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RADIO LEGEND JEAN SHEPHERD, K2ORS, SK

Jean Shepherd, K2ORS--the man once described by media critic Marshall McLuhan as "the first radio novelist" and by others as "Mark Twain for the radio"--died October 16 in a hospital near his home in Sanibel Island, Florida. He was 78.

One of the original radio "talkers," Shepherd gained a loyal following of overnight listeners during his more than two-decade tenure at powerful WOR in New York during the 1950s, 60s and early 70s. Shepherd was first licensed as W9QWN in 1938. He served in the Army Signal Corps during World War II, then attended Indiana University before doing radio in Cincinnati and Philadelphia and finally New York.

On the air, "Shep" worked without a script or reliance on telephone callers spinning yarns--typically with a sardonic edge--often based on his boyhood years in Hammond, Indiana and his time in the Army and occasionally mentioning ham radio. Among the characters he created was alter ego Ralphie Parker, who appeared in his 1983 film classic "A Christmas Story," which he wrote and narrated.

The banquet speaker at the 1985 Dayton Hamvention, Shepherd also provided the introductory narration to the Morse code instruction tape included with the League's Tune in the World license manual. Several hams wrote ARRL Headquarters to say that Shepherd had provided inspiration for their early interest in Amateur Radio.

In addition to live appearances, Shepherd penned numerous articles and several books, including In God We Trust, All Others Pay Cash in 1966 and Wanda Hickey's Night of Golden Memories in 1971. His TV works for PBS include Jean Shepherd's America and The Great American Fourth of July and Other Disasters.

In later life, Shepherd remained active on HF SSB and occasionally on 2-meter FM, sometimes operating from his boat in Florida. He also had an interest in classic automobiles. His third wife, Leigh, died last year.

"He captivated a generation with his stories," said vintage radio buff John Dilks, K2TQN. "He is survived by Schwartz, Flick, Bruner and all of the other wonderful characters he created."

For detailed information on Jean Shepherd, visit <http://www.advanix.net/~jsadur/shep.htm> or <http://www.spacelab.net/~bkaye/Shep.html>.