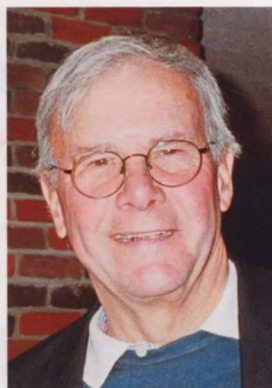
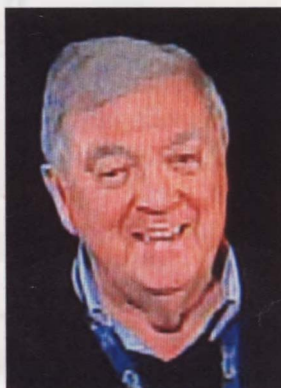




Peacock North is 25 Years Old!

Bambi Tascarella to be Guest Speaker at Annual Brunch
Details on Pages 2 and 3



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Marilyn's Page



Happy New Year all! It's 2012, and this year marks Peacock North's 25th anniversary. We have held together and enjoyed each other's company, sharing stories and pictures as we honor our past and present. I hope all of you will make a special effort to attend the Spring Brunch to help share in the celebration of our success and longevity.

I would also like to take this opportunity to salute two very separate and distinctive groups: first, congratulations to the NBCUniversal members of NABET/CWA for overwhelmingly ratifying a long-awaited contract. The previous Master Agreement at NBC Universal expired on March 31, 2009. Second, congrats to the Giants as winners of Super Bowl XLVI. I realized while watching the coverage that my last Super Bowl involvement was in Super Bowl XXIII. It's funny; you can never know when you will have such an opportunity for the last time. I am so grateful for the chances I had and for those memories. Now sitting at home as a viewer, I am amazed at the enormity of all the coverage:

the pre-game, the cross pollination of shows throughout the network and cable entities, and, of course, the half-time extravaganza.

Our industry is in the throes of change and growth. It keeps morphing onto different platforms, most notably on mobile devices, cable and over the internet. The Super Bowl is just one great example. All I can say is that broadcasting is not going away any time soon - and that's really good news.

Now on to the good part, the rest of the magazine...

Spring Brunch Details

The fun happens from noon to 3:00 pm on Sunday, May 20th.

Once again we will be at Atlantic Grill/Lincoln Center, located in the former O'Neals' space, located at 43 West 64th Street, between Broadway and Central Park West.

Bambi Tascarella, NBCUniversal's own "Ma Bell", has agreed to be our Keynote Speaker.

The entire ground floor space will be ours if we can guarantee 150 guests.

We're counting on all of our members to fill in the reservation form on Page 27 and mail it in today!



All the best to you from your "Second Generation" Leaders!

**Support Our Troops,
Our Crews
and Our Correspondents
In Harm's Way**

Current E-mail Addresses

REMINDER—When you change your e-mail address, please remember to notify us at peacocknorth@yahoo.com. This is a great way for us to help members keep in touch with each other.

*What's Now!***Bambi's Brunch Blog**

Bambi was recently interviewed for an in-house closeup of key News Division people. Here are excerpts from that conversation.



I started in June of '65. After one year of college at Wittenberg University in Ohio, majoring in drama and speech, I decided to come back to New York City for the summer and get a job. My dad, Leon, was conducting the orchestra at Radio City Music Hall right across the street, and I said, "Gee, wouldn't it be great to get a job as a studio tour guide?" I started in June, giving tours, and I made \$40 a week. I had a lot of night shift duty, where I'd give a lot of tours to drunken sailors, but we had a lot of fun and met a lot of good people. I returned back to NBC in the June of '66, and I never left. I stayed in Guest Relations, giving tours, and was then promoted to cashier, and eventually tour supervisor in 1969, and then got my big break to move into the News Department.

A lot of the job opportunities that came down in the '60s listed as their first requirement: "Must be male." So, the only positions that gals were allowed to apply for back then were mostly in production. I got a job in the news room as sort of a gal Friday, working on the news desk in the height of the Vietnam War. The work consisted of sending telexes to our crews in the field—filing all the information, getting them what they needed, money orders, information on road closings, things like that. Vietnam is what I remember the most about my early days in the news room.

In 1972, there was a legal action brought against NBC by 16 women claiming discrimination. They won the case and that allowed a lot of women, especially new, young women coming into the company, to have an opportunity to get jobs that heretofore had been for males only. It actually helped me in 1979, after a wonderful nine year run on *Nightly News*, to land a job as a news desk manager, which, for the most part, was work that had been done by men. As an off-shoot of being a desk manager I got into telecoms and was on the news satellite operations desk. A very exciting time for me.

In 1988, I marched off to do the Atlanta and New Orleans conventions, which happened to be two of my favorite remotes. We had a total of 700 phone lines for all the NBC staff. It was quite an effort. After 45+ years I am still at it, albeit the phone lines have virtually gone away in favor of VoIP*.

[Ed. note: For more stories from "Ma Bell", NBC's Telecommunications Guru, be sure to join us at the Brunch!]

[*Voice over Internet Protocol, or "internet phone calls" ... such as the Skype® service, or dedicated high-speed data lines.]



What's Now!

**TODAY at 60—A Memoir
By Dan Grabel**



**RCA Exhibition Hall, January 14, 1952—Day One
Photo by Peter Stackpole, Life Magazine**



**“Today Girl” (Writer-Producer)
Beryl Pfizer on the air
with Dave Garroway - ca. 1960-61**

I can boast that I’m a television pioneer. Didn’t contribute impressive ideas, or win the coveted awards, but I was in the trenches, starting in 1948 at WPIX. When the Daily News got its FCC license none of the established “ink-stained wretches” (the hot shot by-line reporters and re-write men) working for the paper with the country’s largest circulation would take offered jobs in the start-up industry. I was a tyro radio newswriter at the paper and automatically became an associate producer for Sports and News at the TV station.

Looking for upward movement in 1955, I contacted the Today show’s Executive Producer Jerry Green and shortly after joined the show. In that day, guys like Green were accessible. Without a connection you could phone and seek a job!

“Today” was the brainchild of NBC boss Sylvester “Pat” Weaver, who later followed up the creativity with “Tonight” with Steve Allen, “Home” with Arlene Francis and Hugh Downs, and “Monitor – The NBC Radio Weekend Service.”

In 1948 and for a few years after, as I recall, daily TV programming did not commence ‘til mid-afternoon, so a wild idea like inviting an audience to tune in at seven in the morning as they were brushing their teeth and putting the coffee pot on (we had NO automatic self-starting coffee pots in the 1950s!) was outrageous! But they tuned in!

Weaver selected Dave Garroway, a laconic Chicago broadcaster, to head the show. Horn-rimmed glasses, six foot three, curious, definitely laid back, a guy audiences could accept at that time of the day. Weaver even coined an identifying title for Dave -- “Communicator.”

Stars had “side-kicks” in those days, and that job went to Jack Lescoulie, a New York morning radio show host from WNEW, then a very popular local station (remember “Milk Man’s Matinee” with Art Ford and “Make Believe Ballroom” with Martin Block?) The news reader was Frank Blair, a WWII Navy fighter pilot. And “Today” had a “weather girl,” a pretty fixture who probably looked out the window to make her predictions. The first was curvy Muriel McPherson. Later weather girls included former Miss America Lee Meriwether, pop singer Helen O’Connell and Florence Henderson

What's Now!

Well before “equal rights” became part of the American culture, women had good jobs on “Today” as writer-producers of the feature inserts and celebrity guest interviews. I recall a few: Beryl Pfizer; the well-connected Barbara Walters (who later became an on-camera “Today Girl”); the brusque and efficient Mary McCarthy; and Estelle Parsons, who later enjoyed a career on the Broadway stage and in Hollywood. There were several male side-kicks as well, whose names have slipped out of my memory bank.

At that time “Today” was more news than the light-weight material we watch currently. I was on the over-night news staff that included Eliot Frankel and Dave Teitelbaum. Both had come from the International News Service where they were cronies of Reuven Frank, later a writer on NBC’s Camel News Caravan with John Cameron Swayze. Also, in later years, Denny Dalton, Ed Bowers and Mort Hochstein were newswriters.

On the “Today” set which shared the space in the 49th Street window -- about 100 feet west of the present studio-- with the RCA Exhibition Hall, we had an active audio engineer who took in news feeds from overseas correspondents. He was Cal Brodhead. In 1955 we did not have immediate video feeds from overseas. It was all film, and it arrived on an airliner!

The studio was a lively place, with the control room and the guests’ “Green Room” down below. I recall Director Jac Hein, who was the personification of what you’d expect a big-time director to be. A guy with authority who exuded it in a friendly manner. A later big-name director, was Clark Jones. The TD was Steve Madrick. Paul Ransom was the commercial coordinator.

And then there was Major, the huge king of the coffee and Danish, who didn’t have much authority, but did preside over that coffee and the buns!

Innovation. I’ve overlooked one distinguished performer on the show: J. Fred Muggs, the semi-controllable chimp who would be deposited on Garroway’s desk from time to time for one-way conversations. Picture this as an experience: I’m in a studio men’s room cubicle and the hairy hand of a chimp comes searching under the wall separating the booths!

That was “Today” on the inside. Outside the window it was another world. The stars rarely, if ever, went out to join the throng which always gathered on 49th Street. If you were a New York visitor, it was a great way to communicate with the home folks -- still is. Press agents loved it. I recall one morning a gorilla was bouncing up in the crowd. Inside the studio staffers got excited and contacted the director who could not see the throng. When he switched the cameras from Garroway to the street, the gorilla put up a sign “Watch King Kong on W-O-R.”

The highlight of my “Today” life was the morning I was assigned to take a walk around midtown with former president Harry S. Truman, who occasionally visited the city and always took a walk--unescorted --around 7:30am, starting at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. He was chatty, friendly, and tipped his fedora to passing astounded New Yorkers. When he passed the Barkley Hotel he commented that he’d have to mention that to politician Alben Barkley, who had been his vice-president!

Dave Garroway probably was a more complex individual than I realized. He ended his TV career when it might have continued for many years, and, eventually, he took his own life.

Like many a star, he created a distinctive closing shtick-- the man from the mid-west raised his right arm at the elbow, opened the palm, and, as if pow-wow-ing with an Indian chief, said: “Peace.”

Later “Communicators” included Frank McGee, Barbara Walters, Jack Chancellor (I remember him as “Jack” before he upgraded to “John”) along with Ed Newman, Jim Hartz, and many others.

That’s my look back some six decades ago. My memories of “Today”, from 1955 to 1962.

[Editor's Note: “Today” was 60 years young on January 14, 2012.

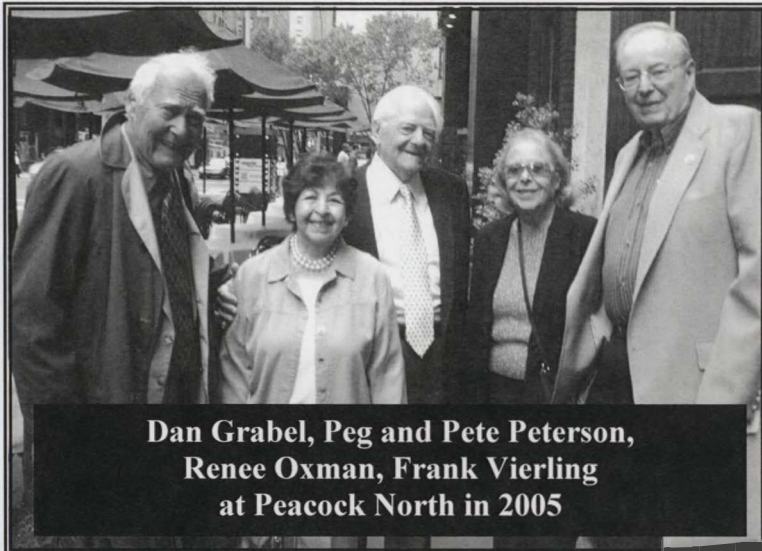
Dan Grabel joined NBC and “Today”

in its 3rd year as a newswriter in 1955 and remained with NBC News for 32 years.]

Peacock Profiles

The Genesis of Peacock North

By Dan Grabel



**Dan Grabel, Peg and Pete Peterson,
Renee Oxman, Frank Vierling
at Peacock North in 2005**

The e-mail from Joel Spector read – “PN will soon be 25 years old. Can you create something?” The big news that November day was about a presidential “wanna-be” who couldn’t recall details of a sexual harassment issue ten years earlier. And Spector wants me to recall facts dating back 25 years? These days, at 90, I discard memorabilia rather than squirrel it away. But I’ll try.

In the beginning: The late 1980s was a time of minor upheaval at 30 Rock. GE bought NBC from RCA and Jack Welch (he was the dynamic boss of GE) was sure to make some changes. He put GE exec Bob Wright in charge. He had no tv background as far as I’m aware, but corporate America must believe if you can successfully run business in one industry, you can do it in another. Wright was always cordial to PN. In my opin-

ion, the company was going from a benevolent aura to a bottom-line conscious operation. The unionized NABET writers may have been the first group set for down-sizing as GE sent letters with reasonably attractive payouts inviting many to take retirement. I did, leaving after 32 years.

In the early 1950s television was coming into its own – remember Tuesday nights when no organization would schedule an event because Milton Berle and the Texaco Star Theatre were broadcast at 8pm? All America watched – at home and looking into tv shops which showed the broadcast in their windows. Berle was such a hot item that even after the show ended NBC kept him on retainer at \$100,000 a year –I think, for life! So there was a lot of staff hiring at the networks. Forty years later it was a different story. Remember – someone invented daily hires and outsourcing!

Among NABET engineers, Peter Peterson, video-man, was retiring in 1986 and a group had gathered for a farewell lunch. They enjoyed it so much that they mused – we’ve shared a working life for 25 plus years, why end it like a guillotine slashing off a head at the Bastille? So an organization was formed. By then, many NBC engineers had retired to Florida and they met regularly. What to call the NY group? Peacock North was the answer, and Pete, with time on his hands, became major domo and the single-handed developer of the organization. Vinnie DiPietro was the first president, followed by Frank DeRienzo, and then Pete, who continued in the job until just before he died in 2008.

The informal gatherings in the early days were monthly luncheons at Picco Lissimo restaurant in Fort Lee, NJ with about 20 engineers and one newswriter (me!) in attendance. To spread the word, the annual moveable feast went to White Plains, NY on one occasion and to a Ramada Inn in Secaucus on another. The PN newspaper in those days was, I think, a mimeographed sheet put out by Joe Bascietto. For many years PN’s make up was primarily engineering staffers and a few newswriters. Eventually PN branched out to include anyone who had spent 25 years at NBC.

In that day (1970s and 80s) a gracious RCA ran a big event at the Plaza Hotel every December inducting 25 year veterans into an informal club whose main (and only) event was that lavish cocktail party. Five or six hundred showed up. Inductees got a nice watch and a class photo. I think I recall correspondent Ed Newman was in my group of around 50 new 25-year club members...

Peacock Profiles

In that era most people worked at NBC for a lifetime. The record holders were Gloria Clyne, who died last summer, and announcers Don Pardo and Howard Reig who racked up 50+ years. There was one other half century person, a woman -- last name possibly Smith -- I do not recall. [Ed. note: Audio pioneer Phil Falcone started with NBC as a Page at 711 Fifth Avenue and retired 49-1/2 years later!]

I still have the 1995 PN phone book Peter put together and it lists about 350 members. I think -- a guess-timate -- membership might have reached 400-450 at its height.

PN's big expense has always been the publication and after it went from mimeo, to black and white magazine style and then color, Pete managed to find support in NBC's Reprographics (print) department -- which produced promotional material -- where their Robert Batche found time, paper, and manpower to assist in producing the slick publication in those days. The present-day magazines are professionally printed by Pressmark Printing in Marietta, OH, thanks to Jim and Mary Marshall, who brought us together with them several years ago.

The creative job of putting words and pictures into a professional 48 page magazine was accomplished first by Heino Ripp, a popular TD, and later by video engineer Frank Vierling, who also created the "Looking Back" features. I was the Managing Editor and chief writer for 14 years with vital assistance from newswriter Roy Silver

As PN grew in membership the monthly luncheons became an annual affair at La Maganette on Third Avenue and then on to O'Neals' and now the Atlantic Grill, both at Lincoln Center. They always attracted a crowd of around 150 guests. Pete always managed to get a headliner for those annual gatherings. Top directors, correspondents and anchors including Tom Brokaw, Ed Newman, Bob Costas, Bob Hager, and director Walter Miller, all of whom had an endless supply of anecdotes for this audience which already knew a lot of inside stories. Pete's wife Peg, who survives him, was for many years the hostess who greeted attendees.

The one thing we all share is (mostly) wonderful memories at 30 Rock. It was an exciting venue. To me, it was a job where no one called in sick because you never knew who you might be interviewing, video-graphing, or being in close contact with the names that made news that day.

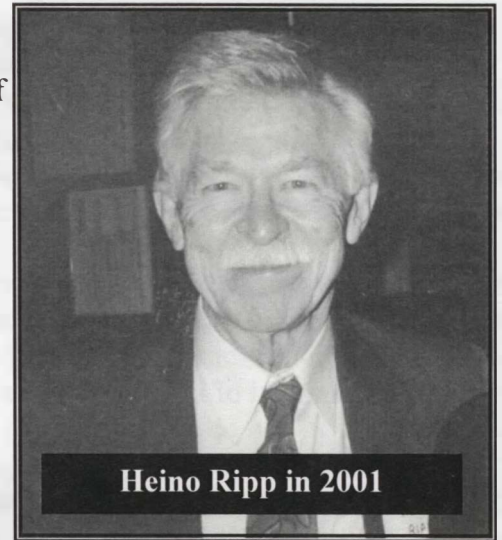
My personal list is extensive: a "Today" assignment to walk midtown Manhattan with a retired Harry Truman, a morning must on his visits to the Big Apple, and report back to Dave Garroway; filming road work with Muhammad Ali in Central Park, (cameraman Jerry Yarus and crew rode just ahead in a station wagon); wearing ice skates to do an interview with Peggy Fleming on the rink at 30 Rock; concentrating so hard while doing an interview with Richard Burton as he came off a train at Penn Station to do Hamlet on Broadway that I did not look at the woman who was on his arm -- Elizabeth Taylor! Hey, and interviewing O. J. Simpson when he won the Heisman trophy...

Finally, while Peacock North goes back a quarter century, I can dig a bit deeper in my personal television years since I began in the industry in 1948 when WPIX got its FCC license. I was in the News & Sports department (then combined) and our first big event was the presidential conventions -- both Democratic and Republican, held in Philadelphia with Harry Truman and Tom Dewey as the nominees!

#####

[Ed. note: Dan Grabel was one of the creators of PN magazine, along with Peter Peterson and Heino Ripp, in 1988. For more on Dan—and "Today" — please see his article on the preceding pages.]

Dan may be contacted at dangrabel@aol.com or at (401) 315-2357, in Rhode Island.



*Peacock Profiles***Studio 3A
Then and Now
By Frank Vierling****The Birth and Rebirth of Studio 3A**

I was mustered out of the Army Air Force in December 1945. I served 18 months, of almost exactly three years, in Kunming, China. In December, 1948, after finishing the two year engineering program at the RCA Institute, I found my way to NBC's Personnel Department and to the desk of Doris Ann. There were the usual basic interview questions and then a round of interviews by engineering department heads. I was hired and reported for work on January 6, 1949.

All new engineering hires had to pass through Whitney Baston's studio audio operations class. I was assigned to Kinescope Recording, for about a month, waiting for a new class opening. Following Mr. Baston's class I worked a few Studio shows before being assigned to the TV Field group where the mobile units were garaged in Long Island City.

Field had two mobile units, each equipped with three camera chains. 1A's gear was color coded blue and 1B's was Yellow. A third set of cameras (the Green Gear) was stored in Rock Center and moved to different studios as programming required. Only two studios, 8G and 3H had cameras. The Green Gear covered the NBC Symphony from 8H, Perry Como in 6A and Milton Berle in 6B, among others. As the broadcast day expanded theaters and other outside facilities were equipped for TV. On a 1949 Saturday, now a member of TV Field, I was part of a crew assigned to 3B. We moved the Green equipment to 3B and set up for Jon Gnagy's show "You Are an Artist". John hosted the very first "learn to draw" show on TV. His artist kits are still sold in art supply stores! You can Google John on "You Tube" and see segments of several of his vintage TV shows.

Following Gnagy one camera was pushed across the hall into 3A for "Story Book Time." An actress, dressed in a Little Bow Peep costume, read and turned pages of a giant story book. (This was TV's first use of 3A although technically it was just an extension of 3B.) Before we broke for lunch, Leon Pearson did a noon news spot. While we were on our lunch break, 3B was set up for the prime time "Phil Silver's Arrow Shirt Show," which was followed by a Pearson news spot at 11. After the Pearson news spot, we moved the gear and set up 6A for Sunday morning's Horn & Hardart "Children's Hour," hosted by Ed Herlihy. With little sleep and short turnaround we were back in for the Sunday broadcast day. In addition to the "Children's Hour," we did "Leave It to the Girls," with Maggi McNellis in 6B (cameras pushed across the hall). The cameras returned to 6A for the "The Meredith Willson Show" and sign off news with Leon.

The Birth of TV in 3A.

Sometime in 1949 Field received three new camera chains. At first, it was thought they were to replace or add to our Field equipment. We soon found they were bound for studio 3A. The gear was coded RED. With the Red Gear, 3A became the third TV Studio. A variety of shows originated from 3A, a few I worked were "Morton Downey's Mohawk Rug Show" and "The Roberta Quinlan Show", the sitcom "Henry Aldrich" ("Coming Mother"), "Who Said That?" (See note below) and "Date in Manhattan" the outdoor talk show from Central Park's Tavern on the Green. I remember being the first to use the new 3A "Christmas Tree" audio console, so named for the overuse of tally lights.

Peacock Profiles

While I was in China I subscribed to "Time" magazine's mini overseas edition. I read it cover to cover. One of our Recreation Hall entertainments, other than movies, was a news quiz show. A moderator and a panel of four men asked and answered current news questions. News quotes were read and the panelists were asked to identify who said that. If they could not, the audience was asked. The quotes came right out of "Time." The reward for a correct audience answer was a carton of cigarettes. I often left with several cartons. I didn't smoke, but they were good for trading.

Jumping ahead, it's now 1949, I'm in 3A and working on the show "Who Said That." Bob Trout is the MC and John Cameron Swayze is a permanent member of a panel filled out with various stage, screen and TV personalities. It was produced by Fred Friendly.

When Friendly died his obituary noted his service in the CBI Theater and that he had, as I did, worked on the Bombay, India dock disaster and fire (one of the worst and little known WW II disasters). We might have worked side by side in India. And here we were in 3A, side by side working on his show. Did he create it in China or adapt it from what I saw in Kunming?

Eventually all the NBC studios were colorized and now some 62 years later there is another 3B rebirth as it enters the new era of HDTV.

Disclaimer -- Any similarity to actual events is the best my old brain can muster. My 34 years at NBC had many more plusses than minuses. Thank you, PN, for asking me to commemorate 3B's HDTV upgrade. I have enjoyed reliving my NBC years through my "Looking Back" series and now again with this opus.

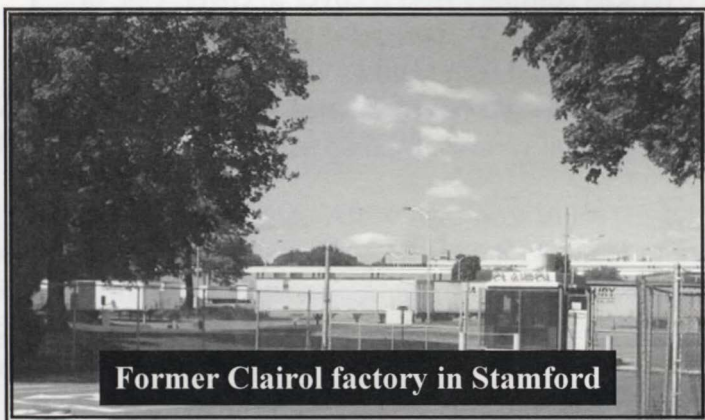
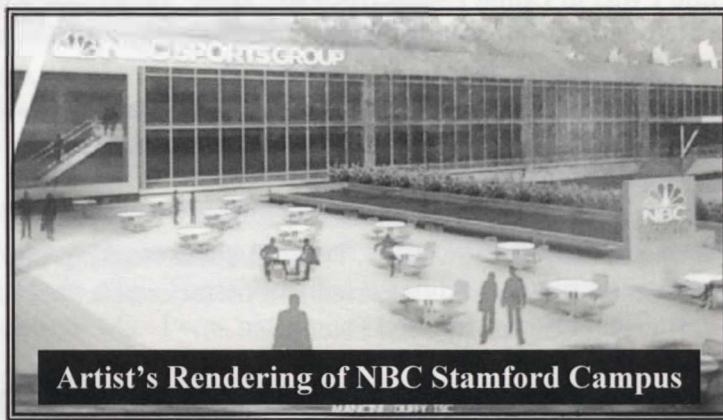
Ed. notes:

In recent years Nightly News has originated in the 3C studio space and was controlled from a new control room built in the old 3G studio space. That new control room was turned over to MSNBC to use with the 3A studio floor when MSNBC moved into 30 Rock. That meant that Nightly News, still using 3C floor, would now be controlled from the Today show's new control room in "10 Rock", the former Eastern Airlines building.

Also in recent years, 3B studio and the 1986 3B control room had been unused, to the point of removing every stick of equipment from the control room and turning both it and the studio floor into office space. The studio equipment, lighting grid and wall panels were never touched, so that it was quite simple to resume using it for both Nightly News and the Brian Williams "Rock Center" prime-time magazine show. Both of these shows are controlled from the Today show control room, "1A." All of these facilities are now high-definition.

Sometime this year WNBC News will return to its 1970's Sixth and Eleventh Hour News home on the 3C studio floor, and will be controlled from their current control room in the 7th floor East newsroom area.

3K control is gone, but the studio floor belongs to MSNBC and is controlled from the recently built Hi-Def 2K control room – on the second floor!

*What's Now!***Tax Deal Lures NBC Sports to Connecticut****Former Clairol factory in Stamford****Artist's Rendering of NBC Stamford Campus**

NBC Sports will move to Connecticut. Gov. Daniel Malloy made the announcement on October 25, 2011 at 1 Blachley Road in Stamford, which will be the new home of the NBC Sports Group. The project is expected to begin in September 2012, create 450 jobs and allow room for the company to grow in the future. "This new campus is about bringing people together to maximize production, creativity and efficient teamwork," Mark Lazarus, Chairman of NBC Sports Group, said in a statement. "However, this initiative would not have been possible without the financial support of Governor Malloy's 'First Five' program and the local support provided by Mayor Pavia, who we look forward to working with for many years to come."

NBC Sports Group will also build a studio for the NHL Network that will house most of the network's personnel and will create additional jobs in Connecticut, in addition to the 450 amount. Malloy said the company will consolidate much of its northeast operations, including its existing Connecticut workforce, at new studios and offices in the former Clairol factory in Stamford. [Ed. note: Much of NBC Sports' **senior staff** will move out of their 30 Rock offices and be based out of Stamford. All **NBC Sports sales executives** will remain in New York, and there will be some offices in 30 Rock to allow executives to work out of Manhattan on occasion.]

NBC Sports is the fourth company in the "First Five" initiative, a state program that provides incentives for the first five companies that bring more than 200 new jobs to Connecticut.

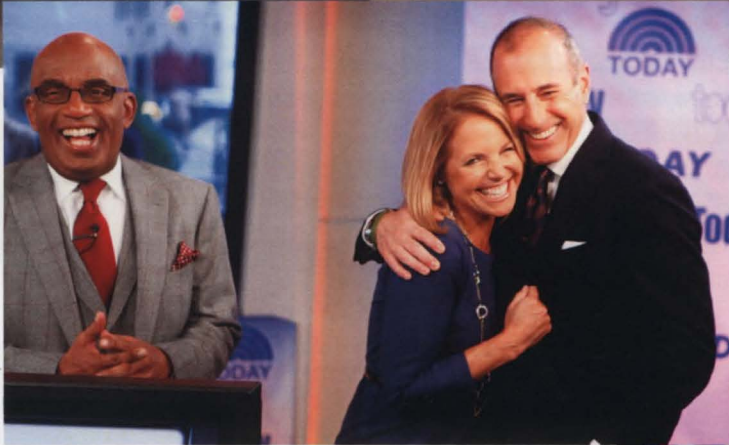
The state will provide a \$20 million loan through the Department of Economic and Community Development, which administers "First Five." The building is the largest in Stamford, according to Cushman & Wakefield. "This is a terrific project for the city and state, and one that I am proud to support as the fourth 'First Five.' The companies that are participating in this economic development program are job producers, and NBCUniversal has been doing that since it first arrived in Connecticut," Malloy said. "Stamford has been home to NBCUniversal television production since 2008 when it retrofitted the Rich Forum Theatre in downtown to create the Stamford Media Center.."

The 32-acre site, located near Interstate 95, will include office space for NBC Sports, NBC Olympics, NBC Sports Digital, the NBC Sports Network, and the Comcast Sports Management Group, which oversees the NBC Sports Group's 14 regional networks. The NBC Sports Group will also use the site to construct numerous state-of-the-art studios to house the company's growing need for studio content. NBC Connecticut is part of NBC Universal.

—NBC Connecticut press release of Oct 25, 2011

What's Now!

In Living Color: "Today at 60" Official NBC Photos from the set of the 60th Anniversary Broadcast



*What's Now!***"Bloommobile" Wins an Emmy®**

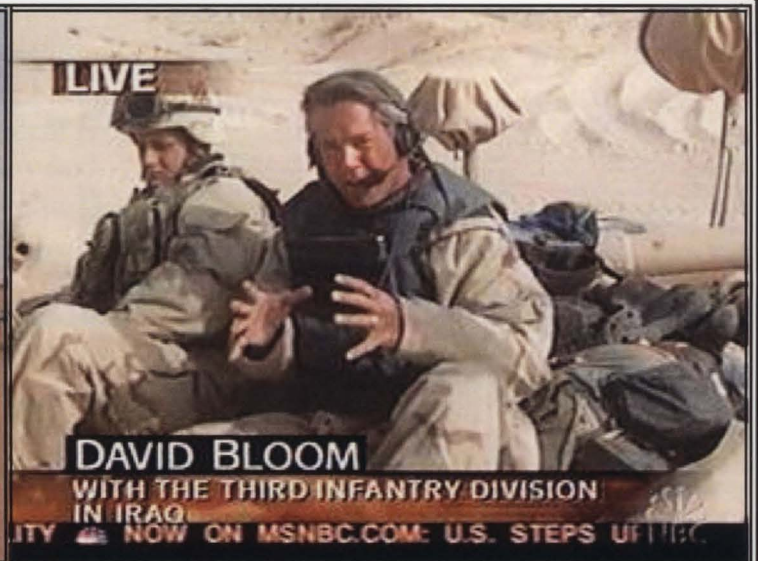
The National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences honored the winners of the 63rd Annual Technology & Engineering Emmy® Awards January 12 at the International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. The NBCUniversal Operations & Technical Services team from News won for "Development of Integrated, Deployable Systems for Live Reporting from Remote Environments ('Bloommobile')."

Accepting this very prestigious award was none other than Stacy Brady, recently named SVP and General Manager of News Field and Production Operations. The award was for the development and implementation of the Bloommobile as a rapidly deployed integrated system. Basically, it was a game changer for how live news would be covered. It was the first time a correspondent would report live while en route with a convoy through the desert, maintain communications with a control room, and have telephones, internet access and a return feed. It was unprecedented.

Our late colleague David Bloom was honored as well, which was a fitting tribute to his vision and contributions to this project that distinguished NBC News from the competition.



Accompanying Ms. Brady at the award show were Jack Bennett, Bob Lapp and members of the Bloom family. This was David Bloom's vision. He came to Field Operations knowing that Stacy and her team would help him push the envelope to accomplish this. Jack Bennett, Director of Field Operations, was key in helping to design the engineering requirements for the Bloommobile. Bob Lapp was the audio technician/driver as well as an all-round great engineer who was part of the embedded crew accompanying correspondent David Bloom. One other person not present at the awards ceremony was David's videographer, Craig White, who took over the reportage after David's untimely death. As Stacy noted, the evening was very bittersweet.



We Get Letters and Pictures

Joelle Garguilo, NBC's Newest Journalist

Marilyn Altman writes:

Speaking of great things to come out of NBC News Field and Production operations: meet Joelle Garguilo, a new face on the Weekend Today Show.

About five years ago I was tasked by Stacy Brady to implement a number of new ideas, one of them being a school for digital journalism and its associated technical crafts. Who better than NBC, with its rich history and roster of talent, to begin teaching the next generation of journalists? It would be a course combining the fundamentals of broadcast news reporting as well as the high level of technical competence which is now demanded of those who must prepare and present their own stories.

It proved to be very successful in many ways. Joelle Garguilo was one of the "stars" in the first one-year program. She has been working at NBC for the past few years for Beth O'Connell as a Digital Journalist, but on January 21st Joelle made her debut on the Weekend Today Show. Here is the link to her piece:

<http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/26184891/vp/46081750#46081750>

And just to give proper credit, she was the student of Marian Porges, who was the Director of the Journalism Program at the New York Film Academy, where NBC partnered to create the course of study and technical facilities..

Good luck Joelle! We could not be more proud.

[Ed. Note: Joelle is not related to retired NBC and CBS TV director and executive Mike Gargiulo – their names are spelled differently.]



Joe Sturniolo's First Job

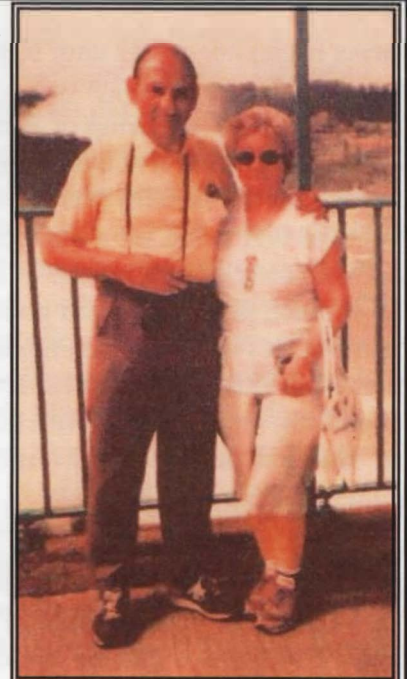
Recently your editor was sent a link to a short film about making bagels in Brooklyn. Seeing that film prompted retired NBC Network Radio Engineer Joe Sturniolo to send this story to us...

The Bagels film reminds me of my first job. Mr. Geller had a grocery store on the corner of 42nd Street and 12th Avenue, in Borough Park, Brooklyn. My job was to get up at 6 A.M., dress, and go to the store, where Mr. Geller would tell me how many dozen bagels he needed for the day. In the winter it was cold in Brooklyn, but when I got to the bagel factory it was warm and cozy. The aroma of baking bagels was a real treat. When I returned to the store, bagels in hand, I would fill paper bags with the proper quantities, and mark the bags with the names of the customers. Mr. Geller would always give me two bagels and a slab of Breakstone cream cheese to bring home to mama. There we always enjoyed the warm bagels with a schmear of cream cheese. How is that for an 88 year old's memory!

The lovely lady in this photo is Frances. We have just celebrated 63 years of marriage bliss. That picture is about twenty-five years old. It was taken on an overlook of the St. Lawrence River during a trip we took to Canada soon after I retired.

Thanks for the memory.

Joe Radio



Peacock Profiles
Lucy Jarvis at 93!


In a remarkable broadcast career spanning nearly fifty years, Lucy Jarvis has made her name by achieving the impossible. Born in New York City in 1919, Jarvis attended Cornell University* where she supplemented her studies in home economics and nutrition with courses in architecture, public speaking, and finance, while also serving as president of the drama club. "It was as though I was preparing myself for whatever decision I would make for the rest of my life," she explained in an interview for an alumni newsletter in 2005. Upon graduation, Jarvis found a job as a dietitian with New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center, where one of the doctors with whom she worked recommended her for an opening as the food editor of McCall's magazine. Jarvis, who had already written and published a cook book, flourished in the position, particularly when called upon to make appearances on locally produced television talk shows. The burgeoning medium held an allure for the ambitious, exquisitely curious young woman, who decided that she had "something I want to say ... and the place for me to do that is on television."

As she mulled her next career step, Jarvis left McCall's to raise her two children—"enjoying every minute of it"—while also volunteering for the Organization for Rehabilitation through Training (ORT). Here she got her first taste of film production when she made "Passport to Freedom", a documentary on ORT's global efforts to provide skills training to Jewish war refugees, taking them, as Jarvis explained, "from hopelessness to education to a new place of living, a new home, and a new hope." Jarvis eventually resumed her professional career by working as a staffer for various radio and television outfits, such as David Susskind's Talent Associates, and serving, for a time, as women's television editor for Pathé News. In 1957 she collaborated with Martha Rountree, the creator of "Meet the Press", on a Washington, D.C.-based public affairs radio show known as "Capitol Close-Up." The program attracted such notable guests as President Dwight Eisenhower, Vice President Richard Nixon, Senator John F. Kennedy, and FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, and subsequently earned Jarvis an invitation to join NBC News.

Jarvis began her career with NBC as an assistant producer for "The Nation's Future," a forum on current and controversial issues in which two opposing personalities shared their ideas and opinions. One of her earliest successes was the exclusive pairing of American astronaut John Glenn with Russian cosmonaut Gherman Titov, an event which was carried live by all three networks. In 1962, Jarvis, by then promoted to producer, was sent to Moscow to arrange for the filming of a documentary about the cultural and political history of the Soviet Union. While NBC had tried and failed for a number of years to bring cameras into the Kremlin, the inner bastion of communism, Jarvis, who took a crash course in Russian, succeeded by what she later characterized as "sheer manipulative wile." After much persistence and political maneuvering, Jarvis secured permission for the project from no less a figure than Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, whom she would subsequently profile in a 1967 documentary. Jarvis remained in Russia for the next five months, coordinating the various aspects of the production, and regularly smoothing local feathers with gifts of American cigarettes and home-baked brownies. Airing in 1963, "The Kremlin" dazzled audiences and critics alike and won an Emmy® Award for its cinematography.

Jarvis next produced a dual tour of the Louvre in Paris and the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., "Museum without Walls", which aired on NBC in 1963. The logistically complex project—among the first to utilize satellite technology—served as a forerunner to a more detailed exploration of the Louvre that Jarvis had in mind. The previous year she had accompanied President Kennedy on a state visit to Paris and it was there, during a social event, that she had first broached the idea of a documentary about the hallowed institution to French President Charles de Gaulle and Minister of Culture André Malraux. In a feat comparable to getting approval to shoot inside the Krem-

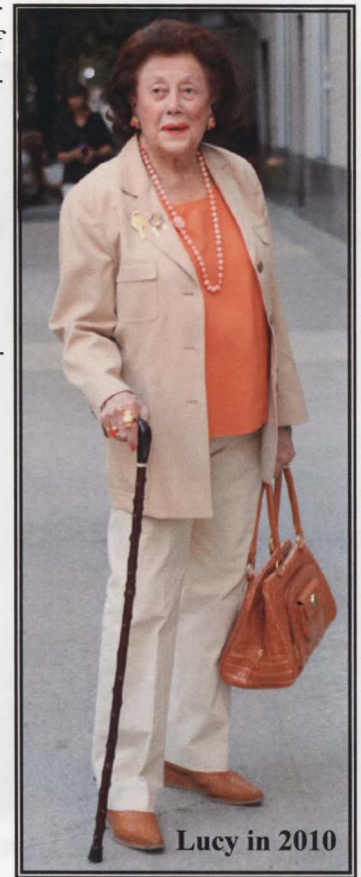
lin, Jarvis finagled permission to bring a camera crew into the Louvre. The color cinematography was an important element for Jarvis; indeed, General Sarnoff, chairman of RCA, the parent company of NBC, credited her programs on the Kremlin and the Louvre with helping to sell four million color television sets. “The Louvre: A Golden Prison”, airing in 1964, was recognized with a staggering number of awards, among them six Emmys, a Peabody, and a Radio-TV Critics Award. In 1968, Jarvis became the first woman—and one of the few Americans—ever to be designated by the French government as a *Chevalière de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*.

Jarvis returned to her roots in healthcare with the 1965 documentary “Who Shall Live?”, a landmark investigation of the medical, moral, and economic issues surrounding the use of artificial kidney machines. The broadcast sparked a firestorm of controversy over whether life-saving treatment should only be limited to those affluent enough to afford it and is considered one of the cornerstones of the modern bioethics movement. As a result of the film and the debate it stirred, the federal government made funding available for artificial kidney machine centers around the country, prompting the National Dialysis Committee to state: “Each new patient treated with the therapy of dialysis on the artificial kidney will owe some portion of his life to the camera and cutting shears of Lucy Jarvis.” “Who Shall Live?” was but the first of many crusading documentaries that Jarvis would make on medical and social issues.

Continuing her trend of “missions impossible” Jarvis embarked on an ambitious film about Scotland Yard. Although the Yard had never before allowed its internal operations to be captured on camera, Jarvis, quite naturally, prevailed and her film, “Scotland Yard: The Golden Thread”, aired to great acclaim in 1971. Jarvis next ventured to Communist China—becoming the first Westerner ever to film there—documenting the Peking Opera production of “Red Detachment of Women” (1972). In perhaps the greatest coup of her career, she gained access to the fabled Forbidden City, the ancient stronghold of imperial China, which had been off-limited to Westerners, and most Chinese, since the fourteenth century. Obtaining permission to shoot inside the walled city required intense diplomacy.

Negotiations of a different sort awaited her back in the States: at that time, the editor’s union was only open to men, but Jarvis insisted that her editing-room assistant, a woman, receive “special dispensation,” and, thus, a full credit on the completed film, China and the Forbidden City, which aired in 1973. “I fought hard to help women move up the ladder,” Jarvis explained in 2004 when she was honored by New York Women in Communication, “because I always felt that the more successful women there were around me, the better it reflected on me.”

On the cultural side, Jarvis has produced such documentaries as “Mary Martin: Hello Dolly! ’Round the World” (1966), and “Bravo, Picasso” (1967), which presented, via satellite, a simultaneous exhibition of the artist’s work from museums around the world. Jarvis ended her eighteen-year association with NBC in 1976, when she left to produce a series of Barbara Walters specials for ABC. Soon thereafter, she formed her own production company, Creative Projects, Inc., and tried her hand at fictional films, such as the two-part television movie “Family Reunion” (1981) starring Bette Davis, while continuing to produce and even host documentaries like “The Incas Remembered” (1984). In 1987, she started a second company, Jarvis Theater and Film Limited (eventually merging the two entities), and produced the first collaborative U.S.–Soviet musical of Duke Ellington’s “Sophisticated Ladies” in Moscow. In 1990, she brought the Russian rock opera “Junon and Avos” to New York City. Still going strong as she approaches her [ninety-third] year, Jarvis remains an inspiration to other women in television. As Sheila Nevins, president of documentary and family programming for HBO, notes: “Lucy lasts and lasts and lasts. She’s sexy, defies age, and gives bounce to every ounce. A trailblazer for women, she makes it easy for the rest of us. I love Lucy.”



Lucy in 2010

-- From Paley Center SHE MADE IT 2006 event info

* [Ed Note: View a recent interview with Lucy at <http://www.cornell.edu/video/?videoID=718>]

Peacock Profiles

Working at Wimbledon by Eric Brown



Eric, 3rd from left, with John McEnroe and the team.

This past Summer I had the opportunity to be a part of an amazing team of producers, directors, editors, and commentators all working towards a common goal—to portray the magic of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships to people worldwide. This is no small effort. The team of people I worked with devoted countless hours to making the show “happen.” I underestimated how much work was truly necessary behind the scenes, but now, having worked at this event, I developed a new-found respect for the efficiency and pure skill of our NBC Sports Wimbledon team.

As a runner, I was the typical “go getter” with a positive attitude. In retrospect, I hadn’t honestly cared what job I would be doing when in London; the simple fact that I was allowed to be there was enough for me. If an enthusiastic, encouraging, and assiduous worker is what our team needed at the time, I was determined to fill that role to the best of my ability. As an outgoing person who loves to meet new people, I was resolved to speak with everyone I met to find about how everything really worked. I grew up surrounded by the broadcasting world at NBCUniversal and have always wondered what exactly needs to be done in that dark room with all the screens to broadcast a sporting event and/or television show.

Luckily for me, my main job was “manning” the control room, and tending to the needs of our director, producer, technical director, associate director, and graphics PA’s. It was a busy job, but it landed me dead center in the heart of the action. Many of my unending questions received satisfying answers. I was fortunate enough to stumble into our audio truck, where Wendel Stevens, the Senior Audio Engineer for the show, resided for the majority of the event. As an audio engineering student at Ithaca College, this particular truck caught my eye, and Wendel was kind enough to give me an in-depth explanation of the broadcast audio world—a spectrum of sound filled with crowd noise, the sound of the players’ shoes sweeping against the grassy courts and their rackets smacking the ball at a hundred miles an hour, and most importantly, the voices of our announcers.



The scope of the broadcast audio field was quite intriguing, for I am surrounded by music everyday at school—that is what I know best. Getting exposure to a new aspect of audio I’m not as comfortable with is something I thrive on. And what more perfect place to do it? No question went unanswered, no concept was misunderstood, and I left with a substantial amount of new knowledge.

Yet, the comprehension of audio I gained was but one facet of the overall picture in this unforgettable summer experience. A student like me can truly learn from simply being an assistant. I was an observer, but this was a position that enabled me to learn, and to explore. It opened up my eyes to what it took to make a show like this really happen.

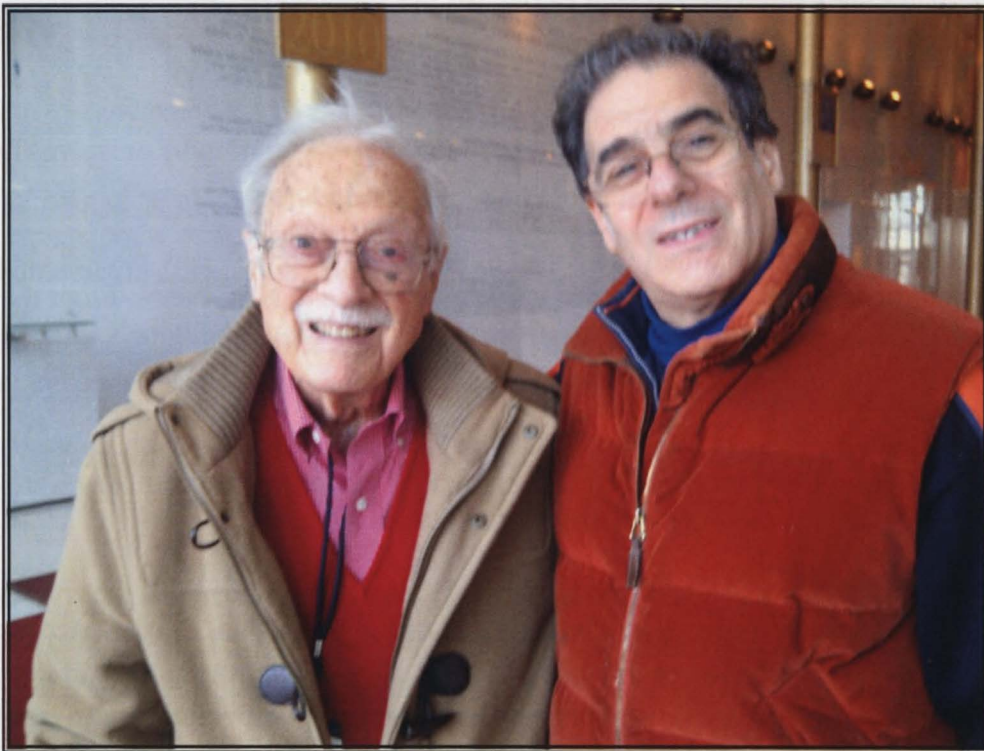
Eric Brown is a Sound Engineering student in the music program at Ithaca College

We Get Letters and Pictures

It's the Long Island Lunch Bunch November Gathering at Domenico's in Levittown.

Top: Gary Iorio, Bill Freeda, Jan Kasoff, Joel Spector

Seated: Vinnie Gabriele, Frank Gaeta, Murray Vecchio, Jerry Ryba and Tony Rivera



"Dream Along with Me..." It's "The Other" Ray Charles and Joel Spector. Perry Como's former choral director and your editor met for the first time in December while we were both working on the 2011 Kennedy Center Honors show.

*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Cardinal John P. Foley
Remembered by Joe Alicastro**

I first met Cardinal John P. Foley in the early autumn of 1989. Of course at that time he was Archbishop Foley. We had arranged to meet for lunch at Il Buco, one of his favorite restaurants in Rome. My purpose was to introduce myself as the new Rome Bureau Chief for NBC News. In his job as Communications Director for the Vatican it was important that I impress upon him NBC's serious and continuing commitment to covering Pope John Paul II.

When he first spoke to me I heard the same voice that I had listened to for so many years narrating the English language broadcast of the Pope's Midnight Mass from St. Peter's on NBC. I half expected the angels to descend from heaven right then and there in the middle of the first course of pasta! He immediately impressed me with his intelligence, wit and warmth. Many years later he would touch my own family when he presided over the ordination of my nephew who is now a priest in Maryland.

Over the years we had many meals together. He loved Italian cuisine. He had a wonderful sense of humor and he loved a good joke. On one occasion, at lunch with Cardinal Foley, my wife Miki launched into the story of how we were delayed at JFK Airport because her underwire bra kept setting off the metal detector. The Cardinal roared with laughter!

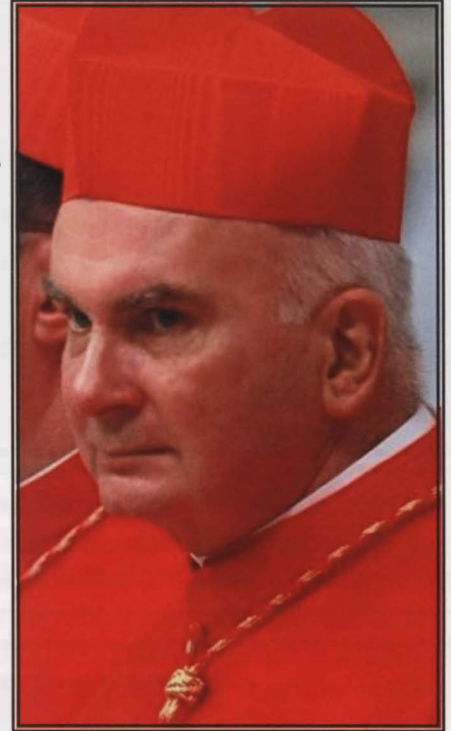
Always the gracious host, I will never forget the evening he invited Miki and I to the revealing of the restored Sistine Chapel. There we were, the night before it would open to the public, sitting by ourselves for twenty minutes staring up at the miracle of Michelangelo's frescoes.

As Vatican Communications Director, Cardinal Foley had to be impartial to the many requests he received from all of the world's news organizations. But secretly, he always felt very close to NBC News. From the landmark live Today Show Vatican broadcasts, to his role as commentator for NBC News on the Pope's historic trip to Cuba, he was with us.

Along with [Catholic theologian and papal biographer] George Weigel, he was also with us as commentator during our days of coverage of the death Pope John Paul II. During the last day of mourning, it was Cardinal Foley who escorted Phil Alongi and I directly to the Pope's casket to pay our final respects.

A graduate of the Columbia University School of Journalism, Cardinal Foley expanded the church's use of the electronic news media and coordinated news coverage for the papal trips of John Paul II. He understood our business completely. A journalist at heart, he was one of us.

All whom he touched surely miss Cardinal John P. Foley. He was truly was a member of our NBC family.



—Joe Alicastro, Producer, NBC News

*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Jean Brokaw
Remembered by her son, Tom**

Jean Brokaw – “Grandma Jean” – died on November 9th, 2011, peacefully and in the company of family and care givers at her home in Laguna Woods, California.

She was just 4 days short of her 94th birthday.

Mom was the mother lode of wisdom, good humor, soft and tough love for her three sons, 5 grandchildren, 7 great-grand children, a niece, nephew and a wide assortment of surrogate family members who gravitated to her for her generous manner, home-made dill pickles and peach pie.

She began life in Little House on the Prairie fashion on a farm in northern SD. No electricity, no indoor plumbing at the beginning and at the end, the hard times of the Great Depression.

She graduated from high school at 16 and wanted to be a journalist but the cost of college was prohibitive so instead she passed along her life-long interest in politics and world affairs to her son, keeping a close eye on his reporting for almost half a century.

The arc of her life is testimony to the warp speed of change. She went from kerosene lamps to logging on; she lived on an Army base in World War II and witnessed the end of the Cold War; she sent a Marine son to Vietnam and supplied his outfit with homemade dill pickles; she drove a team of horses as a child and traveled the world by jet and luxury cruise liners as an adult; with her larger than life construction foreman Red she went from living in a camping trailer to a Southern California condo stocked with good buys from Trader Joes. She went from not being able to attend college to attending the graduation of granddaughters from Stanford, Berkeley and Duke.

Grandma Jean always had something to say and it was always worth listening to.

*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Doug Skene, Sr****From Ken Fouts**

I am very sad to hear of Doug's passing on January 9th. I first came to NBC Sports Ops in 1978 and Doug was the Director of Operations with NBC Sports. He escorted me on my first international trip for a survey for boxing in Monaco. Needless to say I had no clue. I was petrified and he knew it. Doug made me feel that none of this was a big deal. I didn't understand what a cash advance was nor had I ever been through customs. Doug helped me just enough to figure out how to do what. He always wanted me to figure things out for myself. So, he would give me just enough information to make the next step.

He was old school and made me think of things differently. He had a wry smile and a sharp wit that I will always remember. He was part of the Simmons and Connal group that made NBC Sports work. I was lucky to get started in the Sports TV operations business with Doug Skene.

From Brett Holey

Douglas A. Skene Sr. worked at NBC for nearly 40 years. He started in the mailroom, worked as a film editor, a production manager on "Today" and retired as Director of Operations for NBC Sports. He travelled the world for NBC heading up coverage as memorable and diverse as the march on Selma and the Sapporo Olympics.

He was born in England in 1929 and met his bride, Kathleen while working as a purser on the Queen Mary. He served in the US Air Force during the Korean War then settled on Long Island to raise Doug and his four siblings. In lieu of flowers donations to the Salvation Army in Douglas' name would be appreciated.

If you would like to send Doug Jr a note his home address is:

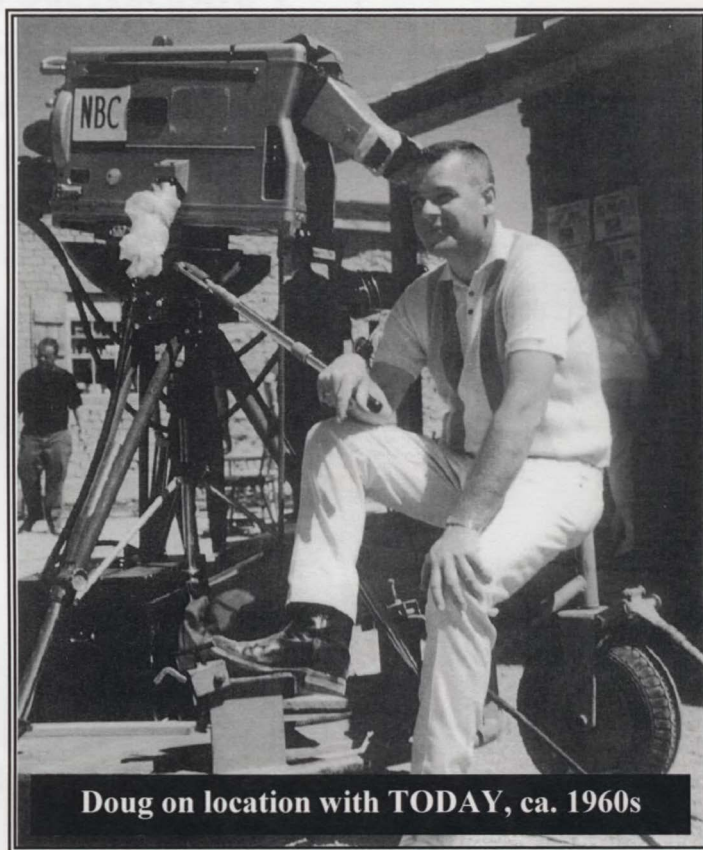
76 Saint Marks
Roslyn Heights, NY 11577

From Newsday on January 10, 2012

Beloved husband of the late Kathleen Loving father of Jacqueline (Philip) Kirk, Owen, Douglas, Geoffrey, Paul (Margaret). Cherished grandfather of Michael, Peter, Katherine, Elizabeth, Andrew Kirk and Harrison Skene.

From Joel Spector

Although I only met Doug on a few occasions, I was always taken by his grace and good humor. When we worked on the first live Wimbledon Finals in 8H Control he made sure that his New York crew had "Strawberries and Cream" for breakfast, just like the London crew. Quite a gesture.



Doug on location with TODAY, ca. 1960s

Doug Skene, Sr
Remembered by his son, Doug Jr

A little background on my dad. After leaving the US Air Force, he became a major contributor to NBC. Since 1950, he held many positions, including Film Editor, Associate Director, BOC Manager and Production Manager. His credits include the Tonight Show, Today Show, Political Conventions, Presidential Trips to Asia, Australia, South America, China and the Soviet Union, and a three month stay in the Sahara Desert.

He came to NBC Sports as a Production Manager on the Sapporo Olympics and was later named Director of Operations for NBC Sports. He was heavily involved in virtually every production aspect of NBC Sports, both foreign and domestic.

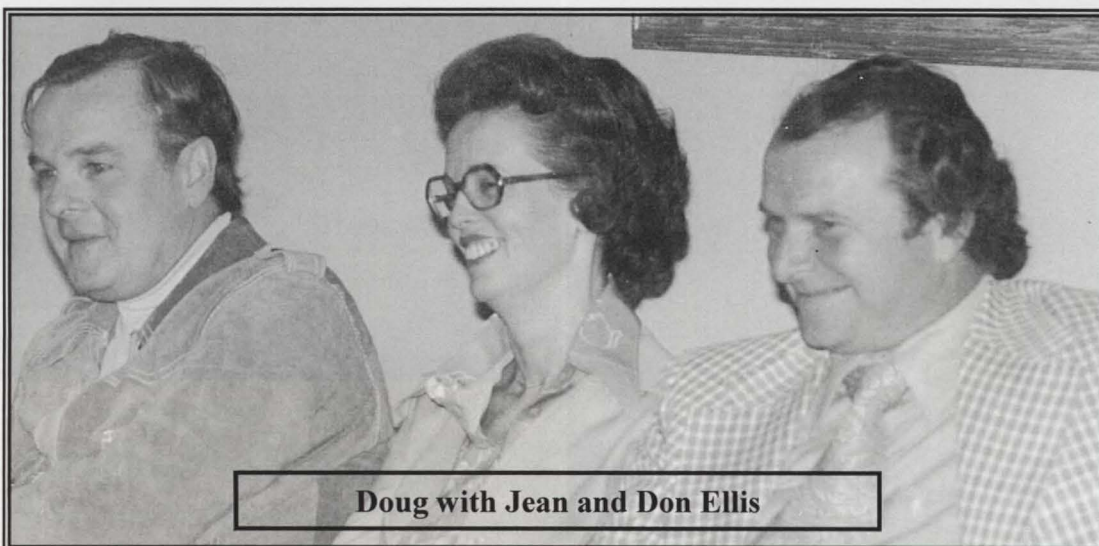
My dad was a class act. He loved NBC and thought of it as his second family. He was not only my father, but he was my best friend. He was the only guy I knew who would finish the Sunday Crossword Puzzle in under two hours. A day would never go by where we would not discuss the goings-on at NBC. He took such pride in my becoming the Technical Director on the NBC Nightly News. Any time something would go wrong on the broadcast I would hear about it for days for days. I cannot begin to tell you how much I miss him.

Doug Jr.

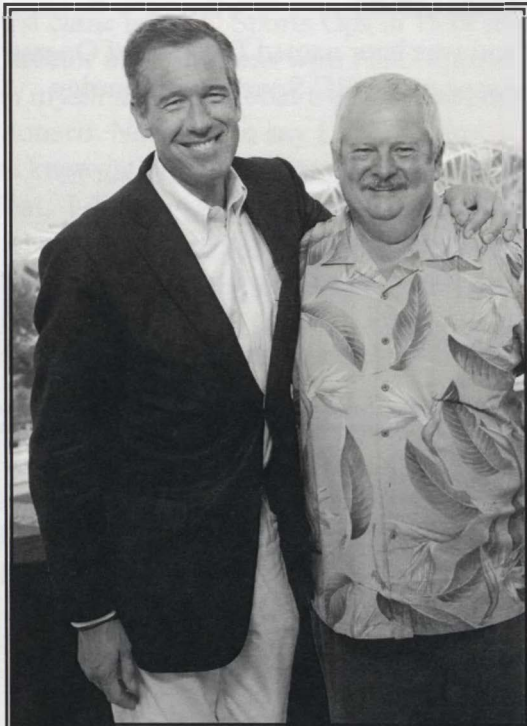
Photos Courtesy of Ginny Seipt



**Doug at the
Winter Olympics
Sapporo, 1972**



Doug with Jean and Don Ellis

*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Alan Harding
Remembered by Marilyn Altman**

For those of us who knew Alan Harding, we knew we were the lucky ones. The world truly grew dimmer on Friday, December 9th with his passing. He gave life to those around him with his humor, hard work, common sense, and did I mention humor? Alan was a loveable, roly-poly of a guy who just grabbed you by the heart and never let go. He was tireless in his work ethic, good to those around him. You could always count on Alan, no matter what.

Alan Harding was the Technical Manager of Field Operations in the London Bureau. Nothing happened on that side of the pond without his knowledge and invaluable input. His footprint extended to Africa and the Far East while in service to NBC News. He was beloved by on-air talent as well as production folks and fellow engineers. After many years with NBC he retired, but had come back to work with Stacy Brady's Field Operations group in Vancouver for the 2010 Olympics. In April of 2011 he worked with that same group in London for the Royal Wedding. Alan was 62 and leaves a wife, Val, and a son, Andrew.

There will be a service for him here in New York on March 1st, which his family will attend. If you wish details, please email me at marilyn.altman@nbcuni.com.



*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Bob McCarthy
Remembered by Ken Donoghue**

Bob McCarthy came to NBC during in the 1962-63 strike against all seven New York newspapers. The papers' loss was broadcasting's gain. Every station multiplied its news, sports and commentary segments. A 15-minute radio or TV show now ran for an hour - loaded with commercials.

NBC and its competitors needed people, experienced people, to staff their newsrooms. NBC recruited from all the papers. Bob McCarthy of the Daily News was one of our star recruits. Bob was a police reporter. His contacts with precincts and bureaus gave NBC a leg up on many crime stories. We all saw Bob as a character out of "Front Page." Brooklyn accent, street savvy, funny, colorful vocabulary; accurate to a fault. When Bob described some executive as an Empty Suit we all nodded in agreement.

When the press strike ended Bob and many other talented newsmen were hired permanently. Bob worked local radio, local TV, primaries and conventions. It was Bob's connections which tipped NBC on Nixon's choice of Spiro Agnew as his VP running mate. Bob was on the space team for the Gemini and Apollo missions. He used to utter the word "Sideways" when something went awry in our coverage. Jim Kitchell, the Executive Producer, startled everyone, especially Bob McCarthy, with the last credit on Apollo 15 -- an elegant slanted

"A SIDEWAYS PRESENTATION."

Bob was a regular at Hurley's. He always drank Martinis, which called "Martins." One night in 1974 he came into Hurley's and complained that "someone" had given his name to Mort Aronoff and Hank Huestis, two engineers who were working on a NABET Local 11 program to help fellow employees with drinking problems. Bob was indignant that night. But some weeks later he came into Hurley's and asked Tommy Hughes, the bartender, for a ginger ale. Tommy was stunned. We all were. But Bob became a success story for Mort and Hank. He was still brash, still outspoken, still funny. But he had had his last Martin.

Robert J. McCarthy, former reporter for the Daily News and later an assignment editor, writer and producer for NBC News and WNBC TV, died October 18 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where he lived.

McCarthy, who worked at the Daily News from 1950 to 1962, was responsible for a number of news firsts, including reports on the shooting death of Mafia leader Frank Costello.

In 1962, he was hired by NBC where, for the next 25 years, he held various positions as a writer, editor and producer for WNBC-TV and the NBC network. He was credited by Bob Teague, an NBC colleague, as WNBC's best assignment editor. He later worked for NBC Nightly News and retired as the head of WNBC's local New Jersey office.

His survivors include his wife, Joan, and his two children from a prior marriage, Neil and Wynn.

—Bob McCarthy obit from NY Daily News

*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Bill Birch**

On November 3rd we lost NBC News cameraman Bill Birch, father of Randy Birch. He died in a Chicago hospital after a brief illness at the age of 93. A memorial service was held on December 3rd. Bill first worked for Reuven Frank on the "Camel News Caravan" and was one of the last news photographers of his era. He helped to create television news coverage and loved every minute he spent at NBC. Bill saved every camera he ever shot with.

Those wishing to send notes or cards to the family may write to:

Marjorie Birch
1226 W. Norwood #3E
Chicago, IL 60660

Bill Birch enjoyed a career that extended back to early television news [at NBC], for which he shot the 1957 Little Rock, AR, desegregation disputes and interviewed Fidel Castro just before his takeover of Cuba in 1959. But Mr. Birch, who started filming at age 11 when his cameraman father gave him a hand-crank model, was perhaps best known for filming the stunts and opening scene of the 1980 movie "The Blues Brothers." After graduating from Lake View High School in Chicago, Mr. Birch got his start in the late 1930s working for Fox Movietone News in the lab developing film in total darkness, working by touch. When World War II started, he was a cameraman under director Frank Capra in the Army's Signal Corps Unit.

In 1950, NBC asked Mr. Birch to set up a news bureau in Chicago, his wife Marjorie said. He hired John Chancellor, who later anchored "NBC Nightly News" during the 1970s and early 1980s. "It was the era when the cameraman ran the show. They found the stories. They shot the stories. They really did everything," said Steve Ivich, a Chicago friend and filmmaker who made "American Cameraman", an unreleased documentary of Mr. Birch's news career. "I like to get in there and film when it's dangerous," Mr. Birch told the Tribune in a 1987 interview, recalling that in Little Rock firefighters sprayed his crew with water and angry crowds threw rocks.

Mr. Birch's willingness to take risks also extended to his career in feature films. While shooting a "Blues Brothers" chase scene in which about 25 police cars speed down Lake Street in downtown Chicago, one of the police cars rolled and hit the station wagon out of which Mr. Birch was filming. "If it hadn't hit us broadside, it would have come right into the wagon," Mr. Birch said. "I wasn't hurt. But still, it knocked me 100 feet down the street."

His son, Randy, later became the third generation of Birch men to work as [an NBC] news cameraman, following in the footsteps of his father and his grandfather Harry, who worked in the silent era. Mr. Birch met his third wife, Marjorie, while they were working on the 1979 film "Fast Charlie ... The Moonbeam Rider." She recalled how, when a camera operator and his assistant balked at balancing a 70-pound rig on the back of a motorcycle to shoot a racing David Carradine, Mr. Birch, then in his 50s, stepped in. "He said, 'Give me that ... camera,' got on and he filmed the whole thing," she said. Her husband continued working as a cameraman into his 80s, regularly rode a bike into his 90s and kept an office stacked with materials from his 70-year career, she said. In addition to his wife and son, Mr. Birch is survived by a daughter, Wendye; and two granddaughters.

—By Steve Schmadeke, Chicago Tribune, November 7, 2011

Excerpt from a eulogy by Wallace O. Westfeldt, former Executive Producer of the Huntley-Brinkley Report:

Bill...Birch...Two words, one syllable each. Two syllables. There is no way such brevity can embrace the life of such a man. He was much too big for that; big of heart, big of mind. Very big of talent and also very big of insatiable desire to learn new ways to do old things or apply old principles to the use of the latest fad in the technology of making pictures. If the new didn't hold up to his satisfaction, he dropped it and went back to shooting pictures his old way, a tried a true way that, most important, pleased him as well as those he worked for at the moment.

Tributes to Silent Microphones

Bill Birch at Work



Above Left: Filming John Chancellor.

Above Right:
His "most treasured photograph",
inscribed "...from his good friend..."

**Left: Bill is the one standing with
camera on his shoulder—early 1950s**



**Right: Nathan Leopold (in white shirt) came up for
parole the first time at Statesville Prison
outside Chicago.
Bill covered it for NBC of course**

**We thank Marjorie Birch for
providing these wonderful photos.**



*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Sumner Weener
Remembered by his wife Lucille**

Sumner Weener, who retired in 1986, after thirty-five years with NBC News, died on November 4, 2011 at his home in McLean, Virginia. He was 89. For those of you who recall the good old days of radio news, Sumner was producer of the Morgan Beatty news programs, and later supervisor of NBC radio news.

Born in Boston in 1922, Sumner seemed destined for the news business. He was witness to much of the major news of the 20th century and often seemed to be where it was happening. It started when, as a student at Boston University's School of Journalism, his professor assigned him to the police station to write a story "as it was happening". The police radios would hear from the fire station. And soon, a one-alarm fire became two and then three alarms and the cops said to Sumner, "Kid, come with us." They came upon the Coconut Grove Fire, among the worst in the nation's history. Sumner helped the cops break down doors ...and then wrote the story.

In World War Two, Sumner was on a troop ship crossing the Pacific. He was headed for Okinawa with his typewriter, where he would run the battalion newspaper. He recalled how, when the troops were lowered from the ship into smaller boats, there was a special boat for him to help keep his typewriter dry.

Sumner returned from the war to work in Vermont for the Burlington Free Press, where he both wrote and delivered the news on the radio. From there he went on to the Providence Journal in Rhode Island. As a reporter for the Providence Journal, he interviewed the noted newscaster, Edward R. Murrow, who invited Sumner to come to New York.

After touring the CBS newsroom, he walked across town to NBC to visit a friend who he knew at the Providence Journal. And the rest is history. He stayed at NBC.

At NBC, Sumner was in various news management positions, including the network's transition from radio to satellite news feeds. His personal stories were legendary, and true, and sometimes funny. Like the time in Helsinki, Finland when Premier Nikita Khrushchev mistook Sumner for the president of Finland. And he was proud to say that two people he gave first time radio spots to, before they were hired by NBC, were Chet Huntley and Tom Brokaw.

In 1955, Sumner Weener received the Christopher Award for producing "Biography In Sound", on the life of Will Rogers. This is now at The Library of Congress. And many NBC radio news programs from the 1940s to 1960s can be heard at The Newseum, in Washington, DC, in the Sumner and Lucille Weener Radio News Collection. The last line of the memorial plaque for Sumner at The Newseum quotes him, "Reporters should observe, not participate."

Sumner's first wife, Marjorie Houhoulis, died in 1979. He leaves a loving family: his wife of 26 years, Lucille, four stepchildren: Pamela Janis of Washington, DC; Caroline Rimmer of Orgeval, France; Michele Janis of Silver Spring, MD; Gordon Janis of Alexandria, VA; and four grandchildren who adored him.

Contact Lucille Weener at
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McLean, VA 22102
or at ljw22102@aol.com

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