

VALLEY BROADCAST LEGENDS

Issue #140 “Honoring the Past, Sharing the Present, Embracing the Future in Media”

August 2024

August 13 • Aviator’s Restaurant at Executive Airport • Doors open 11 a.m. • Lunch service at 11:30

The Rise and Fall of Tower Records

Tower Records’ birth in Sacramento is well known. **Russ Solomon** first started selling vinyl records out of his father’s drug store in 1960 in a building shared with the Tower Theater. Over 46 years Tower Records rose to be an international juggernaut with stores in Japan, Argentina, Hong Kong, Israel, Singapore, London, and every major city in the U.S. Here in Sacramento, the Tower empire also included stand-alone stores for books, posters and house plants. It was an institution that seemed invincible. But as we all know, nothing lasts forever.



Our guest speaker for the August 13 VBL meeting has the inside scoop on the rise and fall of Tower Records. **Carla Henson** joined Tower headquarters in Sacramento in 1971, working with Solomon as he was growing the business. At first, she was an Administrative Assistant to the Vice-President/General Manager and to the Director of Advertising. Then she moved to Nashville as a Sales Representative, responsible for inventory control, sales promotion and marketing. Carla handled the southern region which included New Orleans, Atlanta, Dallas and

Austin. She worked one-on-one with recording artists like Linda Ronstadt and Gary Morris, the 1984 Academy Of Country Music Awards “Song of the Year” winner. Carla’s 30-year career with Tower ended in 2001, five years before Tower went out of business.

Her second career landed Carla at KXTV Channel 10 in 2006. Then General Manager Russell Postell dubbed her the “Agent of First Impressions” as she worked the front desk. She was the first person clients and guests encountered at KXTV, and the voice on the phone who had to calm viewers if—God forbid—*Jeopardy!* or *Wheel of Fortune* were interrupted or pre-empted. She retired in 2020 to her West Sacramento estate.

If we twist her arm, she may dish some dirt on what she witnessed from her vantage point, first at Tower Records, and then at KXTV. Don’t miss out—turn in your RSVP today!



It was a sad day in Sacramento in 2006 when the Tower Records store on Watt Avenue closed its doors.

**RSVP for the August 13 Meeting:
Allen Chamberlin: 916/456-7654**

VBL-geek@theguys.org

**Cost: \$30 payable at the door. Cash or
check only!**

Reservations required by August 6!

Member Hobbies: Mapping Things Out

by VBL Board Member **Ward Koppel**

Maps trace their origins back over 5,000 years as a way to show points of interest and important routes. Valley Broadcast Legends President **Bill George**'s collection of maps doesn't go back that far, but some date to the 1850s. "I collected—or saved, rather—maps when I was a kid," Bill says, adding, "I have some transcontinental railroad maps from the 1870s, probably the oldest, and I have a book of Gold Rush camp maps from the 1850s" He also has a map of Sacramento County from 1913. It was published by Phinney, Cate & Marshall and includes the names of some of the property owners which he says is interesting to see. "Probably my favorite is 'Covered Wagon Roads to the American West' by Gregory M. Franzwa. The trails start in Missouri and guess what, a few of them terminate here in Sacramento. I spend hours looking at it." Sadly, some of his best maps were lost when his parents' home flooded in the 1960s.

"My kids said living with me was like growing up in a museum!" Bill recalls. He has more than 50 maps, but has run out of wall space to display them. Most are prints, as originals are expensive and hard to find. "To me maps are symbols of progress and discovery. Art and science melded to show us our world." He also has a few globes in his collection and hopes to add more. You can't really get a good understanding of geography unless you have a globe".

What is most remarkable about Bill's map collection? He worked at KCRA as an Assignment Editor, yet doesn't have a single Thomas Brothers map book in his collection.

Officers

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Kristine Hanson, Ward Koppel

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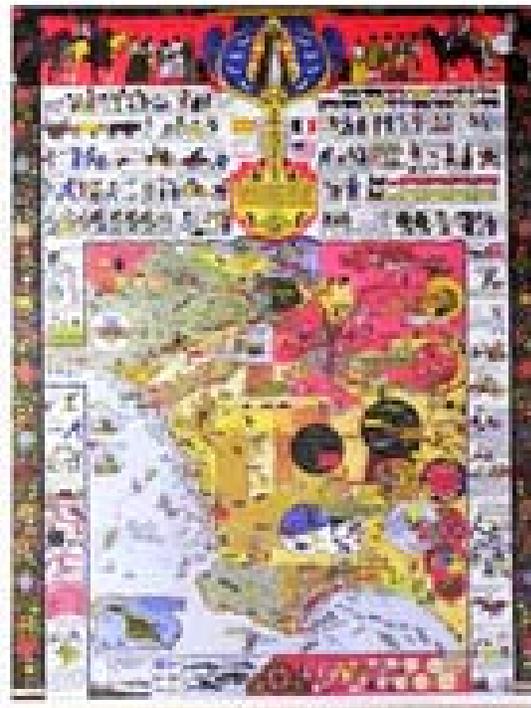
Webmaster: Allen Chamberlin

Audio-Visual: Bud Kress

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P.O. Box 601861

Sacramento, CA 95860-1861



Among the treasures in Bill George's map collection is this highly detailed map of Los Angeles created by early 20th century illustratore Jo Mora.

President's Message:

Meet Our New President

by VBL President **Bill George**



I am glad to report that the VBL board of directors has seen fit to name me president. It is not such a very big job that it will overwhelm me, but it is sufficiently complex to provide a challenge. I look forward to it with great anticipation.

I assume the role from **Joyce Krieg** who diligently and successfully guided us past Covid and over the challenges of becoming a legal non-profit entity. We all owe her hearty thanks for the work she has put in.

I believe we are in a strong position for the future. Our finances are solid, membership steady and faithful, the board active and honest. The lifeblood of all organizations is new members and we are all looking for ways to attract new blood to the organization, and your suggestions are always welcome.

A bit about me: I began my broadcast career in 1976 at KOMU-TV and KBIA Radio in Columbia, Missouri. These were the entities owned by the University of Missouri, which I attended as a journalism student. We had so many student reporters vying for airtime one had to work during spring breaks and Christmas to get experience. I "walked" on graduation day, had lunch with my parents and girlfriend, then pulled an evening shift at the station. Welcome to broadcasting! From there it was on to WHO-TV and radio in Des Moines for five years of Iowa Caucuses and snowstorms. One day I answered the phone and (I didn't know it at the time) it was **Jim Drennan** on the line. "I hear you're a crackerjack journalist," he said. I had no idea where Sacramento was and envisioned sun, sandy beaches and the rolling Pacific. Well, the sun was there for sure. I landed at KCRA-TV in 1982 working with Jim on the assignment desk. I stayed awhile then moved into PR and marketing, eventually running Ford Motor Company's Broadcast News Department. I never lost my love of broadcasting and in 2010 began making documentary films for KVIE, which I am still doing.

Broadcast people are the best. Outgoing, fun, interested in the world and always ready for the next challenge. What a great group to be part of! I look forward to exciting times in the future.

The Legends

Membership as of July 26, 2024

John Archer • Julie Archer
 Jay "DJ Jay" Arnold • Stan Atkinson
 Mark Baggs • Vic Biondi • Bill Bishofberger
 Thomas Blazowski • Matias Bombal
 Tom Buck • Allen Chamberlin
 Mark Chiolis • Tim Church
 Tony Cox • Judi Decker • Anita Fein
 Curt Foley • Vicki Fox • Bill George
 Gary Gerould • Marty Gonzalez
 Henry Grambergu • Dennis Grayson
 Cyndy Green • Michael Guiliano
 Kristine Hanson • Bud Harmon
 Lois Hart • Mark Hedlund • Jerry Henry
 Lizann Hunt • Rich Ibarra • Tip Kindel
 Jan "Neely" Klevan • Kim Kline
 Cindy Koppel • Ward Koppel
 Bud Kress • Bill Kreutzer • Joyce Krieg
 Eleanor Kuechler-VanAcker • Bob Lang
 Dick Leeson • Mike Luery • Jeanne Marie
 Lizette Martinez- Hopkins
 Michael McCarron • Michael Messmer
 Dana Michaels • Bob Miller
 Mike Montgomery • Keith Moon
 Ray Nelson • George Nyberg
 John D. O'Brien • Sandy Ofsenek Helland
 Sue Peppers • Mary Jane Popp
 Craig Prosser • Bruce Riggs • Jay Rudin
 Bill Schmechel • Walt Shaw • Dann Shively
 Barbara Souza • Roy Stearns
 Jim Stimson • Steve Swatt
 Gregory VanAcker • Gregory Virtue
 Tom Wagner • Dave Walker
 Marla Wells • Dave Williams
 Dennis Yoder • Steve Zraggen



Bob Galli: 1950-2024



Bob “The Godfather” Galli, a long-time fixture on Sacramento’s radio airwaves, signed off for the last time on June 10. His wife of 51 years, Desiree, reported on Facebook, “He didn’t suffer or die in pain. He just collapsed.”

Bob was born in Washington, DC, to an Air Force family that moved around the world frequently when he was a child. He graduated from high school in Japan in 1968 and had no clue about the counter-culture movement that was sweeping the United States and much of Europe in that tumultuous year. Bob attended the Columbia School of Broadcasting in Rhode Island and had his first radio gig as a news reporter for WADK in Newport, RI. He came to California in 1980 at the urging of a brother who was living in Sacramento. Bob dropped off a tape and resumé at KZAP and the rest, as they say, is radio history.

Bob was first assigned to the overnight shift when KZAP was still located in the Elks building at 9th and J streets. Calling himself “The Midnight Rambler,” he opened the window and urged drivers cruising J Street to honk as they drove by the station. Later, Bob moved up to a daytime air shift and started calling himself “The Godfather,” an air name that stuck throughout the rest of his radio career.

After eight years at KZAP, Bob moved over to KRXO 93 Rock, then played jazz at KQPT-The Point. It was back to classic rock at The Eagle and KHYL. After a stint in Buffalo, NY, Bob came back to Sacramento in 2015 to join the online version of KZAP.

Welcoming New and Returning Members

It’s always gratifying when a guest speaker has such a good time at our meeting they decide to become a member. Such was the case with our June meeting when **Lizann Hunt** signed up. Lizann had a 35-year career in radio with Brown Broadcasting and Entercom. She was in charge of promotions for K108 and The Eagle. Also joining after the June meeting was Lizann’s husband, **Henry Grambergu**, whose stations included KQPT, KSSJ, Y-92, KHYL and KCCL. His career highlights was starting The Point from scratch with a New Age Contemporary format. Within a year, it was #1 in the market for adults 25-54.

We’re also welcoming **Mark Baggs** to the VBL family. Mark worked as a senior editor at KCRA and as a director at KVIE. His career also included several San Francisco stations, as technical director/studio operations supervisor at KPIX and studio tech at KQED.

Finally, we’re welcoming back **Cyndy Green**. Cyndy’s been with us before in the pre-pandemic days, helping with the Oral History Project. Cyndy has worked at all three of Sacramento’s major network stations—KXTV, KCRA and KOVR—as well as KQED in San Francisco. She’s eager to get started again with the Oral History Project as she has a “passion for visual story-telling.”



Fun Times for VBL: June 11, 2024



The topic couldn't have been more fun: the zany world of radio station promotions. Guests included, top from left: **Lizann Hunt**, retired promotion director for K108 and The Eagle; **John Nerlson**, marketing director for iHeart Media-Sacramento, and **Karen Rufer**, director of special events for Mix 96 and other Bonneville stations in Sacramento. Adding to the fun, **Jay Rudin** offered a rare **Rush Limbaugh** video. At bottom left, two KFBK promotions directors in one place, **John Nelson** and **Joyce Krieg**, who held the job from 1982 to 1994. *Photos by Matías Bombal.*

Preserving Our Legacy

Several years back, (i.e. pre-pandemic), VBL teamed up with the Center for Sacramento History for the Oral History Project, preserving our broadcast heritage by recording the memories of legendary local radio/TV personalities and behind-the-scenes pioneers. The Covid lock-down put a halt to this worthwhile endeavor, but now we're poised to bring it back.

If you know of a local broadcaster who is worthy of having their story preserved in the Sacramento archives, let President Bill George know, nimbusbill@icloud.com.

By the way, \$5 of your annual dues money supports the Oral History Project, paying for the cost of video-recording and editing.



Aloha Attire Encouraged

We're planning to do the August 13 VBL meeting with a "luau/beach party" theme. Please join the fun by wearing an aloha shirt or other beachy attire—surfer jams, flip-flops, muumuu—or not. This is all strictly for fun, entirely optional, just a relaxed and informal way to celebrate the summer.

