

Broadcasting's Dali Holds His Audience

By CAROL JACOBSON

WEST LONG BRANCH — The Dali of radio broadcasting, or as he seriously describes himself, "a man of mixed media," Jean Shepherd appeared at the Monmouth College Lecture Series last night.

Listening once to Mr. Shepherd on WOR, I imagined that I was the only one that had tuned him in.

I told him that fantasy, after he held a large audience for almost two hours, weaving some of the familiar stories he relates on radio, and he answered me.

"That's a good thing," he said. "As a matter of fact, I once started one of my broadcasts like that — it was very quiet and I said, 'I'm talking now to the one person out there who is listening to this show.'"

I thought I had imagined the whole thing.

Serious About Craft

Mr. Shepherd may sound surrealistic when he's on stage or in front of a microphone, yet he's serious about his craft.

Beginning April 1, on Channel 13 at 8:30 p.m., he will make what he calls the first attempt at "media in the novelistic form." The first show was filmed by Public Broadcasting System in Alaska and is, he states, an imaginative tale about specific geographic spots. It will be the first in a

series of programs.

He started his career in Cincinnati, on TV he said, and then got into radio.

"I work in silence, like a painter works on canvas, with big spaces, color — imagine chunks of silence about to be molded, kneaded and there I am in front of a microphone," he began.

What makes his presentation so remarkable, is his charm and use of dramatic nuance. Even though he sounds precisely as he sounds on radio, in person he becomes a one man show with spotlight on and an enraptured audience.

His stories were long but

complete. His youth was spent, he said, in the sneakiest ghetto of our time, "the alphabetical ghetto, you know S for Shepherd."

Formal education, he is convinced, is not where a young person learns about life. He attended three universities and graduated from none.

Any attempt at relating his stories would be futile. At 10:15 p.m., following the news on WOR, he turns on with 45 minutes of wierd music (sometimes he orchestrates with it) and monologue. Turn it on any night during the week.

He spoke of his school ex-

periences in low tones, loud tones, sometimes even silence, in what he likes to think of as "Twain story-telling."

Enjoys Commercials

TV commercials for Mr. Shepherd are the best of TV vehicles for humor and literary allusions. He says they follow the classical drama, with prologue, cast and plot.

"Do you want to hear an army story? One you'll never see in the movies?" he asked. The audience responded with applause and by 10:30 p.m. Mr. Shepherd, who admitted he would have continued until 11, finished up. His army tale created real people and places. "War and the army are not necessarily synonymous," he added.

The Shepherd show, on WOR, that covers 27 states, often shares a common frequency with "Now Is the Hour," Billy Graham's show from Ottawa, Canada.

Sometimes the shows crossover, fading in and out from each other.

"I used to get letters like, 'Dear Dr. Shepherd, enclosed is \$10 to keep up the good work,' he added. "I even received six months packets of letters from Billy Graham's office with one letter that began, 'Dear Bill, that story you told last night makes radio so fantastic.'"



SATISFIED LISTENERS — Jean Shepherd, of WOR fame, who spoke at Monmouth College last night, chats with Philip Graham, left, of S. Cherry Lane, Rumson, vice president of the Central Jersey Bank and Trust Co., and his three daughters, staunch fans of Shepherd's. From left, they are Priscilla, 17, Margaret, 11, and Joan, 15. (Register Staff Photo)