



VALLEY BROADCAST LEGENDS

Issue #137 *“Honoring the Past, Sharing the Present, Embracing the Future in Media”*

February 2024

Feb. 13 • Aviator’s Restaurant at Executive Airport • Doors open 11 a.m. • Lunch service at 11:30 Diversity in Local TV with Adrian Woodfork

VBL will explore diversity in broadcasting at the February 13 meeting by featuring one of our own—**Adrian Woodfork**, the first Black newscaster on KCRA-3 and quite possibly the first in the entire market.

After graduating from Sac State, Adrian landed an entry level job at KCRA in 1970, and quickly rose to become a photographer, editor and reporter. Co-worker and long-time friend **Joyce Mitchell** recalls, “As one of the few, if not the only, working Black man in the Sacramento television market at the time, Adrian opened doors – and it was far from easy. Still, Adrian was determined to diversify the industry himself while also helping other people struggling to get in the door.”



Interviewed by KCRA during Black History Month in 2023, Adrian said, “In the beginning, it was bittersweet. Because being the first I was met with some — harassment, let’s say. I went to the owner of the station and I said, ‘Look, I don’t know if I can do this,’ and he said, ‘Adrian, I tell you what, I can’t baby-sit, but I can let you know one thing: I will have your back.’”

Adrian has been credited with creating, producing and hosting the longest running public affairs program in the Sacramento television market – “To Be Somebody (TBS) – A Black Magazine Show.” TBS garnered awards,

recognition and educated viewers about the plight of African Americans, the trials, tribulations, challenges, and successes. TBS remained on the air for nearly two decades.

After leaving KCRA in 1988, Adrian went on to freelance as a commercial actor and print model. He also worked as a field producer for “America’s Most Wanted,” “Inside Edition” and “Current Affairs.” He later worked for the California Department of Food and Agriculture. In 2021, he was inducted into the Silver Circle of the Northern California chapter of NATAS, the National Association of Television Arts and Sciences.

Now retired, Adrian is pursuing his passion for breeding show dogs and is a highly respected and sought-after dog show judge. Once again, he’s a pioneer as one of the few Black judges in the elite world of show dogs.

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

VBL-geek@theguys.org

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

Reservations required by Feb. 6!

Member Hobbies: Mike McCarron

by VBL Board Member **Ward Koppel**

After 30 years of officiating youth sports, Valley Broadcast Legend **Mike McCarron** is hanging up the whistle and chest protector. Mike says, "I started doing junior high school basketball when I was in high school at El Camino." While he doesn't have a favorite sport to officiate, he felt most comfortable working baseball and softball but grew more comfortable working football games. The one advantage football had, according to Mike, "I knew the clock would eventually reach 0:00, but in baseball and softball you never know if you'll get the third and final out."



His favorite experiences include umpiring at the Little League European Regional in Kutno, Poland, and the Little League Senior Softball World Series in Delaware.

His retirement has not gone unnoticed. The *Pacifica Tribune* did a feature story on the end of his officiating in San Mateo County, noting he started there in 1996. Mike told the *Tribune*. "To be honest, the increasing verbal abuse by parents, coaches and even players, reduced the enjoyment I received as an official."

Mike and his wife Jean are looking forward to spending more time with their grandchildren. But he says, "The thing I am going to miss most is the camaraderie with other officials and that I'll no longer have the best seat in the house."

Have You Paid Your Dues?

If you haven't already paid your dues for 2024, please do so. We don't like having to issue these reminders any more than you like reading them!

Just \$25 will keep our beloved social club going for another year. Even though we run a tight ship, we do have some operating expenses. Also, we earmark \$5 per member specifically for the Oral History Project.

The easiest way to pay your dues is to bring cash or check to the February 13 luncheon. \$55 will cover the cost of the buffet and your membership for 2024. Can't make it to the luncheon? Make out a check to Valley Broadcast Legends and mail it to:

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

We appreciate your prompt attention.

Officers

Interim President: Joyce Krieg

Vice President: Bud Kress

Treasurer: Bill George

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

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President's Message: Everything's Up in the Air

by VBL Interim President **Joyce Krieg**



So ... what's the latest with our meeting venue? Are we still at Aviator's?

Short answer—yes. As of this writing, VBL's February meeting will take place at Aviator's restaurant at Sacramento Executive Airport. Beyond that, it's all up in the air, as the saying goes.

As most of you know, just before our December meeting, the Sacramento County Department of Airports announced it would not be renewing Aviator's lease when it expires on January 31. A flood of protests erupted from loyal customers, quickly followed by a petition drive and survey. For now, it appears Aviator's is operating on a month-to-month basis until the SCDA makes up its mind.

Your VBL board has made the decision to remain at Aviator's until (1) the airport board really does close the place or (2) we outgrow the venue.

Reality check: Aviator's is not perfect. Even before the latest dust-up, we had concerns. Sure, our numbers have diminished post-pandemic, but it's still a bit of a squish in there. And the glare from all those windows makes video presentations problematic.

But outweighing that, we share the outrage of Aviator's loyal customers. There's simply inherently unfair and unjust about pulling the rug out from under a business that has served the public for nearly 25 years, surviving the Covid lockdown, only to be tossed aside without even a thank-you. What about the needs of the service clubs that meet at Aviator's—Rotary, Lions, Optimists, Soroptimists—and the many good works they do in the community? More to the point, what about us?

Chik, the owner of Aviator's, immediately set out the welcome mat for VBL when the Club Pheasant cancelled on us at the last minute in December of 2022. He's been nothing but helpful to us ever since. Chik has assured us that as soon as he hears anything new from SCDA, he will get in touch with us. Your board feels it's only right to show our appreciation by sticking by Chik and Aviator's as this situation sorts itself out.

Nothing is certain except change, and that is especially true in the restaurant industry. If anything develops between the writing of this column and the February 13 meeting, we'll be sure to let everyone know via email. As we say in the news biz, "Stay tuned for updates as they come into the newsroom ..."

The Legends

Membership as of Jan. 31, 2024

John Archer • Julie Archer
 Jay "DJ Jay" Arnold • Stan Atkinson
 Vic Biondi • Bill Bishofberger
 Thomas Blazowski • Matias Bombal
 Tom Buck • Allen Chamberlin
 Mark Chiolis • Tim Church
 Chris Cochran • Anita Fein • Curt Foley
 Vicki Fox • Bill George • Gary Gerould
 Marty Gonzalez • Samuel Gonzalez
 Dennis Grayson • Michael Guiliano
 Kristine Hanson • Bud Harmon
 Fred Harris • Mark Hedlund • Jerry Henry
 Betsy Hite • Rich Ibarra
 Rick Kavooras • Richard Kermickel
 Tip Kindel • Jan "Neely" Klevan
 Kim Kline • Cindy Koppel
 Ward Koppel • Bill Kreutzer • Bud Kress
 Joyce Krieg • Eleanor Kuechler-VanAcker
 Bob Lang • Dick Leeson • Mike Luery
 Jeanne Marie • Lizette Martinez- Hopkins
 Dee McCafferty • Michael McCarron
 Michael Messmer • Dana Michaels
 Bob Miller • Alan Milner • Joyce Mitchell
 Mike Montgomery • Keith Moon
 Ray Nelson • George Nyberg
 John D. O'Brien • Alan Oda
 Sandy Ofsenek Helland • Deborah Pacyna
 Sue Peppers • Mary Jane Popp
 Craig Prosser • Rich Raymond
 Bruce Riggs • Jay Rudin • Beth Ruyak
 Bill Schmechel • Walt Shaw • Dann Shively
 Barbara Souza • Roy Stearns
 Jim Stimson • Steve Swatt
 Gregory VanAcker • Bob Venditti
 Gregory Virtue • Tom Wagner
 Marla Wells • Dave Williams
 Adrian Woodfork • Dennis Yoder
 Jan Young • Steve Zraggen



Erik St. John: 1936-2023

Former KFBK news announcer **Erik St. John** was told by his doctor he wouldn't live to see 2024. Never one to miss a deadline, Erik succumbed to pancreatic cancer on New Year's Eve at the home of his son in Kasilof, Alaska.

Born in Boston as Donald Wilbur Skjold, Erik graduate from the College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Illinois in 1960 and adopted the air name of Erik St. John. Following the well-worn career path of many other radio personalities in that era, he bounced around the country at a variety of stations, finally landing at KFBK in 1978. He anchored the morning drive newscast and later hosted a mid-morning talk show.



Those who worked with Erik at KFBK recall him as a consummate professional with a classic deep, resonate radio voice and calm, reassuring on-air demeanor. He liked to sign off his programs by saying, "Wishing you blue skies, green lights and a red convertible."

After leaving KFBK in the mid-1980s, Erik started a new career recording customized telephone messages for Sacramento area businesses. At the time, this was a brand-new concept, giving customers something to listen to besides the hiss of dead air as they waited on hold. As the technology evolved, so did the business.

He is survived by three children, eight grandchildren and eighteen great-grandchildren. A memorial service was held January 13 in Soldotna, Alaska.

Cary Nosler: 1944-2023



He was known throughout the greater Sacramento area as simply "Captain Carrot." **Cary Nosler** dedicated over 40 years of his life to promoting fitness and wellness through his radio show. A native Sacramentan, Cary graduated from El Camino High School and studied psychology at California State University, Sacramento. He started his career in radio with an underground radio show called "The Fantasy Machine" on KJML. He was one of the original deejays at KZAP, during which he earned the nickname "Captain Carrot" for his insights into nutrition, exercise, and overall health.

News of his passing while visiting his son in Thailand brought an outpouring of tributes on Facebook from his many fans. "I loved listening to Captain Carrot in the 70s and 80s. He was a huge influence on so, so many of us, and absolutely instrumental in encouraging me to learn about nutrition and create a healthy lifestyle" ... "an early influence in my wellness journey" ... "he is an icon that will never be forgotten; he made the world a better place. If anyone could live forever, I thought for sure it would be Captain Carrot."

Cary is survived by three sons and three grandchildren. A celebration of life was held on January 28 at the Union Brick event space in Roseville.

Meeting Memories: December 12, 2023



Feeling the holiday spirit, from left: VP Bud Kress, Mark Chiolis, Dick Leeson, Gregory VanAcker. Photos by *Matías Bombal*.

Our Condolences to Mary Jane Popp

Many sad faces were spotted at the December VBL luncheon as the word began to spread that our own **Mary Jane Popp** had lost her husband **Erick “Rick” Sprunger** after a battle with cancer just days earlier. He was 76.

Mary Jane and Rick met when they were both students at Indiana University and they had been married for nearly 53 years. On the surface, they seemed to be a bit of an “odd couple,” with Mary Jane so gregarious and bold and Rick quiet and reserved. But it became readily apparent that the two of them were perfectly matched, two halves that make a whole.

We at VBL will remember Rick as the good sport who was willing to don an ugly Christmas sweater and accompany Mary Jane as she made the rounds with chocolate and a sing-a-long at our holiday gatherings. The photo at left is from 2019.



Mary Jane wrote in his obituary, “I can truly say ‘It’s A Wonderful Life’ absolutely describes the life of my beloved Rick Sprunger. He was a great son, a dedicated and loving husband for nearly 53 years, a decorated Vietnam Veteran, and so caring that he always had my back for whatever I created from the most serious to the crazy antics I came up with ... we are and always will be soulmates forever.”

Before retirement, Rick was a manager in the UC Davis department of Innovation and Educational Technology. He shared Mary Jane’s love of dogs and dedicated himself to animal rescue causes. Funeral services were held January 11 at Sierra View Funeral Home in Carmichael.