to the camp with a senior student. The soldiers' first news of the Pearl Harbor attack was from the senior boy and me. I recall the stunned reactions of those young men; in particular one who said, "I want my mommy." Funny what sticks in a kid's mind.

Six months after Pearl Harbor was bombed, the Aleutian Islands were invaded by Japan. Eklutna was 1,000 miles to the north. My father was instructed to prepare for radical changes. Windows were painted black. Curfews were enforced. Air raid warnings shrieked. Staff and students took refuge in

the surrounding forests on several occasions. Serious rationing went into effect. In 1943, staff families were ordered to evacuate. My father stayed behind to supervise evacuation, a process that kept us apart for two years. We said tearful goodbyes at the train station in Eklutna. In Ketchikan, we boarded *USS St. Mibiel* AP-32 to Seattle. My mother and two youngest siblings occupied a cabin above the main deck. My older brother and I were squeezed into a crowded cabin below with teenage boys. I was eleven and my brother twelve. The older boys were profane, spitting obscenities. My brother and I wanted to join our mother but were not allowed. And we sure missed our dad.

In Seattle we boarded a crowded train that took us to Kansas. Separated again from our mother, my brother and I were in a car overflowing with soldiers; some intoxicated to the point of pouring whiskey on our heads. I don't fault them for their behavior. Many would be casualties within a year. In Kansas we were split up even more. My older brother and sister were with grandparents on their farm near Macksville. My four year old brother and I were sent to an uncle and aunt. My mother became ill and was hospitalized in St. John, Kansas. We didn't see her for nearly a year. We four kids felt like orphans.

I told my niece of that difficult time that I saw no end to, explaining that it was affecting the entire world as is Covid19. We got through it. I advised my niece to have faith, assuring her that we will get through the coronavirus as well, but it will take sacrifice and discipline just as WWII did. My niece responded gratefully that it helped her put things in perspective. My desire is that it will fuel the flame of hope in some of the hopeless. Calmer waters are off the bow.

I found a quote from someone I had never heard of.



*"Let me light my lamp,"
says the star.
And never debate whether
It will help to remove the
Darkness."*

—Rabindranath

Broadcasters: Please Stop Mangling the Language!

by Bob Lang

Every so often I find myself yelling at my TV. Not that it does any good. It's just so frustrating to hear so-called professional communicators regularly mangling the language on our daily news.

For example, there is not a single weather person on the air these days who seems to know that the word *temperature* has four syllables. Nope, not a single one. That's why we hear "tem'puh-chur" all of the time. These forecasters also tell us that temperatures will get higher or lower, but they don't. Temperatures warm up or cool down.

In 2012, I published a book called *Now You're Talkin'*, a reference book for media professionals. It's a compilation of misused words and phrases in dictionary form with the intent to provide current and aspiring broadcasters, writers, speakers, and presenters with a guide for maintaining their professional integrity and credibility. The book contains sections on misused, mispronounced, and misspelled words and phrases; written communication including punctuation, foreign words and phrases, even announcing tips. For years now my book has been literally *sauntering* off book store shelves!

Someone once asked me what I considered the most common mistake heard in our media. The one that sticks out to me is when a reporter says, for example, that there were *over* a thousand people in the crowd. Actually, correct would be *more than* a thousand people! *Over* is spatial, like a plane flying over the mountains. Likewise, another correct word would be *fewer* instead of *under*.

The word *less* as a designation, however, is different. A correct use would be that the football team had *fewer* good linemen and *less* experience. Yes, it gets tricky, but a credible broadcaster should know that!

Another blatant mistake that we hear a lot lately is when we're told that the president or his staff members appear behind the *podium*. They don't! They're behind a *lectern*. A *podium* is what Olympians stand on to receive their medals or a conductor stands on to lead the symphony.

Occasionally, words have two acceptable pronunciations. *Data* is a good example. It can be pronounced with either a long or a short "A." Heard less often is *onerous*. It means "arduous" or "tedious" and the preferred pronunciation is "honor us," but most pronounce it with a long "O." In those cases, my book suggests to the reader, "take your choice."

Then, there are the meanings of words, and some are simply not interchangeable. *Reluctant* means unwilling to take

action while *reticent* means unwilling to speak about something. But, lots of times, they get mixed up. Or, for an example nobody seems to get right, when you put pieces of something together, you *compose* the object. That thing then *comprises* the pieces. Don't confuse these words. A CD is *composed* of individual songs. Conversely, the CD itself *comprises* the tracks. Or think of a musical *composition* that's made up of chords and notes and lyrics. The word *compose* is right there! Here's another hint: never say "comprised of."

How about the way the word *invite* is used? Some broadcasters use it as if it were a noun. It's a verb! And some of them say it with the accent on the first syllable—it's on the second syllable. If you receive one, it's an *invitation*. That's the noun!

Have you ever made a *concerted effort*? Are you sure? *Concerted* means it was "in concert" with the efforts of others. You can't do it by yourself! Perhaps you made a *concentrated effort*.

Finally, here's a phrase to simply avoid. 'Ever hear of a bad guy being forced to wear an *ankle bracelet*? There's no such thing! If it's worn on the wrist it's a *bracelet*. If it's worn around an ankle, it's an *anklet*. More accurately, call it an *ankle monitor*.

Why is all of this significant? Potential mistakes like these become reflections on the integrity of those who have chosen to become our spokespeople. Correctly-used language is their most valuable tool. Think about it. A professional

communicator really has one essential thing to offer and that's credibility. For them, maintaining and protecting credibility is vital.

Speaking of being a professional communicator, I find it disappointing that so many of our spokespeople, both locally and nationally, care so little about the condition of their professional skills. There's even one morning show individual who insists on referring to others as "you guys" and, at the toss, regularly greets reporters with, "Hey!" Worse, this person is often overly familiar with interview subjects and calls them "hon." (Insert wide-eyed emoji here!)

Sorry, but, to me, this is extremely unprofessional. In fact, professional decorum prevents me from providing the complete identity of this individual. No, I must respectfully refuse to provide full identifying information on this person. It certainly would not be the thing to do.

That's why I would definitely only agree to provide a first name: Hoda.

