



Reunion 2000

Lots of Joy and Golden Memories, But a Touch of Soberness at the 14th Annual PN Luncheon

By Joe Mehan

The noise level was high, the excitement was strong, there was plenty of laughter and nostalgia, and recollections were sweeping through the crowd. But there was also a muted, underlying sense of seriousness stirring in the room.

This was the 14th annual reunion of Peacock North, Sunday, May 20th. The place: the LaMaganette Restaurant, 3rd and 50th, in the Big Apple. The audience: some 200 survivors of decades and careers spent at NBC.

The tone for the thoughtful reflection was set by the emcee and head of Peacock North, Pete Peterson. After his welcoming remarks, Pete turned sober for a moment and told how he'd had

news in one week of members not attending that day because of two heart attacks, three cancer cases, two brain tumors and one gall bladder problem.

Also, he said, there was a medical reason that Dan Grabel, who always covers the meeting for the Peacock North Newsletter, was not there. Pete said that Dan had suffered chest pains while

in the hospital preparing for prostate surgery some weeks before and had to have an immediate Angioplasty performed on his heart.

Dan is recovering, thank goodness, Pete said, but he still has to gain enough strength to go through with the prostate operation. And Pete expressed an inevitable reality that was evident to everyone. "we're getting ►



Pete Peterson greets the crowd.

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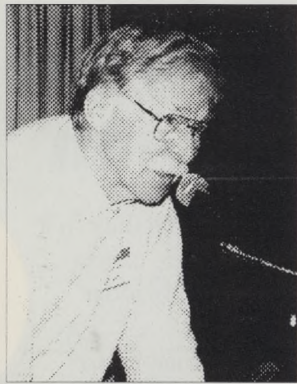
old.”

Snapping back to a festive mood, Pete then launched into the program which included remarks by Heino Ripp, Gloria Clyne, Cissie Lindemann, Bob Asman and others.

Gloria, effervescent as always, disclosed she is doing the time-honored activity of retired news people: writing a book. Glo said it will cover her 55 years at NBC and she's already titled it—"My Life Was Nominated For An Emmy."

Besides her own endless adventures which will go into the book, Gloria is asking for so many wonderful stories that you might have and send to her.

Heino Ripp, "Rippy," was telling about his days working on Sid Caesar's "Show of Shows" when he remembered a priceless routine Sid used to do. This time Sid was doing it at a personal appearance.



Stand-up comic Ripp.

It involved a Nazi World War II pilot who was ecstatic at being able to fly a captured American P-51 fighter. In fact the American markings were still on the plane.

Everything was going fine and the pilot was enjoying himself immensely when Rippy, with a great Caesar imitation, says in a German pilot's voice: "that fokker is coming at me!! DADADADADA (machine gun sounds), but he missed."

A second time the German pilot was attacked by one of his own and Rippy/Sid does the "fokker's shooting at me, dadadada, missed" routine. Then a third time.

Finally, a dignified lady gets up, walks to the podium and announces sweetly: "You understand that Fokker was one of the best and most-used German fighter planes in World War II."

Sid comes up, takes over the mike, and says: "This fokker was flying a Messerschmitt!"

It brought down the house.

Bob Asman, longtime Washington executive producer, came to the gathering and brought not only news, but a live body with him. The body belonged to Max Schindler, also a veteran Washington stalwart, who produced "Meet the Press" among other distinguished assignments.

Max, who has belonged to *Peacock North* for many years but never made it to the luncheon, said how glad he was that Bob had dragged him along because he thought the group was "fabulous" and that Pete and the leadership group



Gloria Effervescing.



Bob Asman

were "great" to keep it going.

Asman brought word of a "mini-Peacock" group that meets in the Washington area. Among its members are Ray Scherer, Bill Monroe, Herb Kaplow, Henrietta Young (Julian Goodman's secretary when

Julian ran the Washington operation), Russ Ward, Ron Nesson, Ray Farkas, Christie Basham and Paul Duke. Sounds like it's big enough to match NYC!

Randy Wands, another longtime member who hadn't been able to get to one of the luncheons before, spoke about his 21 years directing TV coverage of the Pope's Christmas Eve mass in Rome, but how good it was to be back in New York. His wife, Joan, also took a bow.

The sentiment of how good it was to be back in New York was expressed further by Margarite Cissie Lindemann, widow of Carl, longtime vigorous and popular executive at NBC Sports.

Cissie, who lives in Maine now, said it was a joy even when a tourist from New York shows up at the Portland Museum where she is a docent. She said it was exciting to talk about things New York and to hear the sound of the familiar New York accent.

Cissie recalled also the closeness of people who worked together at NBC in the old days, a feeling that "we were all one family."

News about what is happening in the current NBC "family" was brought by Lloyd Siegel, Director, News Partnerships.



Lloyd Siegel

Among the highlights of developments there, Lloyd said, are a renewed interest in obtaining Internet sites and expanding both "Today" and "Dateline" to three hours.

As a closing thought, Pete reminded the audience that PN's roster 14 years ago at its founding was 30 members. Today, he said, it is 900. □



Randy's first appearance.



Cissie excited to be here.

Random shots around the hall



Beryl Pfiser & Mort Hochstein — Yes. Mort you are excused!



Norm Blumenthal & guest Roz



Bob & Vivian Mausler



Peg Peterson.



Ginny Seipt & Bob Asman



Jim Sunder & can you guess? — I can't.



Bob Van Ry



Enid Roth



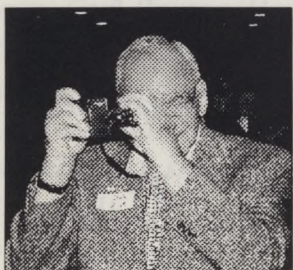
Sal Benza



Mr. & Mrs. Don Ellis — Mr. & Mrs. Jack Weir.



Sally Morin & Vivian Mausler.



Bill Rose with his digital Nikon camera.

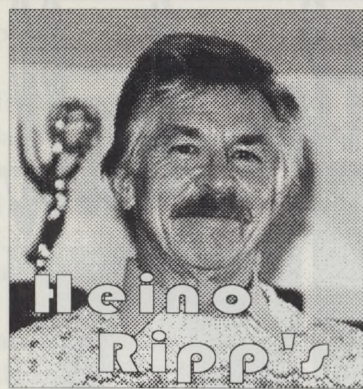


Max Schindler, Joe Mehan & Bob Asman



Don & Mildred Gogarty.

Golden Days Relived, more, much more ➡



Dearly beloved, thought I'd change the photo, but the moustache is now white, and the hair is getting gray.

We sure had a good turnout at the La Mag Bash. Thank you all for coming. I apologize to those who might have been offended with the Caesar Messerschmitt story, but I did see Beryl Pfizer laugh.

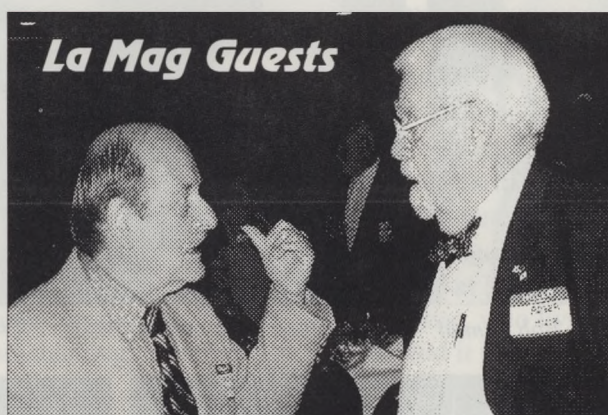
I find myself with too much to do. Guess I should go back to work, 'cause I used to get much more done. Yup, too much unsolicited mail, soliciting mucho dinero. In 2 days 20 letters all asking for \$20 to over \$1000. Great causes, all needing attention, but *uncle* already.

LAURIE KRUG GRANT (Lgrant@optomlinc.net) "Always nice to see former co-workers and friends and catch up on current affairs and relive old times." ...**ANN TAYLOR**, second time as guest - "loved seeing co-workers from NBC." (She was at NBC for only 15 years- but would love to get newsletter.) (Ann, look on the last page, where there is an application.

We shouldn't turn away anyone. H.)....We've missed seeing STAN LEE-FATT (& of course MAXINE LEE-FATT) but he just retired on Dec 31, 1999. Now enjoying the great freedom.

"Great to see old friends again" stanleyglf@msn.com is his e-mail....My pal, **BERYL PFIZER** - (Her e-mail address is Berylly@aol.com) Exclaims, "What fun to see everyone !" (*I just heard a bunch of Yeah, Yeah's.. ? We schmoozed about her directorial debut in 8H. Brings tears to my eyes, I spent more time there than at home H.)...Old timer BOB ZWECK* in from Las Vegas, where he moved in 1992. Wishes he was 40 years younger! Vegas is a swinging town, much as NYC used to be 40 years ago, sez he.

"Never a lack of fine food (77 cents for breakfasts), outstanding entertainment. We see Steve & Eydie every so often. Also "Investments," such as Video Poker up to



Norman Davidson & Roger Muir



Nancie & Tony Nelle



Jack Keegan



Gloria & Bambi



Max Schindler, Dave Handler
& Lloyd Siegel



The DeRienzo's, Frank & Marie



Who he? & Rosemary Dubois

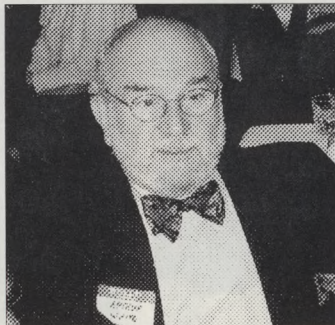
Baccarat. Can get hot as H, but no snow! Four Hrs to LA, Grand Canyon, Utah, etc." Bob invites all - Come on and visit us." *(You heard it here. H)*

Let's all give BOB VAN RY a resounding applause! Bob is fresh out from NBC after 472 and final Sat Nite Live Shows, May 20. He finished a 25 year run with the show from its inception. "All my fellow crew, and cast members were forthcoming with kind sentiments and generosity. It was wonderful and interesting and, with a few exceptions, very enjoyable career - 39 years, 4 months. Thanks to everyone - every where!" *(Bobby, enjoy your retirement.) (PS Bob sold his current home the day he put up a for sale sign, and then went to Hawthorne and almost immediately bought another. Plans to hang around here, except for his forays to Florida.)*

The HOWIE ATLAS-es going through his wife's 1943 Hi School yearbook found to their surprise, she was a classmate of Marvin Sheiness! *(Marvin was a cameraman in the early 50's, and rode on the Fearless dolly up and down the center aisle at the International theater during Max Liebman's Saturday Night Show of Shows, starring Sid Caesar, Imogene Coca, Carl Reiner, Howie Morris and a stage full of singers and dancers and guests, Marvin was very good at his camera, and an amiable fellow. He passed away suddenly some time ago.- H.).....* MICHAEL (JOE) GILLIGAN & Mrs. have hung up their skis. So they spent 6 weeks in Florida this winter. They liked it so much that they hope

to-do it again next year....JERRY SAVITCH writes that it's great seeing many old friends again, comparing our experiences and all the shows we worked on...JOAN WANDS writes in beautiful penmanship, *(you can see the British learning lasts)*. "It's so wonderful to be here with my darling RANDY and see his pleasure at seeing so many old friends! ... NORM BLUMENTHAL: "Name tags, name tags and more name tags - Bless them." *(Amen!-H.)* "The smiles and memories they generate, the best times of our lives. What a beautiful group of people they all are. I'm glad to see them and glad they haven't forgotten"...TED EVERITT: "It's great to be back to see many old friends. 'The City of Happiness is found in the State of Mind.' Red Buttons should be here - What a Dinner!".... HERB OXMAN: "Just to see you (Rippy & Gigi) does my heart good. *(And thee also, Herbie.)* And folks, Herb now walks with 2 new knees, transplanted last year. Must be catching, for FRANK DeRIENZO has a new pair, as does our announcer from Wilmington, S.C. - ROGER TUTTLE.

Who would say, "I don't want to die because I would just hate to miss these luncheons." ➔



Arthur White



Carol & Robert Kasulka

GLORIA CLYNE....MARY LAKA KOZAKIEWICZ aka BALTON STULTZ (NBC 1973 - '98) (*all worn out from the name*) has only one word - - "MEMORIES!" I QUOTE JOHN KELLY - "*Take those here today, give them the equipment to do an event and they shall run circles around any News organization on the Air today.*"



Ross Martindale from Maine, Bob Zweck in from Los Vegas & Howard Atlas all the way from Massapequa

misspelled. Yes Bambi, they were lousy pencils, One can't depend on anything these days. Rita was Betty Furness' producer at NBC News and produced features for anchors & reporters, retired & free lanced for CNN & News Media Center. Teaching "Inside TV News" at Marymount Manhattan, and welcome guest speakers! ...Always nice to see

Here is my Dear Friend Bambi - BAMBI TASCARELLA, musing. --- "1965 to date. NBC News Telecoms, Project Manager, as I think back to those days of Black & White, the first satellite broadcast, Huntley & Brinkley, the Vietnam War -- I look around the room at La Maganette, writing my memoirs with a point-less stubby yellow pencil - and realize we Are The "Golden Age of TV" - Great Friends and Great Times! (*Strange how I remember all of the above, and can't remember where I put my glasses. Sorry for those dumb pencils. H.*)

MARGE McGLYNN, another fixture at 30 Rock: "Happy to see new faces and continuing to see so many of my friends. Also delighted to



Wanda Baer, Lillian (happy to be here) Russo & Marie Finnegan

see my daughter Nancy has been manager of Broadcast? Routines for NBC."

RITA LOT
Excuse me if this is

ARTHUR WHITE. He is a partner in a Video tape editing business (VALKHN FILM & VIDEO). And remembering that life consists of more than work, they spend a great deal of spare time enjoying as many operas as he can in N.Y. and elsewhere....LOIS MARINO is happy to report that she will be working in Sydney, Australia for the Sydney Olympia Broadcasting Organization (SOB). Her assignment will be SUPPORT SERVICES MANAGER for Weight Lifting and assisting in Judo, Wrestling, Fencing and Boxing. The most exciting part, Sez Los, is that her venues and hotel are in the heart of Darling Harbor.. Lois promises "More to Come." ...JOHN (& THERESA) SCORPIO still actively working and they're planning a trip to Dinghy World in July with grandsons and in September expect to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. "As always, great to see the familiar faces of yesterday."...Where has all the leisure time gone? asks BOB MAUSLER. "Gone, gone away."! "Our life, Vivian & mine, is certainly busy, immediately rewarding - with the motto, "FULL SPEED AHEAD" at all times! That says it all." *Bob worked in the Development group*



Don Vierling, Frank Vierling & Francesca Peters



Charlie & Fran Davison & Phil Harper



Dorothea deLamoy & George Peters.



Florence Sinder.



RWD, George Cox & Bob Reese.

designing all the new stuff....PEG CONROY WEBER: "It's nice to be here and talking about the "good old days."...ROSEMARY DUBOIS: "One of the YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS, seeing all of you again, great for happy reminiscing!...RAY LAFFERTY a man of many words - "Had a great time - again!"Another Lab Engineer, HERB POLAK: "I am thoroughly enjoying this luncheon, sitting at the same table with some of my old colleagues from the lab. Regret that Mary had a concert today and couldn't attend. Best regards. You-all are doing a great job."

Did you all know that the NBC lab men invented the TV system that we have today? Also did you know that during the war time, the father of the TV missile was built by the brilliant engineers on the fifth floor? Maybe crude, but they had attached this airborne TV unit to bombs, thus enabling the Navy to watch their trajectory and see how accurate the bombs were....JANE & GENE GARNES are going to China on a 21 day vacation. A video will be produced and anyone with a spare bottle of Southern Comfort can secure admission. Two bottles will get you off the hook!

BOB & CAROL KASULKA still at NBC. But work for Forest Electric, same job but two checks...LUCY AND CARMINE ROCCO haven't been to La Mag for a couple of years. However, they say it's still fantastic and "so nice seeing

everyone again and looking forward to other reunions." (*I get the feeling that everyone feels it's so nice seeing everyone again. From here on I'll just say I-S-N-S-E-A-&-L-F-T-O-R.*) Lucy and Carmine took a Caribbean cruise in January 2K. They were on one of the first cruise ships to pass through the Panama Canal, and much to his surprise, it is still working...SAL & EMMA MONACO - I-S-N-S-E-A-&-L-F-T-O-R-. They are very busy with their grandchildren - working on their sixth. "This reunion is THE BEST."

JOE MEHAN, RETIRED! After NBC, Joe went to the UN. Worked there in International Communications until mandatory retirement in 1990. Then not content with all that free time, Joe became Professor of Int. Com. at Colombia's Graduate School....We missed WALTER MILLER this year. He's been up to his ears producing the Tony's. He has quite a team with him. His son PAUL directs the show and daughter DEBBIE AD's the show. I owe WALTER MILLER an apology. With my retention span decreasing to 3 micro seconds, I failed to mention that we still have stars in PN. At the last EMMY Awards program, Walter, Paul and Debbie all



Roberta Wilson & H. Ripp.



Joan & Randy Wands with Joan Gifford.

won EMMYS. Congratulations Rosie, you brought them up right, Yes, be proud....ED GOUGH still working as video producer at Port Authority of NY/NJ, plus acting in film & TV now and then.

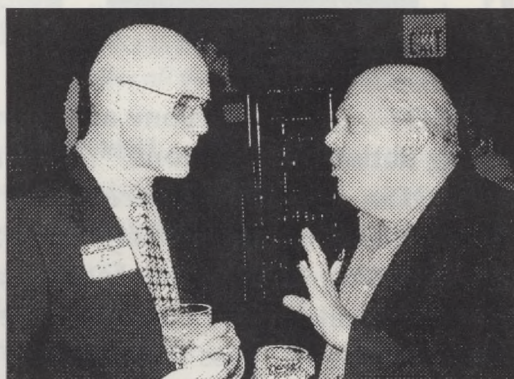
DICK SWICKER continuing woodturning in NJ for restoration of Victorian homes... Granddaughter now 2 1/2, grandson expected soon! "Anneley (Mrs.) and I travel as much as possible. Portugal & Spain last month. Japan next spring when oldest son Chip takes command of the Destroyer USS John S. McCain. Continue well - which is the bottom line.".....ARNIE

RAND, back for his second appearance from Maine/Florida captured the feeling of La Mag. - "A touch of old times - Love it!"...ED WILLIAMS: "I have had a wonderful cat that was adopted some years ago. One month ago another cat showed up. My wife gave it something to eat and it kept coming back. I told my Mrs. it was not a good idea. I was right; it came back to stay and had kittens and now I feel responsible for them and am very busy trying to find homes for them. So you never know what a kindness brings to your doorstep. P.S. My cat was not the father cat." (We have a Shi-Tzu one

year old. Wonderful companion. Follows me like radar. Christina, my bride real estate lady, sold a house to a couple. The buyers had three baby kittens, not yet weaned. At each visit, the kits'



Til Connal & Lois Mareno



Ed Bowers & William Freeda.



Bob Hickey & Mamye Smith.



Bob Zweck, Buddy Shadel & Hank Huestis.

magnet got stronger. We didn't need ANY more complications. Junk mail already bad enough. The cat, already magically named SahRah - Swedish for Sarah came here for a test visit with the male Shi-Tzu (Named Muffi - also Swedish). Muffi was very *blah-zsay* (Ya, Swedish). Yes, Ed Williams, an act of kindness can lead to having one's house turned into a race track overnight. H.)... AL RICE, who I hadn't seen for 15 years appeared at La Mag, looking very healthy and his usual "happy" self. Al says, "This is my first time here, I hope to be here next year also."

BILLY ROSE, another great NBC Sports hero, like Al, graced our bash looking great, and took electronic digital pictures of everyone. A throwback from his forte, videotape, instant play-back etc....Speaking about videotape, another Grand Master, BUDDY SHADEL joined us. I came in with him from West Caldwell by bus. No traffic problems, no parking problems and no exorbitant parking bill. He's traveled a bit, and since his son-in-law captains a naval vessel, Dottie and Buddy manage to get to Hawaii, Japan, and other places where the Capt. is berthed. More videotape,

FRANK WEILL attended, and was seen schmoozing with Buddy. They were cameramen in 8H for The Lucky Strike Hit Parade, lighted by RWD (Bob Davis).



Stanley & Lee-Fatt.

Another Expert Mobile Unit Mogul, SAL BENZA joined Randy and Al Rice.

"My first time at La Mag and says I-S-N-S-E-A-&-L-F-T-O-R."

ARIANE MAUTNER looking great, says, "Two years is too long to be away from this wonderful crowd!. I-S-N-S-E-A-&-L-F-T-O-R"

MAUREEN POTRATO hasn't been here for 2 years either. She can't believe how big the reunion has gotten. I-S-N-S-E-A-&-L-F-T-O-R.

MILTON WYATT: He didn't want to leave the USA in 1999 so he could see the 1900's out in his own country. May go to England in October to visit friends and hopefully may take family to France in 2001 and travel between countries via the Chunnel....What was the name of the person who sent e-mail regretting his inability to be here today? Dan Schawnc't? Coundn't make out the last name. - So it's still a mystery, I guess....BILL DeLANNOY wants to get together with FRANK VIERLING, YES, OUR PUBLISHER, to write their on-air experiences. For ex: The girl that fainted dead away and fell over a desk; the arrow that missed the actor's chest in a Martin Kane show; The victim that died, but

stood up because the Fearless camera dolly's cable bar touched his foot, thinking it was the stage manager's



Hostess & Host, Peg and Peter Peterson.



The Reina's, Gloria & Jim

cue....JIM AND FLORENCE SUNDER: "We're both pleased to be here & see old friends.

We're not travelling much, except to visit the children. Next week we're off to Hilton Head. We've gotten to know too many doctors too well, but we're managing."....JIM AND GLORIA REINA are now living in Manhattan. (What happened to Arizona?) They recently celebrated their 40th anniversary. Gloria returned to acting and appeared recently as Ester Hoffman in "One Life To Live" and can be seen in a Liberty Medical commercial. Jim has discovered a talent for the stock market and has been quite successful - Watches CNBC a lot. (*I just pulled out of Merrill Lynch and now use Chas. Schwab. Wasn't easy. - H*) The Reinas have 2 grandchildren, three sons, two of whom live in Manhattan. The third lives with his wife, Donna, and their two kids in Warren, NJ.....CHARLIE DAVIDSON'S e-mail address:

chdavidson3@aol.com/amateur radio call: K2DPS....DICK DOHERTY'S e-mail address: Boomman205@cs.com - Dick saw a bit of the world. He went on a cruise to Alaska. Did you have as good a time as when you did the



Ray Lafferty & Dolores Parylak.



Arthur Gary, Ed Gough & Marilyn Furey



Gigi Howard & Dave Handler



Michael & Madalyn Gilligan



Dick Auerbach & Lois Mareno



Emma & Sal Monaco.



Joan Gifford, Fred Collins & Gloria

Conventions in San Fran? ...BOB BAEDER, Scenic Artiste par excellent! recently heard about one of the best and nicest scenic designers NBC ever had. Name? DON SHIRLEY. He is living in Oregon. Don did many things with NBC. Bob knew Don from working with him at the Zeigfeld Theater on the Perry Como Show. Bob: "Not only was he talented, but one of the greatest guys I ever worked with." His wife came down with Multiple Sclerosis. He took out an insurance policy on himself, just in case - so she wouldn't have to worry if anything ever happened to him. Today, in their late 70's, she's still here, but still has problems. Don had a heart attack a year ago, yet he still takes care of his Mrs. to the best of his ability. A great guy, if there ever was one. *(Bill Klages and Dick Feldman and I might like to say hello to Don if you have an address, Bob. Don was quiet, had a great grasp of the early TV's limits, great color balances, practical, and a knack of making the scenery look real. He was never wrong. I know we all could attest to his greatness. Don Shirley, a great pioneer. H.)*

CAROL AERENSON: "Once again it's great to be at a Peacock North luncheon & to see old friends." ...WANDA BAER, "I left the Net in 1964. Enjoyed seeing former co-workers. What a trip!" ... MAMYE SMITH, who doesn't let her MS of 20 years stop her ; went horseback riding last weekend! She's flying to Atlanta this week for her sister's

wedding. In July she's off to Martha's Vineyard with Bob Hickey and her family. In August she's finally taking the long planned trip to Alaska with some other MS friends. Also coming up are: M.S. Society excursions for bowling, sailing & fishing. She really looks forward to her yearly reunion to see her old NBC close friends, since she can't work any longer....DICK and BARBARA AUERBACH: "If any table at this GREAT Luncheon reflects 'The Golden Age of TV,' our table with Ellis, Connal, Nathenson, Lindeman, Seipt, Schacter, Marooney and Auerbach exemplified Sports from The Golden Age. We are all still working, all still contributing and all still remembering 'The Golden Age.'".....LILY RUSSO: "Another year gone by - - Where does the time go? - - Nevertheless, my visits with all the former co-workers at the PN Luncheon, get sweeter all the time. I love all the old NBCers - - I Love all of you - Bless you, LILY."....DAVID HANDLER "Another year gone by -Sounds familiar. It's amazing how each year gets shorter than the preceding one! Talk about a downhill slope! Son Adam graduating from Harvard with a Master's in Government, daughter Allison now runs a Land Trust in Missoula, Montana - and my wife Cynthia is retiring in a month. What could be better?"....BILL FREEDA: Took a buyout from NBC 12/31/99 from Network EJ

Editing. Working on a volunteer basis for NABET Local 11. Became officially retired May 1, 2000. (?)....**BILL FREEH**, (NO, not FRE-DA) After 33 years at NBC, Bill is still being mistaken for Bill Freeda. He always tells people he's the younger one! Almost 30 years in NABET jobs, Telecine and EJ Field. Mr. Freeh went on full time LOA from NBC to serve in NABET Local 11. It's Bill's first Luncheon and is Happy to be here. Welcome Bill, Retirement isn't at all bad....**JOE PHILLIPS**, former Guest Relations Tour guide and supervisor and ass't manager under Peter Tintle, then to personnel mgr. for Columbia Records, then CBS, J.C.PENNY, NY Daily News and now with PNC Bank in NJ. His bride was a former Rock Center Tour guide, met her at 30 Rock - a great place and time. Also enjoyed the annual affair greatly. After all that Joe, isn't it a time to rest?

MORT HOCHSTEIN is subbing for Dan Grabel this issue, while Dan is recuperating from a heart problem and soon (June 15) to have prostate surgery....**HERB GORDON** at 212: 222-4899: "Familiar faces out of yesterday, memories brought up to date - What a wonderful way to shake hands. CALL ! - CALL !"....**HANK HEUSTIS**: "Great to be here in good health and looking forward to many more Peacock North events. Have two beautiful grandchildren and enjoying life in Stony Brook, Long island." Hank's E-mail address:

HankHue@Juno.com....**ED BOWERS** 33 years at NBC News, Chicago & N.Y. To steal a line from a current show, "I'm doing very little and doing it slowly." Ed's next trip: Flying to Copenhagen in August, boarding the MAASDAM, which will make a 6-stop journey back to New York. (*What a good idea - Wear yourself out in Copenhagen and have plenty of time to rest up on the way home! H.*).... **SCHOEF** of International Affairs 1990 till 2000. (*He has no first name, it costs more or couldn't agree on a name. Guess I'm in the same boat, except no one is used to hearing or pronouncing Heino*) Now really retired, writing about Global Media and communications issues....**JACK WEIR** Writes that he was honored to be sitting at the ANNOUNCERS' table with his wife Barbara. Also still doing stuff with horses and enjoying life. (*Jack Weir, a credit to the Golden Age. H.*).... **FRED COLLINS** (*Guru of the voice-overs*) says, "Thank God, still doing voice-overs, playing duffer golf and enjoying life with Margot."... A poem by **VIC ROBY**: As the list of announcers decreases,

The Importance of Peacock increases.

JACK MARSHALL: "What ever modicum of success I had at NBC, was due to others who tutored, taught and led me through first 25 years." (*Hey Jack, I can say exactly that also; for when I started in 1943, the brains that invented the* ▶



Elizabeth & Bob Davis



Howie Atlas & Dorothea deLannoy



Dennise Robinson, Don Pardo & Theresa Scuoppo, BG



Edith Nathanson & Jim Marooney



George Peters & Bob Mausler



The Keegans & The Sunders



Rippy — that's Ginny Seipt, BG



Paodo & Gary



Cissie Lindeman in from Maine



*Jack
Weir*

TV system worked in the NBC Lab. No one could ever pay for the education and hands-on teaching I got from them all, for which I am forever grateful. H.)...MAX SCHINDLER, Director NBC News, Washington: "Still working for NBC."....And, says BOB ASMAN, (NBC News - Special Events Producer). "Max is here today because I've been nagging him for the past 3 years to come to a luncheon - he finally agreed! (And we have the pictures to prove it. Max you really looked mahvelus. We're glad you came. H.)...AAVO KOIV'S new house is getting built in Jupiter, Fla....ROGER and PAT TUTTLE soon will move out of his trailer into their new home IN NAWTH CAROLINA.

Till next time, Ripp



Gigi Howard, Dick Swicker, Dave Handler



The Weills, Anne & Frank



Carmine Rocco & ?



Bill Rose & Jack Marshal



Dick Do

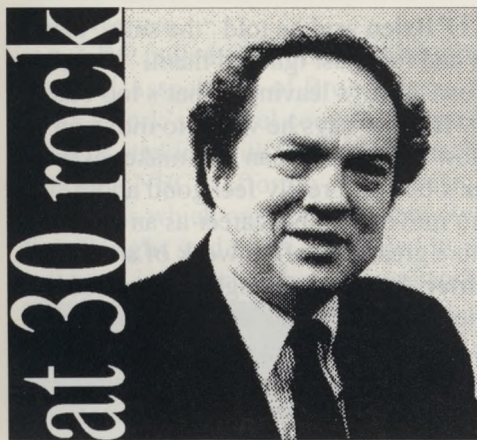


Herb Polak



*Herb
Gordon*

Miles of Smiles



Mort Hochstein is filling in for Dan Grabel while Dan recuperates from recent surgery.

Pete Peterson caught me in Copenhagen where I was indulging my e-mail habit on a computer in the city's brand new library. "Dan Grabel has had an operation and can't write his 30 Rock column. Can you fill in?," he asked. I wrote back that I had a deadline waiting on my return and urged him to find someone else.

When I got home, **Pete** called, and, well, how can you say no to this guy who puts in more hours and days than anyone would like to know just holding Peacock North together and making it the great group that it is?

Before I get into being the poor man's Dan Grabel, let me tell you how this thing works. **Roy Silver** sits up in northern Westchester with a vacuum cleaner, poring through newspapers and magazines and pulling clippings that might be of interest to former NBC people. He piles them into a huge mailbag and ships them off to Dan, who screens the stuff and assembles it into the news items.

Roy sent me six huge envelopes of material dating back to January. (Nobody said we had to be timely) I sorted the clippings out under general headings — TV business, programming, people, gossip, sports and other vague categories, and tried to make sense of it all. After reading too many TV pages, I promised myself I would not write about **Kathy Lee Gifford**, **Dr. Laura** and the parents of **Jon Benet** what's his name and particularly **Bryant Gumble**, who seemed to be a regular on all the page 4's and page 6's **Roy** sent me. Here goes:

Good Times for the Networks

Cable and the Internet may be cutting into audience figures, but network profits are still looking good. The general feeling was that TV got just a little bit more exciting this past season and next year will see heavier promotional expenditures, much of it coming from all that campaign year political advertising, as well as the Summer Olympics.

Up-front sales in advance of the Fall season hit the \$8 billion mark, up 15% from last Spring's selling season. ABC, third last year but suddenly the big boy on the block, demanded the highest CPM (cost per thousand) increases, about 20%. Its advance sales were estimated at \$2.3 billion.

NBC's sales figures were projected at \$2.1 to \$2.1 billion, second behind ABC, with CPM increases between 16% and 20%. Quick summary from NBC Television Network president **Randy Falco**: "this was a great marketplace."

Give credit for renewed excitement to "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire," of course. Last year, combined ratings for ABC, CBS and NBC fell 2.2 rating points. This season they reversed and went up nearly half a point, with ABC showing the biggest gain, up 17%, while NBC and CBS were both off about 14%.

Playing Rough

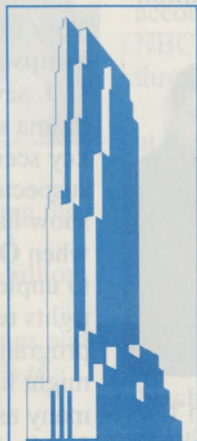
NBC Cameraman **Tony Zumbado** and soundman **Gustavo Moellers** reported they were kicked and hit by Immigration and Naturalization Service agents who prevented them from filming the **Elian Gonzalez** raid in Miami. **Zumbado**, pool guy for the networks during the fracas, was there when the commandos broke the door down. "We got maced, we got kicked and pushed down and I was on the floor with a foot on my back. They told me not to move or they were going to shoot," said Zumbado. NBC

News President **Andy Lack** brought the complaint to the INS, which says it has no knowledge of wrongdoing, but they've turned the matter over to the agency's Office of Internal Audit for review. Let's hope we get a better answer than some bureaucratic stall... "Today" exec producer **Jeff Zucker** came up with the solid idea of paying **Sen. John McCain's** expenses for a return visit to Vietnam, thus guaranteeing a newsworthy spot which would include a tour of the infamous "Hanoi Hilton" prison. But **McCain**, who knows a thing or two about manipulating the press and playing the pre game, then invited several other top newsmen along. What could **Zucker** do but say he welcomed

the added news coverage that would help his broadcast? In the end, "Today" got the only one-on-one interview with the Senator. ... Two out of three of the morning shows, "Today" and CBS's "The Early Show" returned to Littleton, Colorado on April 20th to mark the first anniversary of the massacre at Columbine High School. Many community members had urged the media to stay away from Columbine. **Katie Couric** anchored for "Today" and did five segments from Littleton.

It's Howdy Doody Time

Roger Muir was at the Peacock North gathering and he reminded me that I had been the NBC press rep for his "Howdy Doody Show," back in the late 1950's. **Howdy's** in the news again. A Connecticut judge in May was trying to make a Solomon-like decision over custody of the original **Howdy Doody** puppet. The Detroit Institute of Arts claims the puppet belongs to its collection. But the three sons of the late **Rufus Rose**, who pulled Howdy Doody's strings, say their dad thought about donating the puppet to the museum, but later changed his mind. A museum official says





Which Doody

there's nothing sentimental about the Rose family's desire for Howdy and claims they have a deal with a New York auction house to sell the doll which has been appraised at \$50,000. There were many Howdy puppets and one of them known as Double Doody is now at the Smithsonian in Washington, donated by the puppeteer's widow. Three other copies are reported nesting safely in a Rhode Island bank vault.

Expensive Friendship

It took a \$40 million dollar promise to bring the cast of "Friends" back for another two seasons. That's per person for the six actors, whose per-show payoff jumps from 125,000 an episode to \$833,000. Not exactly **Seinfeld** money, for sure, but nobody's complaining. That puts the cast up in the big leagues with Jerry Seinfeld's \$1.2 million per episode for his final year. **Tim Allen** made \$1.25 million per show for ABC's "Home Improvement," and **Paul Reiser** and **Helen Hunt** pulled down a million each during their last year with "Mad About You." NBC also shelled out big bucks to keep **ER** on the screen for another three years. Just how much isn't known, because Warner Bros. and NBC aren't talking about the new contract. Currently, the network pays \$13 million per episode for the hospital series, which, despite all the hubbub and multiple exposures for "Millionaire," was still standing high atop the numbers game in late May, with viewership well over 32 million in the latest Nielsen. For the first three months of this year, "Today" raked in \$87 million in advertising, according to Nielsen figures, against \$60 million for second-ranked Good Morning America. "Today" averages a little over six million viewers against a shade under 5 million for "Good Morning America." "Today" will add a third hour come this Fall, putting it up against **Regis Philbin** in the New York market. Producer **Jeff Zucker** has promised to stay on the job until March 2002 when his contract expires. That'll take him right through the show's 50th anniversary.



LAST LAUGH

As May ended, **Conan O'Brien** lost his sidekick **Andy Richter** after seven years together on his late night show. When the program started, **O'Brien** recalled recently, he had fought to defend **Richter** against network execs who

wanted him dumped. **O'Brien** said he told "the suits" that he was looking into it and then just ignored them. "Now," he says, they're like, 'Wow. Andy's leaving.' That's too bad. I can't help but laugh.'" **Richter** says he wants to move on. "After all," he asks, how many times can you make jokes about **Jennifer Lopez's** butt and really feel good about yourself?" He wants to move on in his career as an actor.

O'Brien gave him a great sendoff, a week of shows of the best of **Andy Richter**, but his final night got wasted by the NBA playoff games. It's a little too late for some **Richter** fans and that was reflected in a small decrease in the ratings against the previous Friday night, 2.7 against 2.8.

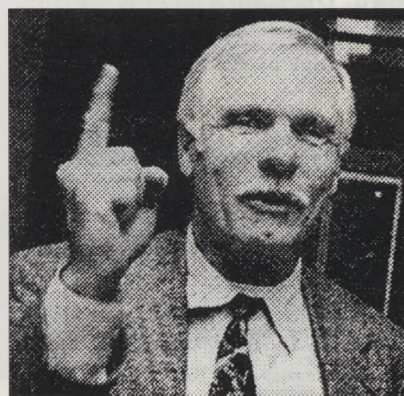
And a goodbye to **Helen Thomas**. She's the longtime UPI White House reporter, who had the honor of asking the first question at presidential press conferences. She had 47 years with UPI and quit in May after the news service was purchased by the Rev. Sun Yung Moon, founder of the Unification Church.

O. J. SIGHTING

Nobody's ever accused television of great taste, but the story of the action series that that would have starred **O.J. Simpson** does present a kinder, gentler side of the business. **O.J.** several years ago made a two-hour pilot of a proposed drama series, "Frogmen," scheduled for NBC. One of the key scenes features **Simpson's** character grabbing a suspected intruder and holding a knife to her throat. The show had been scheduled to air sometime around the period when **O.J.** was in the headlines. That came a little too close to unpleasant reality. The pilot never saw air, and NBC's rights reverted to Warner Bros. It's estimated that if the program had been aired after **Simpson's** criminal trial, it might have pulled in Super Bowl-size audiences, maybe as many as the 74-million people who salivated over **Monica Lewinsky's** two-hour sob session with **Barbara Walters**.

Chasing the Peacock

CNN founding President **Reese Schonfeld** says his boss, **Ted Turner**, is still hoping to purchase NBC. In a new



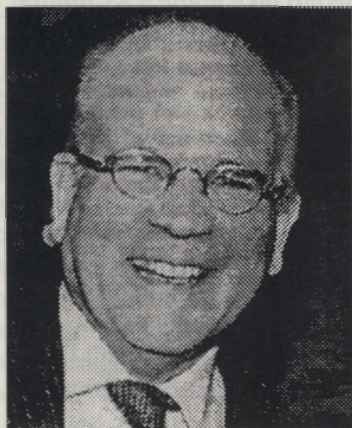
Turner out for the bird

book, **Schonfeld** claims **Turner** told a group of CNN execs in late March that he is very interested in buying NBC. Once the deal for AOL to take over Time Warner is completed, insiders expect **Turner** to cash out and make a move on NBC with his own money. The entrepreneur made an unsuccessful run at CBS

in the mid-80's and has been open about his desire to own a large broadcaster. He reportedly owns a \$9 billion stake in

Time Warner.

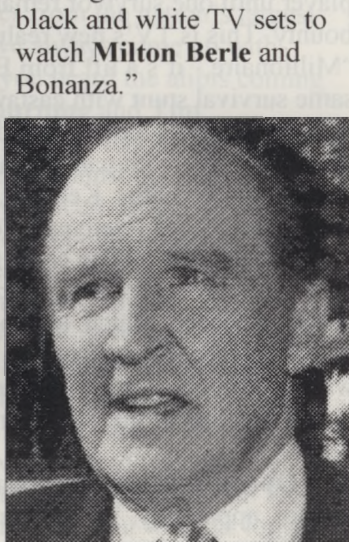
NBC pulled out of the Washington lobbying group, the National Association of Broadcasters, in a policy dispute. The network's general counsel **Richard Cotton** accused the NAB of sticking with "anarchic, anachronistic rules" in opposing NBC's effort to change rules limiting the number of stations which one company can own. NBC president **Bob Wright** said the NAB treated its members as if "they still lived in a world where Americans gathered around



Bob Wright

black and white TV sets to watch **Milton Berle** and *Bonanza*." **Wright** will still report to **Bob Iger**, the Walt Disney president who had been chairman of ABC until midwinter.

They're still adding up the damages caused by Time Warner Cable's blackout of ABC back in May. Time Warner pulled the plug on ABC programs in some 3.5 million households just as the May sweeps were beginning. After two weeks, the companies settled their squabble over how much money Time Warner should pay Disney for carrying some of its cable channels. Analysts say the mouse won out over Time Warner, since the agreement calls for the cable giant to offer the Disney Channel free by January 2003, costing TW hundreds of millions of dollars. The accord with ABC came one day after Time Warner and NBC shook hands on a deal to carry Peacock programming through 2008.



Jack Welch

NBC's future is still uncertain. **Jack Welch**, head honcho for parent General Electric, is reported to have explored several scenarios for NBC, including spinning the network off or doing a deal with **Barry Diller** at USA Networks. GE sales were up 11% in 1999 to \$111.6 billion and that meant more bucks for **Welch**, whose total compensation, covering salary and bonus, stock options and long-term incentive payouts, for the year jumped 61% to \$93.1 million. **Welch** will be 65 in November and is scheduled to retire next year.

Speaking of things for sale, the New York Post quotes a real estate analyst who says Rockefeller Center could soon go on the block for \$2 billion. The expert says the time is ripe in these prosperous days for a sale of those 12 buildings and all that real estate. Back in 1996, Mitsubishi, which had acquired Rock Center for \$1.9 billion, unloaded it at a bankruptcy sale to an investment group which included Goldman Sachs, Tishman Speyer, and **David Rockefeller**, who paid \$306 million while assuming debt of \$845 million. If you haven't been back in recent years, the place has changed wildly, mostly for the better with grander shops and upgraded and much more expensive restaurants.

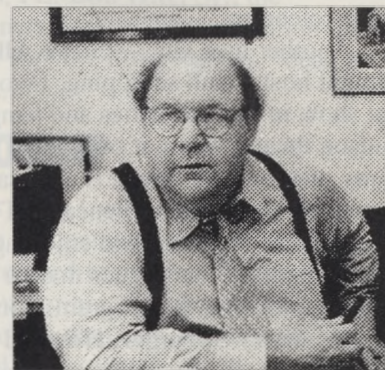
And, in West Nyack, New York, the Regional News Network, which services news to local cable stations, has launched the nation's first TV studio in a shopping center. The studio is in a glass box perching over the food court of the Palisades Center mall and looks very much like the Today studio on West 49th Street. And in case you've been wondering whatever happened to **Rolland Smith**, the ex-CBS newscaster is now anchoring for that cable news provider.

UP THE STREET AT ABC

Also at ABC: **Jerry Nachman**, one-time news director at both WNBC-TV and WCBS-TV in New York, is back as lead writer for "Politically Incorrect with Bill Maher." Anybody who had to work with him — as I did — knows **Nachman** has a savage wit. And he certainly knows politics after working at two New York stations and also, briefly, as editor in chief of the New York Post.

"Spin City" was never high on my list but I, along with nearly 33 million others, watched **Michael J. Fox's** final appearance on that program. He is one brave guy and he's planning to spend his time now helping to find a cure for Parkinson's Disease, which he's been fighting for almost a decade. He kept that illness a secret from most people until he went public last year. **Charlie Sheen** takes over in a similar role next year. It could be son versus father **Martin Sheen**, star of "The West Wing." The scheduling puts the two shows into conflict.

It reminded me of **Frank McGee** during his all-too-brief tenure as host of "Today." Somewhere near the end he was interviewing a psychologist and seemed to light up when the discussion turned toward attitudes about



Jerry Nachman

NICE PEOPLE FINISH FIRST

It reminded me of **Frank McGee** during his all-too-brief tenure as host of "Today." Somewhere near the end he was interviewing a psychologist and seemed to light up when the discussion turned toward attitudes about

when the discussion turned toward attitudes about

cancer. It struck me when he asked the shrink to come back some time to talk more about that topic. Few of us knew **Frank** was already sick and he died of cancer not too long after that interview.

Give a nod of approval to **Katie Couric**, who let TV cameras look on as she underwent a colonoscopy, screening test for cancer. It was part of a week long series Today staged to promote awareness of colon cancer.

Couric's husband, NBC legal commentator **Jay Monahan**, died of that ailment two years ago and she has become a leader in pushing colon care awareness.



Katie testified before Congress

Talking about nice guys brings me back to "West Wing," which I do watch whenever possible. This is a good show covering serious issues and it may just be the best program on commercial TV. Here's a topic — politics — that most people are extremely cynical about and it turns out that all of us want to see the kind of dignity in public service that it celebrates.

Another nice guy — **Steve Allen**. At 78, the onetime Tonight host is still scrapping. I worked as press agent on that show in the late-fifties and hanging out at the old Hudson theater where it originated was the most fun of any of my assignments. **Steve** is a crusader these days, battling against vulgarity and violence on TV. He was never a prude. He admits to watching and enjoying the all-out frankness of "The Sopranos," but argues that he wouldn't want his grandchildren watching the program. Some specific Allen targets—**Jerry Springer**, **Howard Stern** and pro wrestlers.

Allen is allied with the non-profit Parents Television Council, sponsored by the conservative Media Research Center, in sponsoring ads arguing that TV poisons the minds of children. The group has not been generous toward NBC. It rates programs with colors, green for family friendly, yellow for adult oriented and red for sex, explicit dialogue and obscene language. In its April ratings, it gave NBC nine reds, seven yellows and no greens.



Trout, still working

How about **Robert Trout**, the longtime CBS newscaster who had a brief period with NBC in the late 1940's? Trout, who made his first radio broadcast in 1931, is 90 years old, living in New York and Spain, and is currently an occasional broadcaster for National Public Radio. "I'm not sure whether I'm retired or not," Trout told the New York Times recently. "I guess I'm not," he concluded.

AN ISSUE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Television's best-kept secret was the cliff-hanger episode of Dallas back in 1980, when everyone involved was pressured into keeping quiet about "Who killed J.R.?" That sort of secrecy is being invoked on all involved in the "Survivor" series which marooned willing participants on an island off Borneo. Every three days they voted to oust a player until one survivor remained to take home a \$1 million bounty. This is TV's new reality programming and like "Millionaire," it's a lift from Europe where the Swiss did the same survival stunt with castaways on a different Malaysian island. Reporters have covered the filming but have not been allowed to talk with participants, who've all signed confidentiality oaths. Keeping those sixteen people — and their families and relatives — quiet may not be easy.

In truth, the pledge came near to being shattered in mid-May on NBC's Dateline program by a former contestant, **Richard Hatch**. Hatch, a management consultant from Rhode Island, was arrested on child-abuse charges and that was his primary topic with correspondent **Dennis Murphy**. Hatch was one of the 16 entrants but did not survive to the finals.

Oprah Winfrey has always spoken out for free speech, but not, apparently, for former employees. Staffers at her production company, Harpo, Inc., are barred from talking or writing about **Winfrey** and her company for life under a confidentiality agreement. Former producer **Elizabeth Coady** challenged Oprah's gag rule in court recently and lost. "This is ironic in light of someone who touts herself as an advocate for business ethics and spirituality," said **Coady**, who had hoped to write a book about her four years on Winfrey's show.

AWARDS TIME

News4 in New York won local Emmy's for coverage of the Swissair crash on Sept 3, 1998 and for "Today" in New York, named outstanding single morning newscast. **Al Roker** won an Emmy as host of Channel 13's "NY TV: By The People who Made It." Channel Four won 10 Emmy's, running third to Channel 13 with 22 and Long Island's News 12, which took 12 awards. The honors covered programming from September 1998 to August 1999. The evening of awards was not without complaint by people who paid — or whose expense accounts paid — \$275 for chicken-pot pie at a black-tie dinner at the Plaza Hotel.

"Millionaire" is not invulnerable. In the May sweeps, it was topped by ER and the first night of the CBS miniseries, "Jesus." ER totaled better than 32 million viewers, followed by "Jesus" with 24 million viewers and "Millionaire" very close behind with 23,937,000 watching. Despite fall off, ABC retained its weekly ratings leadership, averaging 13,640,000 viewers. May figures for the network newscasts gave Nightly News 9,490,000 viewers, ABC's World News 9,167,000 viewers and CBS' Evening News, 7,526,000 viewers.

Incidentally, those quickly thrown-together assaults on

"Millionaire"—NBC's revival of "Twenty-one" and "Winning Lines" on CBs faded away quickly. Poor audience numbers of course and neither is on the fall schedules.

THIS SPORTING LIFE

I enjoyed the NBA playoff season immensely. It's unfortunate that the old conspiracy theory of referees favoring the Knicks so as to create an eventual Knicks and Lakers finale with huge audiences from the nation's largest markets has resurfaced. Fans have always come up with those far-out ideas but this year you heard the alibis coming from Miami players **Alonzo Mourning** and **Tim Hardaway**. You heard the idea so often that Knick coach **Jeff Van Gundy** felt it might react against his team and gave it more legs by saying, "My concern is that by the constant belaboring of such a foolish point, somehow it will have a subconscious effect on league officials." The perception continues to exist. I have not enjoyed the announcers on the NBC and MSG TV coverage and should have turned off my volume and listened to **Marv Albert**, who was doing the radio side. That the networks, who pay the freight of course, forced the NBA to stretch its opening, best of five rounds, over a two week period was criminal. Normally, those games wouldn't have gone more than 9 or 10 days. It's the old equation, "do what you wish, as long as you pay."

The exclusive period for NBC and Fox to extend their deals with Major League Baseball was set to expire on June 5. Since 1996, the networks has paid a combined \$950 million to organized baseball, but those contracts expire after the World Series and the new price — whoever gets the rights — is expected to be much, much more. Talk about far-out ideas, how do you like **Rush Limbaugh** in the booth for "Monday Night Football?" **Boomer Esiason** is out, booted because of poor ratings. **Limbaugh** claimed he'd done a commendable audition for ABC and would enjoy the job. He might have to take a cut to do it. In '99, his radio show and newsletter brought in \$22 million. Or how about **Jesse Ventura**? The ex-wrestler told CNN he thought he could do the job, but added that he'd still have to govern Minnesota. The not so retiring Miami Dolphins former quarterback, **Dan Marino**, the NFL's leading all-time passer, will call plays this season for HBO's "Inside the NFL."

PAST TENSE

Gil Fates, executive producer of many top TV game and panel shows in the early days of TV, died May 1 in Manhattan at the age of 86. In 35 years with Goodson-Todman Productions, Fates worked on programs such as "Beat the Clock," "To Tell the Truth," "I've got a Secret," and "What's My Line," which he produced for its entire 25 year run.

Sig Mickelson, one of the powers at CBS News in the Edward R. Murrow and Walter Cronkite days, died in March at a hospital in San Diego. Mickelson was a founder

of the Radio and Television News Directors Association. **Mickelson** helped arrange the first commercially sponsored TV broadcast of a political event, the 1952 conventions and assigned **Walter Cronkite** as anchor. His death came shortly after the loss of **Alex Dreier**, seven-time Emmy winner for his work at NBC and ABC from 1948 to 1965. **Dreier**, who was 83, won early fame for his reporting from Europe during World War II. **Craig Stevens**, Mr. Peter Gunn, died of cancer in Los Angeles at the age of 81.



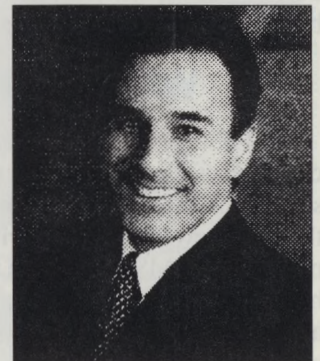
Craig Stevens

Stevens started out life as **Gail Shikles, Jr.** in Liberty, MO, and originally planned a career as a dentist. He came to Hollywood in 1941 and played second-leads primarily through the 1940's and 1950's, then caught fire on TV as the elegant private detective **Peter Gunn** in the series created by **Blake Edwards**. His last role in a major movie was in **Edwards'** satire on Hollywood, "S.O.B." in 1981; Add to the list: **Fred Kelly**, producer,

director and choreographer, who taught his brother **Gene** to dance — dead at 83 from cancer in Tucson. **Durwood Kirby**, **Garry Moore's** second banana, dead at age 88 at a nursing home in Fort Myers, FL. **Bob Hite, Sr.**, the announcer who carried listeners back to "those thrilling days of yesteryear" as announcer for "the Lone Ranger," dead at 86 in West Palm Beach, FL.

GOSSIP

Actor **Robert Urich** is suing Castle Rock Television, charging that the production company terminated his TV series "Lazarus Man," and refused to pay him because he had cancer. **Urich**, best know for his "Spenser for Hire" series, is asking \$1.47 million in damages, the amount he says he would have received for a second season of "Lazarus Man."... **Thomas Bifalco**, a 26-year actor who had bit parts in "The Sopranos," and "Spin City," was hit with a two-year jail term for selling worthless stock from a Wall Street boiler room shop.... "She lied to me, but nicely," **Matt Lauer** said recently while discussing an interview with **Madonna**. She told him on air that she wasn't pregnant. But she was, says **Lauer**, when I reviewed the tape: "I saw a certain smile on her face. I was naïve."... **Roone Arledge**, ABC News Chairman, who built that network into a sports and news powerhouse, is working on his memoirs. **Roone, I** and **Bud Rukeyser**, former NBC PR honcho, served together in the Public Information Office at Aberdeen Proving Grounds before we all joined NBC. Does anybody know that **Roone** was once a go-fer on Monitor? The



"She lied to me."

"Let's go to the video tape" sportscaster, **Werner Wolf** learned about the Heimlich maneuver from **Dr. Frank Field** when he introduced it on WNBC-TV. In his biography, he tells of dining with **Field** in 1985 and watching **Field** eat large chunks of meat, until he gagged. **Wolf** says he gave **Field** his own medicine with a couple of hard squeezes until he spit out the beef which almost choked him. The good doctor's response, according to **Wolf**: "What took you so long?" "Law and Order" star **Jerry Orbach** charged eBay, the online auction service, of setting him up for identity theft and credit card fraud. The auction service, he says, posted on the Internet two 1958 contracts signed by him containing his social security number. He demanded damages of more than \$75,000.... Billy Crystal will direct "61," a movie for HBO about the home run battle between Roger Maris and Mickey Mantle. It'll air sometime next year. Crystal says "these were two extraordinary characters who were pushed to the limits, an amazing story about friends and rivals, hallowed legends and failed heroes."

SPEAKING OF ACTIVISTS

I think it's great when performers speak out about issues, as long as they know what they're talking about, and not just being used for their celebrity value. **Mike Farrell**, best known for "Mash," was taking controversial stands even before he had name value. A Marine Corps vet, **Farrell** has campaigned for causes such as The American Indian Movement, Amnesty International, spousal abuse and veterans rights, among others. He's currently chairman of Human Rights Watch in California and also state president of the Death Penalty Focus.

While starring with **Broderick Crawford** on the series "The Interns," he wore a peace symbol, which was appropriate for his character. People in charge objected, feeling the symbol would not be giving equal time to those who supported the war in Vietnam." **Farrell** responded: "would you like me to wear a bomb every other week." Like **Steve Allen**, **Farrell** says the entertainment industry does not want to offend anyone, so it plays at the lowest common denominator. "Activism," he says, "is about what I am and do to be alive, which is being as true to the imperative of being a human being as I can be."

WATCH YOUR BACK CNN

While CNN celebrates its 20th birthday, NBC's two cable services are gaining ground. CNBC, of course, is the stock market watcher's heaven, while MSNBC is more in the hard news category. **Erik Sorensen**, vp and general manager for MSNBC, says the race is getting tighter. "CNN has beaten on some stories, but with each passing event," he argues, "they beat us less soundly and the margin of victory gets less and less"

Sorensen says the older service is "acting like it's 80. **Larry King** did a whole hour on arthritis last week." MSNBC goes for the younger watcher and that means, he says: "to an 18-year-old, news might be that 'Erin

Brockovich" is number one at the box office or that 'N Sync has the hottest album at Tower Records." Sounds like fluff to those of us who worked in hard news, but MSNBC can also handle the breaking stuff. Says executive producer **Steve Capus**: "The channel has a different overall approach. We found that the model that said live from big story to big story, and then when it happens, milk it until it's dead, was not a good business model. We perhaps stuck with a story and tried to make it a big deal even when it wasn't worthy."

Now the network is reinventing itself and embracing different definitions of news, adding more taped programming such as **Matt Lauer's** biography show, "Headlines and Headliners," and the repackaged NBC News highlight show, "Special Edition." MSNBC's 500-man crew, all on the young side, are jammed into tight quarters between the Panasonic and Gucci warehouses in Secaucus and some staffers work in trailers in the parking lot.

MSNBC's ratings are up, particularly in the 25-to-54-year old market it targets. The figures for the first quarter of 2000 were up 43% against the previous year and MSNBC is starting to consistently win over CNN among young viewers for the first time.

Says **Sorensen**, while pointing out NBC's long history in news and its established stars such as **Jane Pauley**, "We think we have actual programming. It isn't everybody's taste, and that's fine because it's cable. It doesn't have to be everybody's taste." Meanwhile, on the Internet, msnbc.com still dominates news competition, with cnn.com a distant second and foxnews.com far to the rear. □

Mort and Rolaine Hochstein, recently defected from their home in New Jersey for an apartment in New York City. Mort is a retired NBC writer/publicist.

Olympic  Year 2000



In Dan Grabel's at 30 rock column in the Spring issue there was an item about two new PN members, Jean and Alan Walden. Alan had sent along this photo that didn't get into the Spring issue - chalk it up to one of my senior moments

FV



GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO



"Town Hall Tonight" — John Brown, Portland Hoffa and Fred Allen take the radio audience on a visit to Bedlamville.



"Banjo Eyes" Cantor on the air in 1932.



A very young Jack Benny kept the listener laughing.



Jimmy "Schnozzola" Durante belts out a song with guest Greer Garson.

Pictures from *The Golden Years of Broadcasting*

we get from Frank Gaeta pictures

Thursday, April 13th. I was sitting in my den watching the Yankees beat Texas when the phone rang. My wife, Norma, answered the call and said it was Pete Peterson. "Pete, how are you?"

He was fine. He was thinking of someone in engineering that might have some old pictures that would be of interest to old-timers and the young guys and gals of today. — "Do you have any," he asked?

I said to myself, "Why me? I am not a writer."

But he convinced me — so here goes:— I hope you find these pictures and stories about them interesting. I'm sure they will bring back some memories to the guys that I worked with in the studio and the field. Below is a picture that I treasure. It was taken in 1961 at a restaurant call the Azalea Grill in Mobile, Alabama.

NBC broadcast football out of Mobile for many years. The Fun Days!

Notice the suit and tie dress code. I remember pulling cables at the NBC studios on 106th Street in a suit and tie,

with my best dress shoes. That's the way it was in those days.

However, I am getting away from my thoughts about the picture.

Working with Wally was an experience. I was new in the field at the time. Wally came up to me and said, "Pick up that end of the camera." The camera was a TK-41. It was about four feet long, almost two feet wide and weighed over 200 pounds. I bent down and struggled to pick up my end. Wally picked up his end with no effort at all. And, his end had the transformers with most of the weight. I'm sure that the TV Field guys who spent a lot of years in the field have some great stories about Wally. There was a rumor in the field that Wally's idea of a seven course meal was a bottle of Cutty Sark and a six-pack! Unfortunately three of those in the picture are no longer with us — *Bob, Harry and Wally.*



Bob Long, Horace Ruiz, Harry Coyle, Frank Gaeta, Bill Flood & Wally Serafin.

The above picture of John Spagnola and myself was taken at Richard Nixon's 1969 inauguration in Washington, DC.

A bitter cold day in January (what else?). The camera is a PCP-70 — look at the size of the cable that John is holding; it was the size of a garden hose and weighed a ton.

If I remember correctly, the camera weighed 45 pounds. So you see you didn't necessarily have to be a good cameraman, but you did have to have the ability to carry the camera for an hour or so before your next break.

In 1973 the local newspaper in Oklahoma gave this next picture the title of "The Headless Cameraman."

The show was called the "Go Show." You will notice that John Spagnola is not behind me, he refused! I persuaded a Boy Scout to help me out.

We were taping a Boy Scout jamboree held annually in Oklahoma. I was showing the point of view of a scout crossing this rope bridge. It was a one camera shoot for a half hour show.

Note Pete Fatovich is in the lower right corner.

One last picture before you turn the page – it is Mitch Miller and the famous TK-41 camera in the Brooklyn studios.

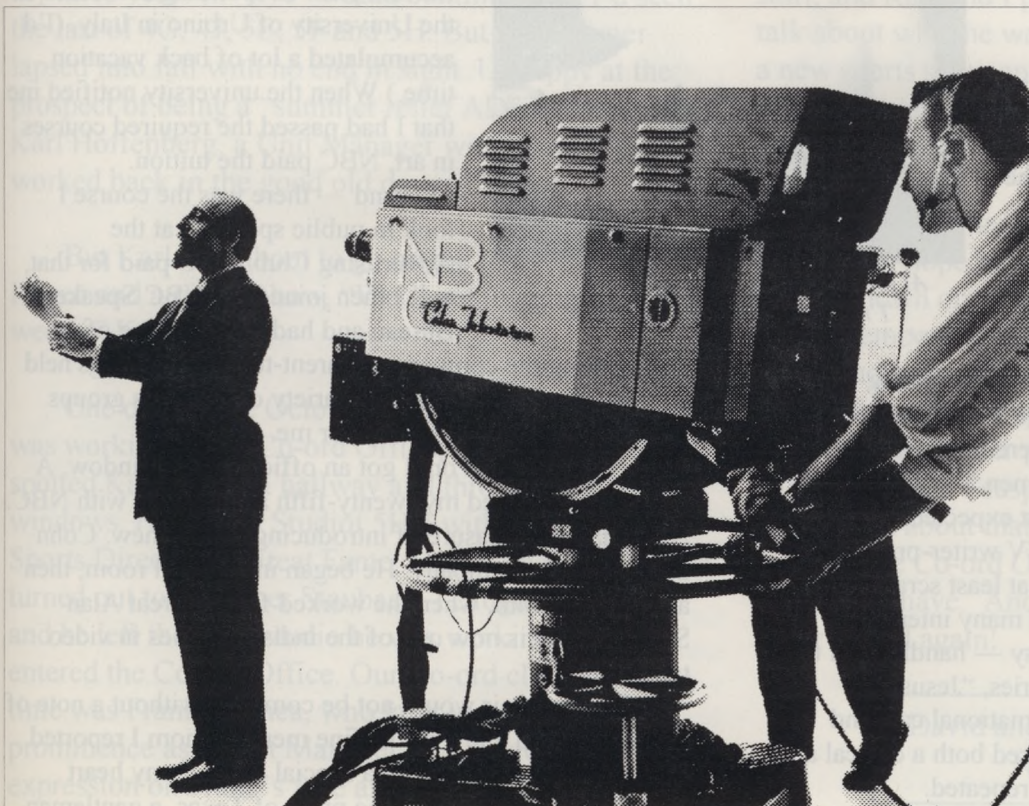
Look at the size of that camera and pedestal – a total weight of approximately 800 pounds! It is amazing how much smaller and lighter today's equipment has become.

Mitch was a great man to work with. He appreciated



everything you did for him. As an example, if we had a difficult taping, that lasted longer than expected, Mitch would call Nathan's in Coney Island and order a few hundred hot dogs and champagne from a local liquor store.

Now that's class! □



Editor's note:

Frank Gaeta started his broadcast career in a TV school followed by a job with ABC in 1951. A year later he was laid off and was immediately hired by NBC.

Frank worked many of the early live shows such as Hallmark and Miss America. As a Technical Director he worked the soap "Another World" and was its Director for some 10 years.

He retired in 1988 and has settled into a life of leisure interrupted by golf with old working buddies.

Frank and Norma enjoy their retirement living in Huntington, NY.

FOND MEMORIES OF NBC

from Dorothy Brodine

I have fainted only once in my life.

It was the day I walked in off the street and applied for a job with NBC. To my surprise and delight, they offered me a secretarial spot in the sales department. But that wasn't why I fainted. It was the blood test I had to take as part of the required physical.

That must have toughened me up, because I haven't fainted since — even under the most trying circumstances. My starting salary in sales was \$35.00 a week — or was it \$50? I can't quite remember. I do recall being told that with raises I could go as high as \$75 per week. Wow! I thought. I'm on my way!

After a stint in sales, I moved on to the advertising department. Here too, I worked as a secretary, all the while scheming to land a job as a copy writer. Somebody had to turn out the "voice overs" that lured audiences to our shows and away from the competition — why not me? Hadn't I won twenty-ninth prize in a Writers' Guide short story contest?

It took a while, but one fine day, a job opened up for a promotion writer. Naturally, I let it be known I was interested. Clyde Clem, out of the goodness of his heart, chose me. Thanks very much, Clyde. I'll never forget your kind deed.

Fast forward a year or two. After promoting every kind of show from soap operas to hard news to boxing — yes, boxing — I set my sights still higher. I wanted to be a TV writer-producer.

For a while, my quest got nowhere. I was once told that "those nice things usually go to men." (Yes, that was a long time ago). But then, when I least expected it, lightning struck. I finally became a TV writer-producer. If I hadn't broken the glass ceiling, I'd at least scratched it.

In the years that followed, I had many interesting assignments. My favorite? That's easy — handling all the promotion for the acclaimed mini-series, "Jesus of Nazareth." With a distinguished international cast and outstanding production values, it scored both a critical and financial success and has often been repeated.

When I began at NBC, television was in the toddler

stage. My first memories are of the Today Show, with Dave Garroway and J. Fred Muggs, and the Home Show, with Arlene Francis and a young Hugh Downs as "the man in the house." Most programs were in black and white. When a color program was scheduled, it was big news. I recall helping to get out the good word.

Other memories abound. "Good-night, Chet, good-night, David," Jack Paar hosting the "The Tonight Show," Richard Chamberlain in "Dr. Kildare," the early years of "Meet the Press," with Martha Rountree.

I saw history in the making — the Watergate trial, Grace Kelly's wedding to Prince Rainier, President Kennedy's funeral. And on and on.

Over the years, NBC often played the "rich uncle" to me. The company paid for most of my Master's degree (in English literature) at Fordham and all of my Ph.D. at St. John's. It also paid for the Italian lessons I took at Berlitz, prior to spending six weeks at the University of Urbino in Italy. (I'd accumulated a lot of back vacation time.) When the university notified me that I had passed the required courses in art, NBC paid the tuition.

And — there was the course I took in public speaking at the Advertising Club. NBC paid for that, too. I then joined the NBC Speakers' Bureau and had the privilege of

representing the company at parent-teacher meetings held at local schools and before a variety of business groups. The world began to open up for me.

Time marched on. I got an office with a window. A gold watch marked my twenty-fifth anniversary with NBC. And I had the pleasure of introducing my nephew, Cohn Spence, to the company. He began in the mail room, then advanced to film, where he worked for the great Alan Smiler. Cohn is now one of the indispensables in video tape.

This memoir would not be complete without a note of appreciation to a few of the fine men to whom I reported over the years. Those with a special place in my heart include: Thaine Engle — the pride of Texas, a gentleman



*At my desk on my last day at NBC —
"I'm smiling through my tears."*

through and through. Away from the office, he devoted much time to charitable activities, such as the Bedside Network, which enabled hospitalized veterans to produce their own programs. A gold star for all he did for the men who served their country well, as was Noel Engler — a prodigious worker, always the first in the office each morning, usually the last to leave at night. I have lost count of his many kindnesses to me. He took an interest in a script I wrote for “Highway to Heaven” and put me in touch with the producer. The script proved a near miss, but that’s life. There will never be another Noel.

And of course, Ed Antonioli who cheered me on when I most needed encouragement, always looked out for the people working for him. I’m sure his support of me had a lot to do with my becoming a TV writer-producer.

Ed was truly special, a priceless asset to the company. Rest in peace, dear Ed.

There you have it — my fond recollections of 33 glorious years at NBC. In retirement, I am putting the finishing touches on a novel based on what I saw, heard and imagined about the happenings in what used to be the RCA building. I call my tome “Confessions of a Nobody.” Not to worry, it’s mostly fiction, and I’ve changed all the names.

So how old does all this make me? Let me think —

Dorothy writes to us and works on her novel from her New York City apartment.

A KISS IS JUST A KISS

David Handler recalls

When “The Merv Griffin Show” met its untimely demise in 1960 (at the hands, some said, of a jealous Johnny Carson — but that’s another story...) I found myself scheduled in Studio 5H as a “summer relief AD.” A graduate of the film studios, I’d thought my three years in “live” would continue, that I’d seen the last of 4G, 4J, 5E, 5F and 5H. But the summer lapsed into fall with no end in sight. Unhappy at the prospect of being a “summer relief AD” I went to see Karl Hoffenberg, a Unit Manager with whom I’d worked back in the good old days of “live.”

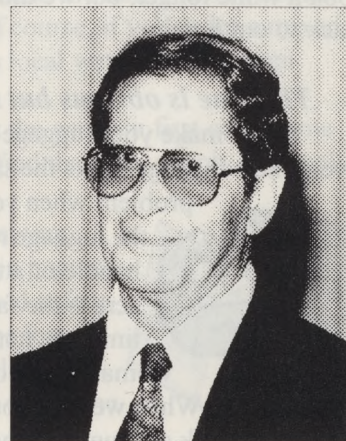
But Karl was about to go on the road with Chet Hagen and a circus show. “We’ll get together in a few weeks,” Karl said.

One day in late October or early November while I was working in the Co-ord Office, an adjunct to 5H, I spotted Karl across a hallway and through two sets of windows. He was in Studio 5HN with Harry Coyle, Sports Director of Great Fame, and another fellow who turned out to be Roger Staubach. I caught Karl’s eye and he left the little studio he was working in and entered the Co-ord Office. Our Co-ord clerk at the time was Frank O’Shea, who later went on to some prominence as a Unit Manager. I will never forget the expression on Frank’s face as he witnessed what

happened next.

Without a preamble, Karl came up to me and we kissed — on the mouth! Now, I had hardly so much as shaken Karl’s hand up to that time: colleagues generally don’t get intimate in our television world! But kiss we did, although I don’t know to this day what prompted it. Frank’s face turned the color of his white shirt, and Karl and I proceeded to make some small talk about what he was involved in. It turned out to be a new sports show and it turned out that they were looking for an AD and it turned out that within a week I was assigned to the Sports Department.

Karl, sadly, has passed away, but I hope he’s smiling down on us all, and remembers the kiss that launched me on a wonderful career in sports that lasted the better part of fifteen years. I suspect Karl forgot about that scene in the Co-ord Office, but I never have. And we never kissed again!



David and wife, Cynthia, live in New York City.

TRAVEL TIPS

Don & Sandy Luftig

When you travel overseas and you don't speak the language of the country you're visiting, life can be interesting, difficult, stressful, or all three. Here are some hints to take the difficulty out, lessen the stress and keep the interesting, interesting.

When staying at a hotel in a foreign country, take a matchbook or piece of stationery that has the hotel name and address on it. Often, a doorman gives a taxi driver the information as to where you want to go. When you want to return to the hotel, the odds are the cab driver you hail does not speak English. When that happens, just show him the matchbook or letterhead and he will generally get you there. But not always.

In Turkey, we ran into a problem. We showed the hotel card to the driver and he started the cab. After traveling a little way, he stopped to talk to another taxi driver. He showed the card. Then drove off. Then there was a second stop at another taxi stand. He showed the card again. The problem - our taxi driver couldn't read. He could qualify to be a New York cabbie. It took a while longer, but we did make it back to our hotel.

This one is obvious but still worth mentioning.

Try to make your luggage look different. Almost everyone's luggage looks the same and it can create a problem when you're trying to pick it up at the luggage return. Tie a bright tag to the handle or attach a strip of white tape across the face of your luggage. One time, we noticed a driver for some woman select our luggage and place it in front of him. When we questioned him, real subtle like, "Hey, you took our luggage" he was surprised and said the woman had pointed it out as belonging to her. Obviously, she thought it was hers. It was mine. It looked the same. It was the same make. If I hadn't noticed it, he would have taken it away with him. Not every airport checks your

luggage against the baggage claim when you leave.

Be sure to put a lock of some kind on your luggage. Most locks can be broken off easily but anything that will deter a potential thief is helpful. He may not take the time to bust your lock. We had a pair of binoculars taken from one of our bags that had been left in a lobby as part of a group departure. We didn't discover the loss until we got home. The bag didn't have a lock on it. Now every one of our bags does have one.

When going to a foreign land, take the time to learn a few words in that language. The effect on the natives is incredible. They appreciate the fact that you have made an effort to speak their language.

Even if you just learn how to ask directions (helpful when you're driving in the countryside) it will make your trip faster. Most of us have had some French or Spanish in high school and college. But, the vocabulary, if not used, is easily forgotten.

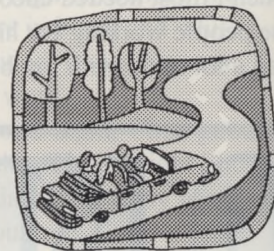
A good idea, and it can be fun, is to take a short course in the language of the country you're going to visit. Before going to France one year, I took a six weeks course at the Alliance Francaise in New York City. One of the first lessons was what to say when your car has a flat tire. I was more interested in what to say when I wanted to order some food. But, you guessed it — going down to the French Riviera, our car had a flat. I was actually happy. I pulled the car into a garage and asked them, in French to fix it. They did. It cost me two American dollars. Right now, I don't remember how to say please fix the flat tire. Of course, one could always point and hold out some money. That works most of the time.

Trying to learn Russian was almost impossible for me. I learned how to say "Good morning" and something like "the weather is nice today." My cab driver was duly impressed. Fortunately, we had a local guide from Intourist who spoke perfect English. But they were very pleased that I had tried.

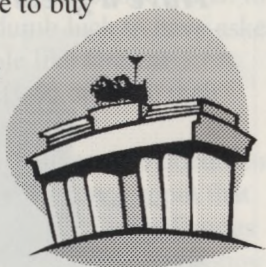
One year I went to Japan and planned to visit Jack Reynolds, a former NBC reporter and executive producer, who was stationed there. He sent me his address, in Japanese. When I got in the taxi, I showed it to the driver who immediately took off. After a few minutes, I ventured to ask him, "Do you know how to speak English?"

He answered me in the only English he knew. "No. Do you know how to speak Japanese?" End of the conversation.

I study languages with records and tour guide books. Before we went to Germany I managed to learn a small



amount of German. It came in handy when a friendly native told me that I would get a parking ticket if I left my car in a particular place. He took me to a store to buy a parking permit. Suddenly, the language kicked in and I realized that I did have a parking permit courtesy of the leasing car company. I took him out to the car, showed it to him. He smiled approvingly and I parked without incident. No matter where we have traveled, we have always enjoyed the kindness of strangers who would often lead us to our destination.



One time when we were in France, we were trying to drive to a restaurant and made a wrong turn. We were in the countryside. There aren't any maps that show you where restaurants are located. Then we spotted a young man approaching on a motorcycle.



I flagged him down and told him, "Je suis perdu." I am lost. "Aidez moi. Je voudrais aller a Les Mougins des Moulin." I would like to go to the name of the restaurant. In French, he told me to "attendez." Wait, while he picked up his girl friend. We waited. I wasn't sure if he was ever going to come back, but in about ten minutes, he showed up with a pretty young lady on the seat behind him. "Suivez moi," he said. Follow me. We did, and he led us directly to the restaurant. The meal tasted wonderful. The pleasure of the experience has lingered longer.

Another time when we asked for directions at a roadside stand, I asked if there was anyone there who could speak English. The man behind the counter said, "L'oiseau," laughing. I laughed, too, because I knew that l'oiseau meant bird - the one in the cage just outside the stand. I felt even better when he gave me directions to get back on the main road.

In Italy, I asked a taxi driver if he could "parla inglese?" He said, "No capice." He didn't understand. So, in Italian, I said "Vorrei andare a la piazza di Spagna, sopra la scala." I wanted to go to the Spanish steps, the top of the steps. He turned to me and in perfect English, said, "Where'd you learn to speak Italian like that?" Surprise. He spoke and understood English beautifully. So, when you're in a taxi in a foreign country, don't say anything contrary about the driver or the country. He may, and probably does, understand what you're saying.

Some uncomplimentary words on your part may make your ride a lot longer and more expensive than you would want.

When going to a foreign country, get about twenty-five dollars worth of their currency before you go. You will find it handy if you have to take a taxi to your hotel. Some cab drivers will not take American dollars because it is too much

trouble to go to a bank and exchange them. Having some money also helps to tip the bellboys and doormen at the hotels when you first arrive. I also bring about fifty dollars worth of singles. I find it easier sometimes to give them a dollar than try to figure out how many yen, reals, or drachma equal that amount.



In Turkey, we advise you not to exchange too much money at any one time. The reason is that the rate of exchange changes faster than a whirling dervish. The rate, when we were there last year, was 285,000 Turkish dollars to one American dollar. They print million dollar notes, and ten million dollar notes. We figured a million was equal to a little more than four dollars. When we came home, we made our children "instant millionaires" without Regis asking them any questions.

Taking pictures... always take plenty of film with you because the cost of buying film overseas



is much more expensive than it is here.

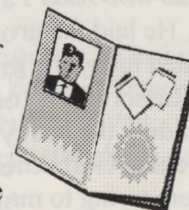
It might be a good idea to take a second simple camera along just in case something happens to your Nikon or Minolta. It isn't easy to get cameras fixed overseas and more often than not, you can't leave it for any length of time because you're usually

moving along quickly from place to place. Take most of your shots on your favorite camera but click off a shot or two on the spare one. That would have saved me a lot of grief in Turkey. My camera shorted. The shutter snapped and the film advanced but the shutter never opened. I never knew (until it was too late) that I had lost a lot of pictures.

Water. In most third world countries, you should probably not drink the water unless it is bottled and hopefully, you will see them open the bottle. You're better off drinking beer or wine. Of course, if you order a mixed drink — don't get ice. That is local water that has been frozen.

It is usually safe to drink the water in first class name hotels but you will probably find that they supply you with bottled water in your room.

Passports. Make sure that you make a photo copy of the main page of your passport and keep it stored safely away. Should your passport be lost or stolen, the copy you made will really simplify your getting another one at the US Embassy.



Money. American Express checks are a good idea. I find that you can often get a higher rate of exchange at a bank for them. Cash is good. But, not always. In certain third world countries, the natives have often refused

twenty or five dollar bills that had any kind of mark on them. Sometimes, banks in the U.S. will give you money that has a pen mark on it. Third world countries usually won't accept a mark or a tear in the bill. Make sure your large bills look clean.

Another tip — enjoy where you are. So many people are concerned about where they're going the next day or week that they never enjoy the moment. Take enough time at each destination to enjoy it leisurely. Don't become a member of "if it's Tuesday, it must be Belgium" club. Sometimes a week in one city is enough, sometimes not. Read about your destination. Know in advance what museums and sites you want to visit. You've traveled too far to wake up and say, what are we going to do today?

If you have any suggestions for travel tips, send them

into Peacock North Travel Tips and they will get passed along in another issue.

Have a great trip wherever you go!



The Luftig's travel base is in North Caldwell, New Jersey. Don is a retired WNBC TV Director.

The Bourgholtzer Report

Reuven Frank yanked me out of the best job I ever had: "NBC News European Correspondent." He claimed that he needed me in Burbank, "where you can tell the rest of us back home what it's like living in that foreign country, California."

He also claimed that closing down the Moscow bureau of NBC News early in the 1970s was justifiable, even though he did it "with regret." I fought tooth and nail against that move, and I actually won a couple of points. How many people can say that about Reuven? I was already a correspondent in foreign Burbank, but I managed to finesse the New York Mafia into retaining our Russian translator and a small office in Moscow. In that way, visiting correspondents had a base from which to work, and when it was decided (inevitably) to re-open a full-fledged bureau, basic facilities already existed.

As a visitor from Burbank, filling in for the Moscow bureau both before and after my retirement, I was able to cover a good deal of the Gorbachev transition. It didn't take long to realize that Mikhail Gorbachev was a brilliant salesman who hadn't a clue about the product he was selling. He laid the ground-work for a New Russia, then proceeded to lay the ground-work for its failure — from which Russia still is reeling.

Finding the heavy thinkers who had put together the package that Gorbachev was selling, and the entrepreneurs who were trying to make it work, was not difficult. The inquiries produced a number of good little stories. There was, for example, the family from Tbilisi, father, mother, children, cousins. They started a little co-op bakery, to produce Georgian bread. This was not only a good story,

combining human interest with economics; watching the production of Georgian bread, which is shaped like an over-sized discus, also inspired me to learn to make it for myself, and use it for pizzas. I still do that.

However, my curiosity having been aroused by Gorbachev's ineptitude, I found myself probing ever more deeply into the sources of reform. Who had inspired these heavy thinkers? And who had inspired the guys who inspired the heavy thinkers?

It became a quest that would occupy a huge amount of my time for many years. What hooked me was the discovery of a man who had been a figure of huge influence before and after the Bolshevik revolution, who had been branded an "enemy of the people" by Stalin, and shot, and whose traces had almost entirely disappeared until his rehabilitation in 1987.

Although it was not a subject that was likely to make a story for Nightly News, I had to know more about it. Urges like that happen to foreign correspondents.

The person who turned out to be the subject of my quest was an agricultural scientist, Aleksandr Chaianov. I found that Chaianov's younger son, Vasilii, was still alive and in Moscow. We became friends, and he told me everything that he could remember about his father. All of his father's personal belongings — notes, manuscripts, records of all sorts — had been seized and destroyed in 1930, and Vasilii's memory was limited by the fact that his father had been taken away when Vasilii was only 5 years old. There was virtually no strictly autobiographical material remaining.

There was, however, the record of his interrogation by the Secret Police — the O.G.P.U., later known as the

K.G.B.

Through Vasilii, I was able to persuade the K.G.B. to let me see their records. It was my dumb luck to have asked at just the right moment, when people like Dmitrii Volkogonov were pushing the K.G.B. to open up their archives.

Not only did I receive permission to see the documents, my work-place turned out to be the conference room that had been part of Yurii Andropov's office in the infamous secret police headquarters, known as Lubianka. Andropov had been the head of the K.G.B. for many years, had succeeded Leonid Brezhnev as leader of the Soviet Union, and had made Mikhail Gorbachev his protégé.

The volumes of interrogation were brought in to Andropov's office and piled up on the long conference table. At one end of the room, Lenin glowered down from a framed photograph. Fastened to the wall behind where I sat at the conference table was a white, sculptured bust of Felix Dzerzhinskii — Iron Felix, the founder of the secret police — looking over my shoulder. I asked whether I could make photo-copies of at least some of the Chaianov material.

"Absolutely not," was the answer.

After a day or two of madly scribbling notes, and realizing that, while I could read Russian if it had been printed, or typewritten, there was no way that I could puzzle out Chaianov's handwriting even if I had years to do it. They had allowed me only a week.

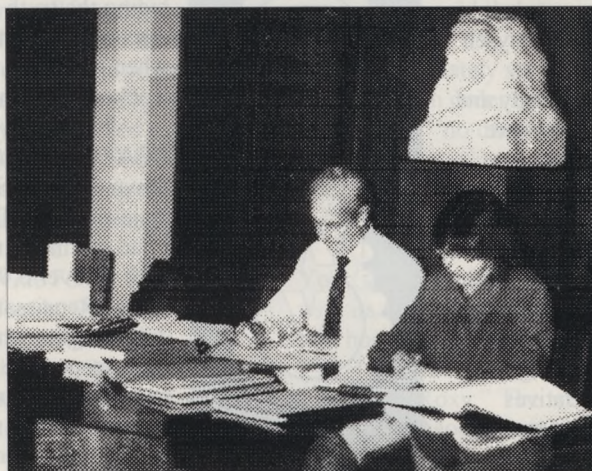
Luckily, I had enlisted the help of a lovely and talented lady who was the translator for a Dutch correspondent friend (my wife was with me on this trip, keeping a close eye on my behavior). I brought a portable tape recorder with us, the next day. Irina sat at the table beside me and read every word of the two-volume transcript into the microphone, 178 pages, hand-written on two sides. Back in her office, she typed it all into a computer.

At this time, I was working for the Christian Science Monitor, one among many NBC exiles who were producing the "World Monitor" television news. I had set up the skeleton of a Moscow bureau for them. That gave me a front-row seat to the fascinating period when Russia seceded from the Soviet Union, in a manner of speaking, elected its own President, fella named Yeltsin, and installed its own parliament in a building Muscovites had long called "The White House" because it was a big white structure and nobody knew what went on inside.

I spent most of my time in the White House. Only three

or four other correspondents ever showed up for more than a few minutes, but colleagues like Carol Williams and John-Thor Dahlberg were always there, as I was, because that is where the real action was. Yeltsin's regime was trying to do the "perestroika" right, in contrast to Gorbachev, who was doing it wrong. Maddeningly, Gorbachev and his powerful party clique managed to torpedo almost every promising move Yeltsin's people made, until the opportunity was squandered, and perestroika foundered.

It pained me, because I liked Russia, and Russians. Moscow and Paris were always my two favorite cities. My first novel took place in Moscow and Paris. My second novel (evolving slowly on my hard disk) will take place in Moscow and Paris.



Frank Bourgholtzer and Irina Ovtcharova, in Yurii Andropov's Lubianka office, examining the dossier of Aleksandr Chaianov.

Why would I like Moscow? A New York Daily News television columnist once asked me that, when I was preparing to re-open the Moscow bureau in 1965 after having been kicked out in 1963. I gave him a flip answer, but here's a better one: when Russians write a letter, they don't begin: "Dear Dan," with a comma. They begin: "Dear Dan!", with an exclamation point. The concept of "friend", with Russians, is vastly more caring, more loyal, than with folks like us.

Even the K.G.B. people were nice. They actually asked me to write an article for their house organ, "The Search." I politely declined. Even so, they gave me a second look at the Chaianov dossier, permitting me to make corrections in the transcript Irina had made for me.

As it turned out, my inquisitiveness wasn't totally wasted. Some of the fruits of my research have been incorporated into a lengthy essay that filled one entire issue of a British periodical, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, and then was published as a hard-cover book, entitled: *Aleksandr Chaianov and Russian Berlin*. (Frank Cass, publisher.)

As for Reuven, there was the rumor that he had once fired an assistant producer because he couldn't stand the poor guy's shaving lotion . . . I never believed that, of course, but I'm saving it for another (possibly book-length) report.

By the way, if anyone wants the recipe for Georgian bread, just send a stamped, self-addressed envelope. □

Frank Bourgholtzer, former NBC correspondent, reports to Peacock North from California.

My Unprofessional Professional Audition

By
**Gloria
Clyne**

When I was ten years old I announced to my family that I wanted to be a dancer. Not just any dancer. I wanted to be a Gae Foster Roxynette and dance on the stage of the Roxy Theatre. My father immediately declared that no daughter of his was leaving home to go on the stage, and blamed Ann Levy and her damn free passes to the Roxy for putting such craziness in my head. I would point out that the year was 1938 and fathers actually felt and talked like that. My mother, the practical parent, pointed out that I was only ten and not packing my bags just yet and, furthermore it was insane to blame Miss Levy for any ideas I had in my head since she knew I was quite capable of putting them there myself without outside help.

Quite frankly, Ann Levy was a very nice lady and my Aunt Anna's best friend. She always wore white gloves and a perky little hat atop a very homely face. While she was physically unattractive, I considered her a very glamorous woman, mainly because of her job. She worked for RKO Pictures Hollywood in their New York office and as a secretary to some big-shot executive she got to speak to famous movie stars. She also had access to free passes for the Roxy Theatre and the NBC Studio Tour. With each program change at the Roxy came a pass for two. And when relatives visited New York for the first time, they were treated to a free tour of the NBC Studios in Rockefeller Center.

Actually, the dream I nurtured wasn't very realistic since I wasn't much of a dancer. My formal dance training consisted of three lessons for a quarter every week at the Hunts Point Palace on Southern Boulevard in the East Bronx and then the continuing depression curtailed them in a matter of months.

To be perfectly honest, I can't say I had an absolute hunger to be a dancer as much as I wanted to prance around on a stage wearing beautiful costumes. So I was completely taken aback when six months after my eighteenth birthday I received a call from the Roxy Theatre advising me to be at the theatre the next morning at 9 a.m. for my Gae Foster Roxynette audition. **What audition?** I panicked. They made a mistake. No mistake. Aunt Anna and Ann Levy, after years of hearing me voice my love for the dancing Roxynettes, arranged for the audition.

I was terrified and ashamed. Now everyone would learn the terrible truth: I couldn't dance! I also knew I had to go through with it. But what did that mean? I had never experienced an actual audition before so I would have to rely on what I learned from the movies. Ruby Keeler auditioned a lot in her films. In *FORTY-SECOND STREET* she auditioned for Warner Baxter and made it to the chorus line. She also came out a star! But what was I to do? Movie stars auditioned wearing long shorts, tailored white blouses with short or long sleeves, a scarf tied around their heads and tap shoes. Oy, tap shoes!! I owned none of those items and there was no time to buy them — even if I knew where they were sold. What, indeed, was this girl to do!

I awoke, after little sleep, to a very bleak-looking morning

that October day in 1944. I told myself it was an eventful day but myself was not too thrilled with the news. Myself liked it even less with the realization that the event was The Audition! When I departed the family's house in Queens, my mother quietly mouthed the words, "Good Luck." My father told me to work hard and have a nice day. He thought I was heading for my job as a tour guide at NBC Studios. There seemed little point in upsetting him,

since mother and I knew the audition would be little more than an exercise in futility, but probably a worthy story to recount in later years. I wasn't accustomed to hiding the truth from my father, which only added more discomfort to the nausea I was already experiencing when I boarded the "F" train from Woodhaven Blvd to Rockefeller Center in Manhattan.

I made my way from the lower concourse of the RCA Building upstairs to 50th Street, which I walked down as far as Seventh Avenue. There stood the majestic Roxy Theatre and inside, The Audition. While I had intimate knowledge of the 'front-of-the-house' with its over 6,000 seats and magnificent architectural mix of Renaissance, Gothic and Moorish styles, I could only imagine what the 'back-of-the-house' looked like. As I opened the Stage Door, I hesitated, my heart pounding. About six very young women pushed past me, whispering some words of thanks. I followed them, my heart now on the verge of exploding. Holy smokes, I was backstage at the Roxy. I felt faint, but there was

no time for that. Things started moving swiftly. A few feet inside the stage door was an old man with a clip board (in the movies he'd be called Pop) who checked off our names and waved us into a very, very, large freight elevator. It was packed, I mean really packed, with squealing noisy 'girls,' all carrying little bags. There was no turning back. I was on an elevator to hell!

The elevator doors opened onto a not-very-large room, considering the number of rehearsal clad 'girls' occupying it. The new arrivals, of which I was one, were ushered into an even smaller room off to the right. We were told to change into our rehearsal clothes, leaving our outer garments on the chairs surrounding the room. The nightmare was about to begin.

In no time at all I was surrounded by dozens of Ruby Keelers, a few Eleanor Powells and lots of Ann Millers. They were dressed for an audition. I was dressed for a night-on-the-town. Most had bobbed hair. My hair was long, blonde and curled under in the fashionable page-boy style of the day. The rest of me was decked out in a low cut, black crepe dress clinging to a thin body that was standing on stiletto heels, stylish for the era but not for the audition. I accessorized with a black choker that spelled out 'Blind Date,' which I received when I appeared on a popular radio show bearing the same name. Since there was nowhere to hide, I was obliged to join the other auditionees in the first room. I stood out like a knish in a Chinese restaurant. I was pathetic.

A woman, speaking very gently, introduced herself as Evelyn. She was lead dancer in the chorus line as well as an assistant choreographer. She also appeared to be in charge, although there was no shortage of important looking people, all



barking orders at one another. And lest we didn't understand, Evelyn reiterated for this new group that she would be leading us through our audition and that she would explain what was expected of us when we were in the rehearsal hall. She was an attractive woman, maybe in her late 20s with heavily made-up eyes and wearing the obligatory white long-sleeved blouse, shorts almost to her knees, a scarf tied around her head and tap shoes. Her voice was calming but her words scared the hell out of me. She proceeded to call out ten names, barely glancing in my direction, and pointing her finger at the door on her left, told the girls to go through. She then joined them in the rehearsal hall.

I could hear the tap dancing through the closed door. I was impressed with and scared by the beautiful sound made by ten girls tapping in unison. How did they know what to do? I was about to find out.

After some ten minutes or so Evelyn and the auditionees came out of the rehearsal hall. She told them to get dressed and leave. The lucky ones would receive a phone call in a day or two. Evelyn now called out another ten names. In disbelief I heard mine. Initially I considered ignoring it. I could pretend to be an important person's secretary overseeing the operation. I was a much better actress than dancer. I heard my name called again and could feel Evelyn staring at me. How did she know? She didn't. She was mesmerized by my outfit. Her eyes kept going to the stiletto heels. Was she wondering how I was going to negotiate dancing on them? It was the same question I had.

Wow! so this was where my beloved Gae Foster Roxyettes rehearsed. The hall looked to be about 30 feet by 20 with one long wall completely mirrored and a hard-wood floor noticeably scarred. Evelyn asked us to line up behind her and face the mirror. I positioned myself directly behind her for the obvious reason, which reason was, indeed, just as obvious to Evelyn. She asked me to move slightly to my right. Good grief, I was now vulnerable and about to be exposed. Evelyn did a basic time-step and asked us to follow suit. Repeat the step, she demanded. Again, she cried out, as her eyes glided along the line of girls, coming to rest on me. While I remembered how to execute the time-step from my days at the Hunts Point Palace, I was miserably off-time with the others. Evelyn knew it too. Strike one! Evelyn continued to tap out other steps each requiring more agility. I took heart when I noticed a few girls struggling to keep up. Me? I just gave up. Oh, I moved my feet around but I never came close to imitating Evelyn's speedy twinkle toes. I could hear the rest of the line tittering like little schoolgirls, which is what most were just six months earlier, so I forgave them their cruelty.

It was now time to show Evelyn how high we could kick. No surprise here. That's what the Gae Foster Roxyettes were noted for...high kicks and hi-jinks on the stage. What happened next is still vividly etched in my mind, which is unfortunate, because it's not a terrific memory.

Earlier I described what I wore to The Audition, but I neglected to tell you about the underpinnings. It goes without saying that I wore a low-cut bra under the low-cut dress, but I also had on a full-fledge girdle with garters. I stood five feet six, weighed 98 pounds and thought it was necessary to wear a girdle. The fact is most young women at that time wore girdles. I never researched the why, but in my case the girdle held up my stockings.

I take you back to that moment when Evelyn asked me to kick. I was confident I could do as well as the four girls who kicked before me, but I hadn't counted on the girdle's reaction to the exercise. Holding my back straight I thrust my right leg

towards the sky which caused my girdle to think it was a sling shot, thereby shooting my left leg out from under me. The thud I made was loud and so was the laughter. It was the end of a short-lived dream. I had been exposed. Literally. I wasn't wearing panties.

I returned home crestfallen. My mother offered some comfort by pointing out I wouldn't have to fight my father for a career on the stage. Three days later Evelyn phoned. She offered me a job as a Gae Foster Roxyette! In disbelief I sank to the floor. Yes, I was exactly what they were looking for, no particular style of dancing, long legs, thin body, perfect height, blonde hair and a pretty face. Oh, and I was not to worry about being an unprofessional dancer, Evelyn said in her calm voice, their instructors would teach me how to dance ...the Roxyette way! I would be steeped in rigorous dance routines for one month after which I would be sent on the road for three more months as part of a Roxy chorus line already booked to play theatres in Cleveland, Detroit and Boston. Evelyn was sure I would then be ready to make my debut on the New York stage.

I immediately set about preparing the arguments I would have to use in order to win over the man who proclaimed eight years earlier "no daughter of my mine is leaving home to go on the stage."

APPENDIX — Roxy Theatre Background:

The Roxy Theatre opened in 1927, and was considered New York's most lavish combination movie and stage showplace, and with its 6,200 seats was perhaps the largest and most luxurious film house in the world.

It was built by theatrical impresario Samuel Lionel Rothafel, known as "Roxy." The architecture was a mix of Renaissance, Gothic and Moorish styles and marked the pinnacle of the era of picture palaces. It was called "the cathedral of the motion picture."

The theater had three pipe organs raised and lowered on elevators, a 110 piece orchestra, a ballet corps of 50 and a line of precision dancing Roxyettes. It also had the largest music library found in any theatre, and an advanced refrigeration system, its own infirmary, and a power plant large enough to light a city of 250,000.

The ROXYETTIES, which in time evolved into the Radio City Music Hall ROCKETTES, actually had their beginnings as the Missouri Rockets in 1925. This was a precision chorus line that made its mark with high kicking. After moving to New York City, they became the resident performers at the Roxy Theatre and renamed the Roxyettes. It should be noted that the Roxyettes were part of the opening show at the Radio City Music Hall in 1932 and stayed on. In 1934 they were renamed the Rockettes.

The glorious Roxy Theatre stood at Seventh Avenue and

50th Street, was taken over in the late 1950s by Rockefeller Center, which ran it as a first-run movie house without a stage show. It was demolished in 1980. □



Gloria is auditioning her creative non-fiction writing for our PN readers. She and husband Leonard live in New York City

Nicholas Penella, Engineering. Nick died on Easter Sunday morning, April 23, 2000, after battling congestive heart failure, diabetes, and finally cancer.

Nick was a native New Yorker, born in the Bronx in 1932. After graduating from high school he started his career at NBC in 1950 in the mailroom. He worked his way up in



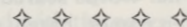
Nick (WA2YEG) at the 5E TD console.

NBC, until he was drafted in 1952. For basic training he was sent to Camp Stewart, Georgia (he called it "Camp Swampy"), then to Falls Church, Virginia, to service the radar equipment for guided missiles. This assignment kept him from overseas duty in Korea. In 1955, "Sergeant" Nick returned to NBC working an impressive list of shows — "Howdy Doody," "Perry Como Show," "Ernie Kovacs Show," "The Home Show," "Dinah Shore Show," "The General Motors Spectacular," also the "Steve Allen Show." He found his niche on the "Today Show" and stayed there

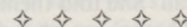
for over 30 of his 42 years at NBC.

Nick retired in 1991 as the "Today Show" Technical Director.

Nick married Barbara in 1957. In addition to Barbara he is survived by two sons; Michael, a professional trumpet player and Thomas, a Transit Police Captain in the Bronx, and two granddaughters.



Ted Markovic, former Manager of Film Production for NBC Advertising and Promotion passed away after a long illness on March 19th in Sun City, Arizona. Ted, who had a long, varied and successful career at NBC is survived by his wife Peg, two sons and three grandchildren.



Reggie Harris, Announcer. Reggie's precise manner of reporting the news made him a staple of local television news broadcasting. Reggie collapsed and died of an apparent heart attack while exercising at his home in Teaneck, New Jersey, March 27, 2000. He was 46.

Mr. Harris' broadcast journalism career covered 23 years and was a



Reggie

Bill Wendell & Dick Dudley

May 13, 2000, John A. D'Angelo writes:

I was very sad when I read in Peacock North that Bill Wendell and Dick Dudley had passed away. I was lucky to have known them both.

I guess one of the things about Bill Wendell that made a deep impression on me was his tremendous strength. I think Bill was one of the strongest men I had ever met. I remember an evening in Broadcast Operations Control when Bill, on just a lark, picked up a Broadcast Operations Supervisor, who was over six feet tall, and held him pressed against the ceiling. It was amazing! There was Bill with his arms straight up and the poor supervisor saying, "Ok, Bill, OK, now can you please put me down?"

There was another amazing feat of strength that Bill performed, although I was not there to see it. The story was told to me by a person who said, "You are *NOT* going to believe this!" — but I did. The incident took place in front of Charlie O's, and I understand a whole slew of NBC folks in Charlie O's witnessed what happened.

It seemed that Bill was in his car at the light and didn't get going fast enough to please two hoods riding in the car behind him, so they did what hoods do — they bumped his car. *BAD mistake.* The way it was described,

Bill unfolded out of his car, the two hoods came at him, and Bill really came to life. He grabbed the first by the throat, lifted him off the ground using only the arm that was wrapped around the hood's throat, and started pounding him against the wall of Charlie O's. As Bill did this, the second hood was dancing around in a boxing stance but not closing in. While Bill pounded the first hood, he turned his head to the second hood, pointed his free arm at him and said, "You wait right there, I'll be right with you!" The second hood turned away and then ran screaming down the street!

I remember Dick Dudley bringing in a special batch of delicious Christmas cookies that he had made. I always looked forward to those cookies and chatting with Dick. Dick was a fountain of interesting stories about people and places and he always had a smile.

They were Ying and Yang. Two totally different types. One was like the sea spray in your face and waves crashing on a rocky shore and the other was like a quiet Maine lake with a loon softly calling. They both were top-notch professionals and good men, and I will miss them deeply.

John A. D'Angelo, johnda1237@aol.com

fixture on local news broadcasts since 1980. He took a special interest in social and economic issues, earning Emmys for separate reports on race relations, the homeless, and panhandling.

Reggie joined UPN in 1997, three months after he and six colleagues were abruptly fired from WCBS where he had been a weekend news anchor.

He had been an anchor in Dallas, Texas, and prior to his move to CBS he was a reporter and weekend anchor for WNBC-TV for almost a decade. He also was host and associate producer of "Working Solutions," a PBS series.

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Carl Watson, passed away on April 17 at his home in Great Neck, NY. He was 90.

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Katherine Priaulx, wife of the late Bob Priaulx. died in mid-May.

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Joseph Milroy, died in May in Port Charlotte, Florida, at the age of 86. He was born in Brooklyn and resided in Mineola. Joe worked for NBC in New York for 42 years. He moved to Florida in 1995.

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James Cordon, electronics engineer. Jim died in March after a long struggle with Hodgkin's lymphoma. He worked for NBC Radio and Television for nearly 20 years. Jim was actively engaged in the installation and maintenance of a new NBC network radio facility in the mid-80s and intercom systems in the 90s and the design and installation of NBC's broadcast communication systems for the 1996 summer Olympics in Atlanta.

Ray Weiss writes: "He worked for me as an electronic maintenance engineer at the NBC Radio Network. His devotion to his work was outstanding. His ever present smile will always be remembered by all who had the great pleasure of knowing him. When it came to moving out of Radio City and building a new plant on Broadway his input was invaluable. I will always remember him as a bright light and good friend. He will be missed but not forgotten.

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Recent Notables

Edward Gorey, 75, whose bizarre stories and black-and-white illustrations reflected an elegantly morbid sense of humor in books, on the stage, and for television, died in mid-April. Gorey won a Tony in 1978 for his costume designs for "Dracula." He is widely known for his titles for "Mystery" on PBS...**Douglas Fairbanks Jr.**, 90, never adopted his father's trademark of indefatigable athleticism that electrified audiences in silent film classics, but took on a sophistication in scores of dramas and light comedies of the early 1930s. In the 1940s he launched a second career as

a television producer. He died May 8 in a New York hospital...**David Merrick**, 88, Broadway's most successful producer, whose flair for showmanship and publicity helped create such hits as "Gypsy," "Hello, Dolly!" and "42nd Street," died in late April. Mr. Merrick produced more than 80 Broadway productions. Any publicity was good if it sold tickets! One of his most famous stunts involved the musical "Subways Are for Sleeping," which received tepid notices from the critics. Mr. Merrick took a newspaper ad with rave quotes from seven men who just happened to have the same names as the critics for New York's seven daily newspapers. The advertisement ran in one edition of the New York Herald-Tribune before it was noticed — and then yanked..

....**Claire Trevor**, 90, the sultry-voiced actress who appeared in more than 60 films and won an Academy Award for her 1948 performance as a boozy, broken-down torch singer in "Key Largo," died April 8, 2000. She earned Oscar nominations for "Dead End," a 1937 melodrama and for "The High and the Mighty," in 1954. She also was in John Ford's 1939 classic, "Stagecoach," playing a frontier prostitute redeemed by a gallant John Wayne...**Larry Linville**, 60, best known for his portrayal of the neurotic Major Frank Burns on the television show "M*A*S*H," died April 10, 2000 at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center...**Craig Stevens**, 81, the veteran actor who played the suave private eye "Peter Gunn" in the late 1950s TV series died of cancer May 10, 2000...**Gil Fates**, executive producer for "What's My Line?" and other television game and panel shows of the 50s and '60s, died May 1. He was 86. In over 35 years with Goodson-Todman Productions, he helped create "Beat the Clock," "Winner Take All," "To Tell the Truth," and "I've Got a Secret." He produced "What's My Line?" for its entire 25-year run....**Sir John Gielgud**, the great British actor, who dominated the theatrical world for much of the 20th century with a voice that Sir Alec Guinness called "a silver trumpet muffled in silk," died in May 21. He was 96....**Neil Patterson**, a 22-year veteran of ABC News who most recently served as senior vice president for operations and executive in charge of its millennium program, died in April of complications from a stroke. He was 50....

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It is always with great displeasure that we announce the deaths of our friends and coworkers along with many prominent people who have touched our lives in some way. The members of Peacock North extend their sympathy and condolences to the families of our departed friends.

THOSE DARING YOUNG MEN IN THEIR FLYING MACHINE

By Wes Paulsen

I joined NBC's Broadcast Systems Engineering or Audio/Video as we were known by the old timers in the mid '60's. There were thirteen to fifteen engineers, depending upon the number of projects planned for the quarter. This was a very close knit group that designed and oversaw the construction of all local and network electronic facilities, from an announce booth to a 106 ft. by 100 ft. more or less TV broadcasting studio, including the lighting system, audio system, video camera system, the studio switching system, the communications system, control room facilities including the consoles and video monitoring and more.

Having been a part of this about 20 years, after 15 years in Electronic Maintenance, one project was kind of unique and stands out. I would like to relate it to you.

In the Spring of 1968 I was assigned the project of making up a helicopter package for use during the summer political conventions. I had received the project by default as the engineer originally assigned left NBC to go to IBM. Much of the systems components were in house, having been ordered by the departed engineer. Sherman Atwood was my project manager.

The helicopter was being leased from the Keystone Helicopter Corp. of Philadelphia. It was, if I remember right, a Sikorsky S58, one of the largest available at the time. It had been gutted, all insulation, seats and unnecessary bric-a-brac had been removed. This was to enable it to lift heavy loads such as I-beams on construction jobs.

The first week after being assigned the project I drove to Blue Bell, PA, with Ed Bertero, a fellow engineer. We went to a camera equipment engineering company that had a way to stabilize a TV camera so it could be used in a helicopter without having the picture vibrate. We watched them hook up their equipment to a camera mounted on a vibrating table. It was a huge success. Ed ordered one for our job with my project budget money.

A few days later I drove to the helicopter in Philly. I took measurements of the pad eyes on the floor and brackets on the walls needed to tie the equipment down. Also the smaller porthole opposite the cargo door on the side through which I later designed a mechanical apparatus to suspend 2

light-weight masts. One to mount both the audio and communications antennas and the second to hold the microwave antenna, a horn type, with its associated flexible wave guide. Both were able to be pulled up alongside the copter, so it could be landed without damaging them. The wave guide antenna mast also had to be able to rotate in order to keep the horn lined up with the microwave receiver antenna. This turned out to be my job, as well as to pull up the masts upon landing.

The equipment was designed so that we would have 3 short racks of equipment. One for audio, another for communications and the third one for camera control. All 3 were able to be fork lifted through the cargo door. All were assembled by NBC construction under my supervision. The biggest problem turned out to be noise free headsets, which we finally licked with a few modifications.

The helicopter owners got an oversized generator from which I took an output and routed it to my DC to AC converter, as all my equipment worked on 120 V AC. All the equipment was solid state in its primitive form. No miniaturization yet.

We tried the equipment out in the Fairview, NJ, TV Field garage for the first time, and much to my amazement it all worked. Sherm said to me, "That's the way you designed it didn't you?" A couple of days later we loaded it into a truck and drove to Philly. Tony Nelle was the video man and big Jim Culley was the cameraman. I was the microwave panner and maintenance man, with Sherm Atwood as coordinator. We loaded it in the helicopter and after a short test took off for Blue Bell, PA, and had the "steady cam" mounted on the camera. What a difference in picture quality! As we returned to Philly, we flew along the Pennsylvania Turnpike and scared a few motorists half to death with our cameraman sitting in the cargo hatch and panning the roadway from above. I think traffic slowed to half speed when they saw us. After arriving in Philly we took the gear back to the garage in Fairview. We tried the package again out of Teterboro Airport flying up the Hudson River to George Washington Bridge and back, microwaving to the receiver domes mounted on top of the then RCA Building. Master Control was happy with the test, but the Package was never used in NY again.

A week before the convention, we trucked the gear to

Philly, where we loaded it on the copter for its flight to Miami. Sherm, Tony, myself, and all I can remember is Bruce, a heck of a nice vacation relief cameraman from Wisconsin, flew down a couple of days later. We were to be staying in a Holiday Inn in North Miami, where we picked up a car and drove up to Opa-Locka Airfield. We found the copter at the Butler Aviation facilities out on the tarmac. They brought it into a hanger to get us out of the baking sun.

We checked everything out and Tony did test patterns on the camera. Sherm called the Convention Hall and they arranged to send a man to operate the microwave receiver on top of the Octagon Tower Building, out on the Collins Avenue strip. We strapped Bruce in the cargo doorway floor area and away we went. The cool breeze blowing through the open door was a blessing after that cruel heat on the ground. We turned on the microwave equipment and about half way to Miami, I panned the horn to the Octagon roof and heard the receiver operator say that he was receiving our signal. And the audio was being picked up at the Convention Hall. Now Bruce, unbeknown to us, had taken a black felt marker pen and printed on the toes of his white sneakers "Hi" on one shoe and "Guys" on the other. So as we flew along with the beautiful Florida landscape under us, he panned down a little more and stuck his shoes out, and there for all the world to see was "Hi Guys" on shoe toes over the Florida Landscape. We got a lot of requests during the Convention, "Give us the sneaker shot." Whether it ever hit the air I don't know.

The flights were usually once in the AM and once in the PM and were pretty routine picking up a Politico's motorcade now and then, Nixon's plane landing and some of the Vietnam protesters, and of course the beautiful Florida rainbows now and then.

While flying back to the airbase one evening, we saw a plume of smoke not too far away. (We still had the Microwave going) We flew toward it and upon getting closer we could see flames shooting out of what appeared to be a car dealer or large garage. We pulled in closer and dropped down to almost tree-top level, microwaving pictures back to Convention Hall. We then could see figures running down the street with boxes and TV sets in their arms. We heard via Convention Hall that a riot was taking place. Then there were some gun shots. Our pilot, an old Korean war copter pilot, said, "We're out of here." And in 2 seconds we were up and away.

Convention Hall was disappointed that we couldn't stay longer, but one shot in the right place and we could have been goners. We discussed it at Butler when we landed, and decided we were foolish to have stuck our necks out as long as we did and we wouldn't do it again.

While we were not in the air, we hung out in the Butler Aviation Flight Training School waiting room. The Chief Instructor was an Amelia Earhart double. She enjoyed

sharing her office with us. In fact the last day after we were all packed up, for the copter to head for Chicago, she took the 4 of us up in one of her trainers and let us have a turn at flying. What a thrill.

A couple of days later we flew home, after Sherm and I made a trip to the Everglades.

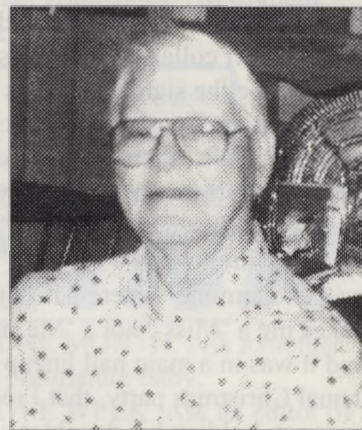
The Chicago Convention was rather dull after Miami. The Telephone Company was on strike, so no Microwave link to Convention Hall. We did some video taping on a portable recorder. Local ordinances prohibited us from flying very low over the city, so getting shots of Vietnam protesters was difficult. We did get some shots of them by flying low along the lake shoreline into Lincoln Park and over Lake Shore Drive. We landed at Meigs Field, on the lake, just down from Soldiers Field. The tapes were picked up there by courier.

The copter was based at Midway Field, with Butler Aviation again our hangout. The first day there Sherm had driven over to a local store and picked up a badminton set. So, between flights, we spent lots of time playing on a court we laid out with masking tape on the hangar floor.

The convention closed and we packed up the gear for the copter flight back to Philly. A few days later we picked up the equipment and left it in the hands of TV Field Operations in Fairview. It was never used again.

This entire system can now be held in one hand.

Whew! It staggers the imagination.



Wes and his wife, Elena, live a retired life in Hicksville, New York. He sent a note along with his story, penned on his old NBC Memo, "E. Wesley Paulsen"....."I don't own a computer, too many outside activities, you'll have to interpret the hieroglyphics as best you can. (Tony and Nancy Nelle did our interpreting).

"This might not be exactly what you (PN) had in mind for an article. Me neither, for that matter, but this is what came out of this 80 year old mind.

"Life has been good to me in spite of a 2 year battle with the big 'C'.

"We are sports people, you name it we've tried it. We have narrowed it down to tennis and golf and are also taking up bridge which is quite a challenge."

Wes

A Page From the Fifties

Memories from Tony Block

Freshly discharged from the army, confident after two summers as a local radio announcer/deejay, and fortified by every radio and television course offered by the University of Michigan, I hit the three TV networks. Their offers didn't quite respond to my vast experience, obvious talent, and unbridled enthusiasm; mailroom at CBS, duplicating section at ABC, page at NBC. So choosing glamour over boredom and ink stained fingers, I accepted the job Pete Tintle had described and reported to Guest Relations on September 20, 1954, for \$135/month. (How I managed with a one room, share-a-bath apartment is another story, one that has long exasperated my sons). In addition to the beginning of what would be a 35 year career, two other milestones occurred that month — the first "Spectacular," Max Liebman's "Satins and Spurs" starring Betty Hutton, and the network debut of Steve Allen's "The Tonight Show." The excitement had begun.

Every day was different. After morning inspection (shoes shined, hands and nails clean, fresh shave, and a spotless shirt collar — collarless shirts were issued once a week, while the starched collars were replaced as needed) we got our assignments; to desks on the three studio floors or to main hall, where we provided an information and greeting service with a little crowd control thrown in. We politely addressed everyone as "Ma'am" or "Sir," which once backfired when a "Ma'am" wagged her hand in my face, exclaiming, "There's no ring on this finger! That makes me a 'Miss,' not a 'Ma'm!' Don't ever call me that!" And it was in a main hall lineup of parents and kids for the annual Christmas party, that I recognized the man in a camel hair coat, holding his daughter's hand, as one of the executive faces posted on our locker room wall. It was Pat Weaver, impressing upon me that rank does not have to have privilege. I've often wondered if Sigourney was equally impressed.

"Howdy Doody" played in 3A, where it was common lore that Clarabell — 1.) didn't speak so the AFTRA lines rate wouldn't have to be paid — and 2.) was originally played by a former page. The latter turned out to be a true story about Bob Keeshan and gave hope to all pages. While Buffalo Bob Smith was laid up with a heart attack, Gabby Hayes replaced him. That seemed to please Zippy, the chimpanzee, who loved to bury his face into the full Hayes beard, eliciting a "He thinks I'm one of them" response.

The third floor (3B) was also home to "Armstrong Circle Theater," one of the four weekly one hour dramatic shows done in the RCA Building. One week it starred Gary Merrill, who used the page phone to have a brief argument with someone I deduced to be his wife, Bette Davis. While

pretending to be busy, it was the most voyeuristic experience of my life.

"Coke Time With Eddie Fisher" came from 6B twice a week. Of all the operations we dealt with, it was the most active and confused. The bulk of the pressure came from being stationed by the studio doors to make sure no star-struck bobby soxers snuck in. There were always a few who somehow managed to work their way into the building, though most of them were cut off by Mike Clancey's security people. The rewards for that assignment were free cokes from the cooler brought into the studio and, usually for me, a headache.

There were other tangible perks that went with being a page; weekly shares from an excess carton of Tootsie Roll products from the "Horn and Hardart Children's Hour" in 6B (We would hold one back in the hopes that the remaining ones would be sufficient. (Usually they were); a serendipitous Thanksgiving spread on the set of "Feather Your Nest" at the Hudson Theater; entree to rehearsals on breaks; and easy access to any audience show for friends and relatives. "The Tonight Show," also at the Hudson, was a tough ticket, but the pages on the night shift made the arrangements many times.

In addition to "The H & H Children's Hour" on Sunday, hosted by Ed Herlihy, 6B was home to "The World of Mr. Sweeney," a laid back daytime strip with Charlie Ruggles in the title role as an old-shoe comfortable shop keeper dispensing love, understanding, and wisdom. 6A, a radio studio where "Beat The Clock" with Bud Collyer played, was serviced by us five days a week because it had an audience. There were actually more radio than TV studios, though we had very little to do with them; 6D, 3C through 3F toward the west end of the third floor, and 8A through 8F across from 8G. They were destined to become scenery and prop storage areas.

It was on the sixth floor that I met one smart raccoon. While his handler and I were talking, he jumped onto the desk, pulled off my watch, and began playing with it on the floor. The trainer explained that he liked shiny things, so I fished a new penny from my pocket and spun it near the raccoon who left the watch and pounced on the coin. I picked up the watch, put it on, and continued the conversation. Back up he came and removed it. I spun the coin again and, he grabbed it with one paw, keeping his other paw on the watch. I've observed the species with awe ever since.

Mecca was on the eighth floor. In addition to a hole-in-a-wall sandwich operation next to 8H that served as a center of social activity, it was home to "Mr. Peepers," which

made stars of Wally Cox, Tony Randall, and Marion Lorne, "Montgomery Presents," "Kraft Theater," and "Your Hit Parade," all, amazingly, in 8H, and "The Philco/Goodyear Playhouse" in 8G. It was that 8H schedule that first made me aware of the incredible ability of stagehands to strike, set, dress and light with such short turnaround time. Through my career, I would always continue to marvel, even while routinely expecting it.

There was another stagehand reputation, perhaps partially deserved, that I witnessed in action. "Montgomery" presented a lavish production of "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," with a 25 foot cathedral facade and Parisian street complete with chickens scurrying about. One of them never made it to air, as a stagehand scurried down the hall with a clucking lump under his jacket. Though I came to know him years later, the incident was never mentioned, but it became part of a mental rap sheet I kept.

My favorite was "Hit Parade," which intrigued me from week to week as long running songs received a different staging treatment each time. The many ways to do "Shh-Boom" or "Hey There!" was a fascinating creative challenge. The singers included Snooky Lanson, Russell Arms, Polly Bergen, and Gisele MacKenzie. I had a particular interest in Gisele because I felt I had bolstered her career in a small way by spinning her records three years earlier when she, a Canadian, was a relatively new talent in the United States.

Zippy once turned up on the eighth floor, too. On the way to 3A from his ninth floor dressing room, the elevator door opened and he shot out. But this was Zippy on roller skates. Weaving toward 8H, he deliberately aimed at and close-shaved anybody wearing a skirt, zoomed through the open door, whipped around a camera, and repeated the performance back to the elevator accompanied by shrieks, cheers, and applause. It took him less than a minute to turn the eighth floor into a scene of gleeful pandemonium.

Pages were released in 18 months if they didn't get a job or promotion, so when an opportunity arose in March of '55, I grabbed it, becoming the tool and hardware clerk at the scenic construction shop at 18th Street. The real job had begun. Bob Stone, Barney Paulson, Bill Trevarthan, Jack Kennedy et al were in the future.

Of the group I left, only a few, as it turned out, remained with NBC for the rest of their careers — Dave Wilson and the late Frank Skinner, Ray Timothy and Harvey Muller of the guide staff, Joe Dicso of the night staff, and from the office, Joan Gifford. Ronnie Wayne, Stan Nishimura, and Vito Matti, our supervisor Tom O'Keefe, and Hugh Brannigan of the guides did stay on for several years before moving on to other companies. All of them would have other stories to tell. □

*Tony Block and wife, Pat, live in
Bronxville, New York.*

YOUR TIME BANK

Imagine there is a bank which credits your account each morning with \$86,400, carries over no balance from day to day, allows you to keep no cash balance, and every evening cancels whatever part of the amount you had failed to use during the day. What would you do?

Draw out every cent, of course!

Well, everyone has such a bank named **TIME**. Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off, as lost, whatever you failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft.

Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the records of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours.

There is no going back. There is no drawing against the "tomorrows." You must live in the present on today's deposits. Invest it to get the utmost in health, happiness and success!

The clock is running. Make the most of your days.

- ♦ To realize the value of ONE YEAR. Ask a student who has failed his final exam.

- ♦ To realize the value of ONE MONTH. Ask a mother who has given birth to a pre-mature baby.
- ♦ To realize the value of ONE WEEK. Ask an editor of a weekly newspaper.
- ♦ To realize the value of ONE DAY. Ask a daily wage laborer who has a family to feed.
- ♦ To realize the value of ONE HOUR. Ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.
- ♦ To realize the value of ONE MINUTE. Ask a person who has just missed the train.
- ♦ To realize the value of ONE SECOND. Ask a person who has survived an accident.
- ♦ To realize the value of ONE MILLI-SECOND. Ask the person who has won a silver medal in the Olympics.

***Treasure every moment that you have!
And treasure it more because you
shared it with someone special.
So, what are you going to do each day
with your 86,400 seconds?***

Ross Martindale

My days in sound effects

After some serious arm twisting by Pete Peterson, I agreed to write a few notes on my days in sound effects at NBC. Here they are —

I started my career at NBC in 1936 as a page in the Guest Relations Department. After going through the usual steps as a guide and studio set-up man, I had a chance to join the Sound Effects Department. I knew very little about sound effects but was happy to accept any advancement. My first few months in the department consisted mainly of setting out equipment for other men doing shows. Gradually I got to assist “senior men” by doing one or two effects they were too busy to handle. And then came the day when I did my first show alone! This was a program called “The Wise Man,” which opened and closed with the sound of a Chinese gong being struck with a padded mallet. Not very complicated, but if the gong was hit too lightly it wouldn’t make much noise, and if it was hit too hard it could knock the station off the air. In any case, I got through that okay and by working with experienced men on many shows I gradually learned my trade.

A good part of my early training came working with Clara Walter on “Cavalcade of America,” one of the better dramatic shows on the air. Since Clara did all the recorded effects on the show my work was with manual equipment. For instance, after a while I became fairly proficient in doing horses’ hooves. As most of you probably remember, this was done using two half-coconut shells in a box of dirt and gravel, and we could take a horse from a walk to a trot and on to a canter or gallop. Also, by using the shells on slate we could produce the sound of a horse on cobblestones for use on shows based in London at the turn of the century. (End of the nineteenth that is!)

In the early 1940s I was doing “Cavalcade” on my own, and I remember one interesting happening. The scene was in a submarine and the script called for the “ping—pong” sound of a sonar. I had no idea how to produce such a sound, so, as was usual in such circumstances, I checked with other sound men to see if anyone could help me. I was not having much success until someone said they thought CBS had such an effect. Somehow we were able to borrow the record and I used it on the show. The director, Homer Fickett, was not too happy with the sound, but, since we

didn’t have anything else, he had to accept it. The next week, while I was setting up my equipment for the show, Homer got on the talk-back and asked where I had gotten the sonar effect used on the previous show, so I told him the story. Then he said the reason he asked was because he had received a call from the Navy Department and *they* wanted to know how we got it. I never did find out where CBS got the effect, but in any case, I think Homer was satisfied that the sonar effect was legitimate.

Two other fine dramatic shows were “Great Plays” and “Theater Guild on the Air.” I had the pleasure of working on “Theater Guild” many times as a second man to Wes Conant. Many of the shows had stars from the original Broadway casts and they were always interesting. My one memory of “Great Plays” is from the time they did Ibsen’s “A Doll’s House.” As you know, at the end of the play Nora storms out of the house. Well, just before airtime the director pointed out to me that this would probably be the most important door slam I had ever done. Nothing like such a remark to make one *really* nervous. I guess it went all right, because I didn’t get fired.

Not all of the shows on the radio were great drama, and we all worked on many of the soap operas. One that is often remembered for its introduction is “Amanda of Honeymoon Hill.” The announcer had to say something like this: And now, “Amanda of Honeymoon Hill,” the story of a young mountain girl laid in a world few Americans know. When Frank Gallop was the announcer some of the cast members went to great lengths trying to break him up and sometimes did. My longest run on a soap was on “Pepper Young’s Family,” which I did for about 12 years — minus a few during WW II. Most of the regular cast were really nice people, and we had a steady stream of other actors added to the cast for different story lines. It was a pleasant show to work on, and I’ll always remember Mason Adams, who played Pepper. He had an unusual voice, and over the years whenever I have heard that famous line “With a name like Smuckers it has to be good” I’ve been reminded of Pepper Young. No one else could imitate his sound.

Finally, in the mid 1950s I graduated from radio to television — I was one of the last. Again, I was fortunate to

work on some good dramatic shows. Two regulars for some time were "Robert Montgomery Presents" and "Armstrong Circle Theater." "Montgomery" did a variety of stories, everything from original dramas to TV adaptations of "Seven Keys to Baldpate," "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" and "The Great Gatsby." Circle Theater, on the other hand, did what they called documentary dramas, dramatizations of real life events. Two that I remember vaguely are a story about the Hungarian Freedom Fighters and an account of the Andrea Doria collision. Both involved some serious sound effects, and at this point I have no idea how we produced them! In any case, as in radio, much of our time was spent doing soap operas. And once again I had a long run, this time on "The Doctors," which I did for about ten years. The show was not great drama, but it did win a Daytime Emmy Award for 1973-74. And the actors and directors were fun to work with, which made it a pleasant experience.

All in all, my days with NBC were happy ones. There were rewards and there were frustrations, but the Sound Effects Group was like a family and they are remembered with great affection.

When I talk with young people about what I did at NBC, they seldom ever heard of the shows I worked on in TV, much less radio. However, I can usually get their

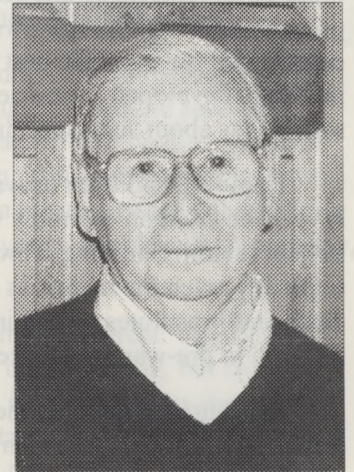
attention when I tell them I did the first four or five shows of "Saturday Night Live." I don't usually tell them that my most frequently used effect on those shows was a toilet flush! The Muppets had a strange group of characters from the world of Gorch who had a spot every week. One of the characters looked sort of like a sculpture of an Aztec god but there was an opening at the top of his head. He was called the Mighty Favog. Every once in a while, for some reason, a sacrifice had to be made to the Mighty Favog. In that case a really weird character named Scred would hold a rubber chicken over the Mighty Favog's head, and when he dropped it in the opening, the script called for sound effect: toilet flush. Just one of the many indignities we had to suffer in our profession!

Having been retired for almost 24 years, I still have found memories of my 40 years at NBC.

Regards to all,

Ross

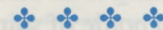
After retirement, Ross left New Jersey and now lives in Yarmouth, Maine.



De-lightful, De-lovely

If lawyers are disbarred and ministers defrocked, why then, not the following:

- electricians are delighted
- musicians denoted
- cowboys deranged
- models deposed
- dry cleaners depressed, decreased and depleted
- bedmakers debunked,
- baseball players debased
- landscapers deflowered
- bulldozer operators degraded
- organ donors delivered
- songwriters decomposed
- the gang at BVD debriefed
- and politicians devoted!



Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson went on a camping trip. After a good meal and a bottle of wine they lay down for the night, and went to sleep. Some hours later, Holmes awoke and nudged his faithful friend. "Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see."

Watson replied, "I see millions of stars."

"What does that tell you?"

Watson pondered for a minute. "Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Horologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Theologically, I can see that God is all powerful and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you, Holmes?"

Holmes was silent for a minute, then spoke. "Watson, the first thing I noticed was that some bloody bastard has stolen our tent."

Germany

Revisited

By
Mort Hochstein

Twenty-eight years ago I made two trips with the Today Show to Germany. I was the lead writer and on our first trip, we surveyed locations and features for programs in Hamburg, Bonn, Munich and Berlin. I was also responsible for shows of my own in Munich and Berlin. In those days, remotes of this scale were subsidized by the host government so we traveled well, first class on Lufthansa, of course, and stayed in the best hotels. Several years later, the networks developed a conscience and became more scrupulous about such subsidies.

Hamburg had been heavily bombed during the war, but by '72 the German economy was booming and the city was largely rebuilt. Shipping crowded the harbor, the ancient inner city, even the notorious Reeperbahn with its seedy sex clubs and prostitutes posing in windows, had been faithfully restored to pre-war decadence.

Hamburg called itself the Venice of the North and actually had more canals than Venice. Our hotel, the Vier Jahreszeiten, sat on an inner-city lake and it was beautiful to watch sailboats skimming along on the Alster and people sunning themselves along its green banks. Outside of the inner core, far from the harbors and its warehouses and far from Hamburg's pleasant residential areas, the Germans had built a modern government center of tall buildings and campus-like setting, functional, gleaming and charmless.

Munich was even more appealing and seemingly less touched by the war. I enjoyed its gemutlich atmosphere, its bustling business district, Victualienmarkt, an historic open-air food market, and, most of all, Schwabing, the local equivalent of Greenwich Village where I spent several nights assiduously researching local culture. In those days, servers would put a marked bottle of spirits on your table and you would pay, not by the glass, but by the level of depreciation on the bottle. Our gang depleted a few.

I will admit I felt uneasy when I took dinner in one of those cavernous beer cellars which had been gathering place for the Nazi thugs in their early days and watched as muscular Brunhildes toting a dozen or more overflowing steins, served beer to patrons whose faces were all too reminiscent of war movies and George Grosz's unflattering caricatures of his fellow Germans.

One of my assignments in Munich was to line up a one-time Nazi General as a guest. I located the former officer,

now retired, and will never forget his

opening line. "Ah, Herr Hochshtein," he declared giving my name its full German pronunciation, "dot's a fine old Chairrman name." I responded that it was a fine old Russian, Jewish name, and suggested that we begin our interview.

Dachau, the first Nazi concentration camp dating back to 1933, was a short ride from downtown. I did not want to visit, but my Christian colleagues insisted that I could not come to Munich without visiting Dachau.

I can't add anything new to descriptions of that hellhole, also carefully preserved, but cannot erase another memory. An amusement park had been erected on an adjoining lot, the sounds of its attractions and noise of the crowd and its ferris wheel giving fun seekers an aerial view of barbed wire fences, guard towers and empty barracks, reminders of the glory days of the Third Reich, were in eerie contrast to the dominating silence of Dachau.

In Berlin, we stayed at the Kempinski, opposite a ravaged former synagogue, and basked in the sun from outdoor tables along the Kufuerstendamm, the great shopping street of the then-divided-and-isolated city. Beyond the Wall was the once-beautiful Avenue der Unter Linden, and most of the city's great museums. We filmed our show from the headquarters of the German publishing titan, Axel Springer. His headquarters, Springerhaus, gave us a dramatic setting overlooking the Wall.

We finished filming at about 3 p.m. and an hour later I fled by air to Denmark. It would have been easier to remain in Berlin and catch a morning plane home, but I rushed off to spend my last night abroad in Copenhagen. I had been in Germany far too long.

So now, flash forward to May 4, 2000 and, after a long overnight flight in tourist, I wake on the morning of my 71st birthday in a giant barracks of a hotel in the former East Germany. We are a tramride and a long S-bahn shot from center city, and I feel I am closer to Warsaw than Berlin. The reason we are so far out is simple: Two international soccer powers were fighting it out in Berlin that weekend and it was impossible to find rooms downtown.

The explanation for my return to Berlin was more complex. Friends had visited after the fall of the Wall and told us Berlin was recapturing the international flavor of pre-war days, had become a very cosmopolitan city, and had great architecture and art treasures and museums that we must see. I wanted to see the new dome over the restored Reichstag and I wanted to see how the city had been rebuilt. All those factors played a part in our decision to visit a city still boycotted by many, but beyond those reasons, my wife and I wanted to see what remained of German Jewish life.

In pre-Hitler days, Jewish and German culture were remarkably intertwined. Jews dominated the entertainment world, from symphonies to cabarets, were leaders in film and theater, taught in its universities and fought in its armies. When the Nazis started on the road to their Final Solution, a few fortunate Jews were able to escape and people such as the director Billy Wilder and the composer Kurt Weill came to this country, enriching the American scene with their talents.

Now Germany, primarily Berlin, is home to a small, but growing Jewish population of about 75,000 and while many avoid mention of the past, others preserve a history of Nazi wrongdoing as a reminder of the evil that can happen. I was happy to find a street named in honor of Varian Fry, the American volunteer who risked his life to smuggle Jews out of France, and another honoring Marlene Dietrich, castigated by many of her landsmen for her anti-Nazi stance. A large plaque on the Ku'dam lists all those former death camps and younger people are getting an education in the history of the Third Reich. There is an effort to prevent a return of such evil.

I stood in line to visit the striking Berlin Jewish Museum. The museum is still not open, but already attracts as many as 1,000 people a day to tour its oddly shaped halls and unsettling corridors. Its opening has been delayed because crowds have exceeded the expectation of 500 people daily, and air exhaust and other support systems are being redesigned and enlarged. When it opens and inaugurates regular exhibitions, no one can estimate the number of visitors it will draw from Jews and non-Jewish visitors.

Little but a skeleton remains of the Oranienburger Strasse Synagogue, a once gorgeous Moorish-influenced gem of a structure which was torched and partially wrecked on Kristallnacht by Nazi mobs and further destroyed by Allied bombs. It has been partially restored as the Centrum Judaicum, providing a fascinating look at the life of German Jews in pre-war times. While most of those on my visit were Jewish tourists, there was also a fair number of German visitors.

I attempted to attend Friday night services at the Rykestrasse Synagogue in East Berlin's Prenzlauer Berg but was told by the police guard outside the closed temple to return for Saturday morning services. As in Vienna and Florence and, I would assume, even Rome, police still mount daily guard over Jewish temples in parts of Europe, protecting them from homegrown or domestic terrorism.

At Wanssee, the elegant lakeside villa where Nazi bigwigs meant to plot their Final Solution to the Jewish problem, I watched as classes of German school children toured the site. Like kids everywhere, some where

interested, while others were bored and paid little attention. Wanssee, as Michelin might say, is worth the detour.

And I was warmed by the audience reaction as Giselle Mayes, a songschpieler, sang the works of Kurt Weill, best known in the U.S. for Three Penny Opera and September Song, and read his letters from exile in New York and Hollywood at the Brechthaus, home of the Berliner Ensemble. I couldn't understand all the German, but I could understand that this was a man who had been forced to leave his native country. But the highlight was Daniel Barenboim conducting a concert and playing piano at the Konzerthaus, home of the Berlin Symphony Orchestra. The Germans brought the Israeli musician back for eight standing ovations and seemed as if they would cheer him all night.

Conclusion? Too hard to draw after a rushed visit, but I would say that Germany's attitude toward the Jews who were once such an important part of their culture, is one of making up for past wrongdoing. Things may never reach the heights of the past but there is a positive change and there is a determined effort to educate young people and prevent any new anti-Semitism.

And, oh yes, those museums were great. The Dome over the Reichstag was, to me, disappointing, but the view from the roof where you could see striking new architecture and Europe's largest railroad station taking shape beneath us, construction cranes reaching out from every point of the compass dominating was worth the half hour I stood in line to visit the historic building.



Mort now lives in New York City. Mort's e-mail address: hocky@banet.net



Attention Audio Types

Seen in the January 2000 *PRO AUDIO REVIEW*

Microphones — buyers guide AEA R44 Bi-directional Long-ribbon Microphone

Applications: Recording studio, broadcast.

Features: Bidirectional pattern; 1.8 micron ribbon element; replica of RCA-44; ships with cushion mount, carrying case.

Price: \$2,395.

And it's only a replica! — got a real one stashed away?

KEN'S

O
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by
Ken Arber

Recently, I had the pleasure of renewing an old friendship with a director of a radio show on which I was the engineer in the early years of Radio City in New York.

I spoke with him on the phone, knowing he lived in my old home town, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey. His name is Arthur Richards, and I know his wife, "Rusty" and his daughter, whom they called "Pee Wee," a term of endearment.

I might also mention that the town of Upper Saddle River was also the home of several other employees of NBC over the years, such as the late Merle Worster who was once the town mayor, and his son Larry Woster. Also Art Parker, whose father sold the property to the town to build the school system. Then there was George Reisenberger, the lighting director, who moved to Los Angeles, and works for the Klages lighting group. Also George Voutsas, Radio Director for NBC, also the chief engineer of WNEW, where Martin Block's "Make Believe Ballroom," originated.

The show on which I worked with Arthur Richards, was the Prudential Insurance Company's "Jack Berch Show," originating in Studio 3D. It consisted of Jack Berch, a singer and commentator of the day's news, and stories that were comically put together. The musical group consisted of Charley Mianine, accordion, George Wright, organist from the Pantages Theatre, and the famous Tony Mattola, guitarist, who I assume is the father of Tommy Mattola, the head of the Sony Music Company.

Paul Gallant assigned me as the studio engineer for the show, because of my musical background, in piano, accordion, saxophone and violin.

Needless to say I enjoyed the assignment since years

before I had met Charles Manine. He gave accordion lessons. However he never taught me, as he was too busy with theater engagements, and suggested his brother in law, Joe Biviano. I decided not to have Biviano teach me at \$5.00 a half hour, in those days.

However, the most important thing over the years, was that I met Grant Tinker in the first days of his employment at NBC, on this show.

In the old days at NBC, the engineer in the studio was in full charge of the control room; only he could permit anyone to be in the control room.

One day a young man came into the control room and sat down on the extra seat. I assumed he might be a friend of Arthur Richards, or Jack Berch. When I found he was not, I asked him what was his business and who he was. He surprised me when he said his name was Grant Tinker, and he was a recent graduate, I think it was, Brown University, and was hired as a management trainee. I said I had never heard of such a thing, and had always thought management personnel came up from the ranks. He said that this was something new, and he was told to visit different studios, and become acquainted with how radio show business was conducted. Of course, this satisfied my inquiry and he came in each day for a week.

As we all know now, this worked out as it was planned, and Grant Tinker became President of NBC, and also married Mary Tyler Moore.

At one of the many 25-year anniversary dinners I attended, Grant Tinker attended these functions, and proved he was a good leader of the men and women at NBC.

Mr. Tinker would leave his table and stand at the "BAR," where everyone gathered rather than go to his table. I made it my business to speak with him, and believe it or not, he remembered our first meeting in the control room of the Jack Berch show, when I questioned his being there. He went on to ask who was that young director, and where is he now. I told him it was Arthur Richards, and did not know where he was.

In my recent conversation with Arthur, he informed that he had left NBC, and went to work at the Agency known as Benton & Bowles.

SATELLITE STUDIO OPERATION

In the early days of television shows coming from Radio City, the requests for tickets to see the shows, were becoming very popular. Of course, even when the show

originated from Studio 8H there was not enough seating, including the balcony that ran around the studio on the 9th floor.

NBC came up with an idea they wanted to try. The studio supervisor, at the time, I believe was Courtney Snell. Courtney came to me, I was doing a show in 8H. He asked me how I felt, if it could be arranged, about doing a show in 8H and having some audience in another studio for their applause reaction. It sounded OK.

The suggestion was to have the overflow audience sent to another studio, 6A with its large audience capacity. The company now had a video projector, if my memory serves me, called the Eidafore. It could project a picture about 12 feet by 10 feet of what was transpiring in studio 8H. The audio and video from studio 8H would be fed to studio 6A, an audio engineer would control the PA, and feed back to me in 8H the 6A audience response.

His question to me was, did I think that the audience in 6A would applaud the video picture, so that I could handle more applause than the amount that would come from the audience in the balcony of 8H? And my answer to that was we will only know if we try it; if not, I could cascade, the applause coming from my studio, 8H.

Courtney said they would try it, and see if it would work. He told me that he would bring up a half dozen maintenance engineers, to hook up the two studios and I would not be required to do any of the hooking up. They would arrange for me to have the output of studio 6A fed to my applause fader. Obviously, this was agreeable to me. The day for the test came, and the maintenance engineers hooked up the connections between the two studios, which consisted of a lot of patch cords in both the 8H and 6A patch fields. The engineer in 6A, was one of the best studio engineers, the late Joe Silva, and it was a pleasure for me to know he was in the Satellite Studio.

We tested out the connection, during the rehearsal, and to all intents, it looked like it would work.

Here comes the result of all the work that was done. We all went to lunch after being satisfied that we had a winner. However, while we were at lunch someone entered the Satellite Studio (*no names please*), sat down and decided to looking for some kind of entertainment. He began pulling out the patch cords in Joe Silva's control room!

We came back from lunch, fortunately, a half hour before the show started. To our surprise, Courtney, Joe, and myself, nothing worked. Joe called and said that his patch field was all mixed up. Fortunately mine was still in

good working order. So between all of us we got the system back working with about fifteen minutes to spare before the show went on the air.

The audience, applauded the video screen in 6A. The pictures were in great color as the operator of the Idafore projector was Warren Winterhalter, whom we affectionately referred to as "Fleagle," this nickname came from the Dick Tracy comic strip character, Eagle Eye Fleagle. I doubt the system was ever used again as the cost must have been very high.

THE ALL STAR REVIEW

While doing the audio on Olsen and Johnson, in the Center Theatre in 1951, I found working with them very interesting and enlightening, as they were quite funny, in the many things that they did.

One thing, that gave me a chance to do something that I never had done before, was to plant microphones in places that would be used to pick up audio that could not be picked up on the regular boom mikes since they were located on both sides of the proscenium on stage left and stage right.

Part of their act had one of them, either Olsen or Johnson, carrying a large potted plant, like a tree, around the stage, and then walk down into the audience. About a dozen rows of seats from the stage, he would go into the row for about a dozen seats, talking and carrying the potted tree which was five or six feet tall.

Since the boom mikes could not reach into the row of seats, and the use of a lavalier mike was not practical because of the long run of cable, and RF mikes were not reliable as they are today, I had to come up with something else.

I came up with an idea that I learned years before, from Ray Swanecamp, affectionately, known as "Swany." While doing audio in California at a horse race, Swany picked up the audio from two jockeys talking to each other while racing around the track. He set up a half dozen mikes along the track, and as they passed the mikes, he would open them up, and was able to get the audio. Since this race was part of a movie, he knew where they were cued to talk. I used the same idea here and put up three RCA 77B mikes on the back of the seats facing the stage, and as the man carrying the tree passed the mikes, I opened them up, and the speech came out on both the PA system and the TV show.

Ken Arber's Archives

Program notes:

Ole Olsen and Chic Johnson, the stage's gift to the gunpowder industry, have been together for 35 years, having met in Chicago in 1914. Since then they have never "laid off" for more than two weeks at a stretch, and neither has missed a performance in their more than three decades together, establishing a record which will go long unchallenged.

As long as there is a Broadway, and as long as there is a theatre-goer, Olsen and Johnson will be remembered for their "Hellza-poppin," which they brought to

N B C

KELLOGG'S SNOW CROP and PET MILK PRESENT

OLSEN and JOHNSON

with their guest star

TESSIE O'SHEA

Produced and Directed by LEO MORGAN

**NBC Production Supervisor
PETE BARNUM**

Television Director
SIDNEY SMITH

Assistant to the Producer
BILL HARMON

Technical Director
JACK IRVING

Musical Director
MILTON DE LUCC

Written by

OLSEN AND JOHNSON, PHIL DAVIS, MARVIN MARX
STAN BURNS, HERB SARGENT, J. C. OLSEN

Jerry Lewis Impression by
SAMMY PETRILLO

Settings by
HJALMAR HERMANSON

Costumes by
FORREST THAYER

Lighting by
JOHN FITZPATRICK

Audio by
KENNETH J. ARBER

N B C

KELLOGG'S SNOW CROP and PET MILK PRESENT



OLSEN and JOHNSON

In the great new Saturday night series

THE ALL STAR REVUE

JACK CARSON • JIMMY DURANTE • OLSEN & JOHNSON
DANNY THOMAS • ED WYNN • AND FIVE OTHER GREAT STARS

CENTER THEATRE • NEW YORK • SEPTEMBER 15, 1951

Broadway in 1938. Described by Walter Winchell as "the bellylaughingest" show he'd seen in a long time, it ran for 1125 performances. Similar success was enjoyed by their "Sons O' Fun" and "Laughing Room Only."

Tonight, on the ALL STAR REVUE, they will use the ingredients that have always been an integral part of their comedy success — audience participation, pretty girls, midgets, stooges, seltzer bottles and other squirting accessories, custard pies and —members of their families. At various times Ole's wife and daughter, and Chic's wife have been in their shows. Now, Ole's son, J. C., and Chic's daughter, June, and her husband, Marty May, are veterans of Olsen and Johnson 5 splash and boom presentations.

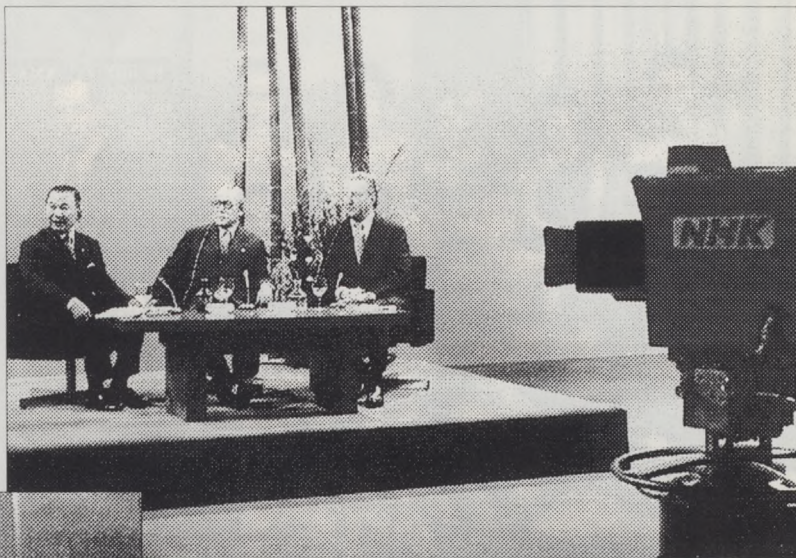
The makers of Kellogg's Cereals and NBC are happy to invite you, and Olsen and Johnson, to the ALL STAR REVUE.

*Retired NBC TD Ken Arber and wife
Jaye live in Boynton Beach, FL.*

WE GET PICTURES 2

MEETING in JAPAN

Julian Goodman, former Chairman of NBC, appearing on Japan's NHK Television calling for cooperation among governments and broadcasting organizations in developing broadcast satellites. On his right, Yashinori Maera, former president of NHK and president of ABU, and Naiki Nomura, chief announcer for NHK.

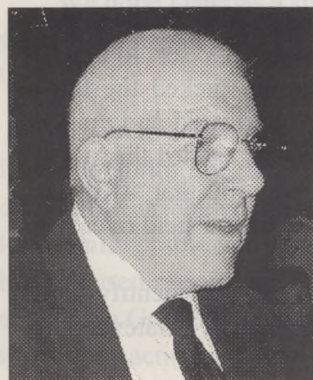


October 1974, Tokyo, Japan.

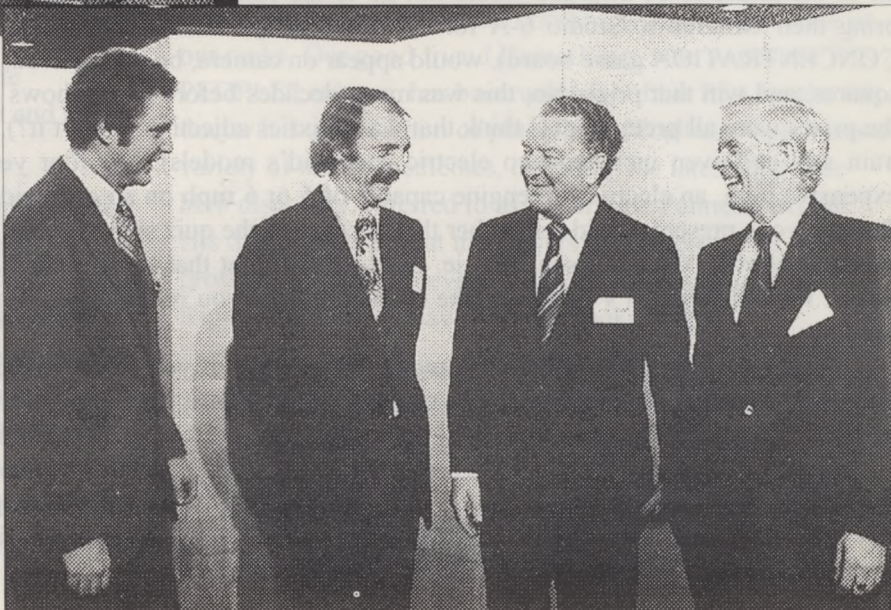
Julian Goodman addressing General Assembly of Asian Broadcasting Union. On Mr. Goodman's left — John Rich, Far East NBC News and John Scuoppo, NBC Creative Services.



Don Oliver, NBC News, LA; Tom Corpora, Tokyo Bureau Chief, Julian Goodman and John Rich.



John Scuoppo at our May 21 LaMaganette luncheon. John brought these historic pictures along for this edition. Many thanks, John.





In 1960, as producer of *CONCENTRATION*, I decided to change the game show rules. For this one Christmas show, all of the prizes to be awarded would not go to the contestants. Instead, I invited all members of the production crew to bring their children to Studio 6-A for a holiday party. These thirty children (one for each of the thirty squares on the *CONCENTRATION* game board), would appear on camera, be interviewed, and pick a card corresponding to one of those squares, and win that prize. No, this was many decades before game shows gave away a million bucks. But for that year, the prizes were all pretty cool (I think that was a sixties adjective, wasn't it?). They ranged from portable TV sets to Lionel train sets and even included two electric cars (kid's models). My four year old son, Bob, randomly picked the most expensive item, an electric fire engine capable of 5 or 6 mph on an open sidewalk. I was terribly embarrassed and prayed that everyone present would remember that because of the quiz show scandal (a few years earlier), it was against the law to rig game shows. My other son, Howie, eight years old at that time, picked a chemistry set. In no way did that affect his career. He ended up a TV producer like his dad. In case you're interested, Bob chose the computer software field over fire fighting.

What about the other kids in this picture? For those of you who worked the show at that time, can you identify your offspring? Possibly, you recognize one or more of the kids as belonging to a fellow technician, stagehand or whatever. Let us know My son Bob is third from the left, bottom row, Howard is fifth from the right, middle row.

For the sake of accuracy, and before some of you photo sleuths starting writing letters, I know there are only 29 kids, and a forty-year younger Hugh Downs, in the photograph. Look at the little girl at the bottom left. She obviously couldn't stay put for our cameras, and the other missing kid (now, probably in his fifties), is probably still wandering around the studio in search of his or her parents. — *Norm Blumenthal*

A Message from

Pete Peterson



Once again we were very fortunate to have a large turnout for our annual luncheon get-together on Sunday May 21 in New York City. Spirits were high, as people came from near and far. On these occasions we've held during the last 14 years, it has been a rewarding surprise when someone who has

been absent from our midst finally shows up to join with our friendly group. This year it seemed that more of these old friends made that special effort to be present. They were greeted warmly by the regular attendees.

While we basked in the glory of stories of days gone by, it became evident that the challenges of time were affecting us all. Several of our members have reported rather serious health and physical limitation problems. Within the core group of leadership we have lost, for the moment, the presence and journalistic works of our senior managing editor Dan Grabel. As reported, he has suffered setbacks due to heart and prostate problems. For many years Dan has been a vital part of our organization. His broad knowledge of the news, the business of NBC, the media, and our PN membership have played into his writings with a personalized flair for interpretation as well as keeping us abreast of the news. We miss his contributions, his company and guidance in the publication of our newsletter.

We hope Dan has a speedy recovery from the procedures he needs to help him regain his health and return to us all.

We were at a "full stop" moment when I learned about Dan's condition. Peg and I had just returned from a delightful Caribbean cruise. When we got home, there was a lot of unfavorable news to greet us. Several PN members had reported serious health problems. The saddening news about Dan Grabel was complicated in that it required immediate action to find a replacement for him. With the luncheon looming upon us in a few days, we needed someone to cover that story. Then we needed another writer for Dan's "AT 30 ROCK" column. We needed a writer who could collect all of the material provided by Roy Silver in

distant upper Westchester, and receive NBC New York internal news sources dispatches. All of this could only be done by someone who had experience with deadline situations and in analyzing and scripting stories quickly. I reached for names of some former NBC news writers in our ranks. Three women and two men writers were contacted. Some were busy of course with personal affairs, but receptive to our needs.

The busiest was Mort Hochstein, so he got the job. Morty was in Copenhagen, Denmark when I reached him by e-mail. Immediately upon his return Mort hooked up with us by e-mail, cell phones and landlines. We got the material to him in his NYC apartment by very circuitous methods. He started to compile the material while coordinating with publisher Frank Vierling and me. Meanwhile, sad news arrived. Mort's brother, in Miami, was failing rapidly from cancer. While he packed for a quick flight to see his brother, his wife Rolaine in NYC kept in communication with us to continue the flow of late news and material for Hocky. The Miami visit was not promising. His brother lingers, the medical report is discouraging. Mort sadly returned home. He picked right up again though, and did the job for us superbly. It is reassuring, that in our very gifted group there are those who offer their talents to our needs, even in difficult circumstances. Thank you Morty.

As to covering our LaMaganette Gala Luncheon story, friendly former NBC newswriter Dr. Joseph Mehan, now professor at Columbia U., stepped in to fill the breach. Joe, who lives in CT, made sure he would be at the luncheon affair. He then turned in the piece featured on page one of this edition. He is a very busy guy, but has come through for PN every time! Thanks Joe.

As time goes by, health conditions are a major issue in our ranks. Our good friend Heino Ripp, who writes the "PN PEOPLE" column, has been watchful of his PSA levels. His doctor has advised him of potential difficulties. Rippy uses a variety of herbal medicines, including the latest palm tree herb discovery, referred to as Super Saw Palmetto extract. His doctor advises that this lowers the dimension of the prostate, and helps prevent difficulty. We hope too that Rippy continues to stay well. (He looks great!)

Newsletter publisher Frank Vierling, who had suffered a heart problem some years ago, (triple bypass), is always doing more than anyone can possibly do. As I have mentioned in the past, he attends his wife Lois' advanced Alzheimer's condition at home on a daily basis. He is her principal caregiver. We hope that Frank can

continue on in his great efforts in the computerized phase of publishing the PN newsletter.

Looking back at all this, it sounds more like a medical report on our old NBC soap opera show "The Doctors" we used to do in studio 3B. Little did we realize then that we would all be cast into the fray by central casting! But Dr. Jim Pritchard seemed to always come out with a cure to save the situation. Where is he now when we need him!

On the lighter side, the articles sent by members for this edition continue to stir up memories. Frank Gaeta's picture file would easily remind technical people and engineers of the early days of manning the cumbersome and somewhat experimental equipment. Oftentimes adverse weather conditions and distant "on location" sites had inadequate logistical and technical facilities. That in turn would result in hampering the operation. In early days, technically speaking, new and "unproven for reliability" equipment made it difficult to achieve the desired results required by production. Several incidents come to mind for me. A camera on a roller coaster at Palisades amusement park, didn't work, the SYNC generator died as the coaster went into its 9-G dive. The picture disintegrated. Another folly was trying to send video images on "Wide Wide World" to England from the RCA antenna farm at Riverhead L.I. They never saw it in London, satellites hadn't been invented. It was just wishful thinking that somehow the ionosphere skip would do the trick and bounce the signal across the pond. There are dozens of them that I'm sure many tech people can recall.

One amusing one that comes to mind for me is an incident I spoke of recently with some of our PNers. NBC covered all the presidential inauguration ceremonies in Washington, D.C. I worked on all of the inaugurations from Eisenhower through Reagan. Always cold freezing weeks in January setting up and preparing for the big event. On the Eisenhower parade day, back in the fifties, I was assigned to operate the camera atop the roof of the Mills office building at the corner of 17th and G Street. (Since demolished). The shot was to be looking down from the rooftop down Pennsylvania Avenue showing the reviewing stand where the President would be. It was an icy, rainy, frigid day. Standing next to me behind the camera was Frank Slingland an AD/SM (Associate Director and Stage Manager) from WRC, our NBC Washington station. Both of us had headsets on, and we stood there awaiting a cue. The icy sleet intensified. I threw a large canvas "Elephant" cover over the camera and myself. I asked Frank to join me. He gratefully accepted. The talent standing in front of the camera was

David Brinkley. His assignment was to describe the action taking place over his shoulder down on Pennsylvania Avenue where the parade would be marching past the reviewing stand. A moment later, as the pelting rain became fierce, I invited Brinkley into our canvas hut. He too agreed thankfully. There we were, three guys snuggled with a bulky camera out on a rooftop in the icy rain, all for the glory of working in this new fun medium of TELEVISION.

Now let me just say, it's funny how you can get to exchange small talk and steamy breaths in very small quarters. It's remarkable how you learn about each other in a hurry. We waited for about 2 or more hours for a cue from Master Control, one that never seemed to come. Needless to say, there were no porta-johns in those days either. But, it was exciting fun of those early "live" days in TV, aided by the fact that we were considerably younger. That's what made it endurable. As the song goes, "Ah youth..... I remember it well."

The recollections of Dorothy Brodine as described in her article about her early years underscored the possibilities that existed in those early days. The promotions and opportunities were abounding for many. The new medium discovered its own prowess to elevate those with potential. It rewarded some to high recognition levels that became leaders in the industry.

Articles by Ross Martindale and Wes Paulson give us an insight on operations performed apart from the ordinary phases of the business we were accustomed to. Don Luftig gives us the benefit of the professional travelers tips. (Thanks, Don, we'll use locks from now on!) Senior NBC Correspondent Frank Bourgholtzer has generously given us insight to the workings of foreign intrigues while we sit comfortably at home feeling reassured that "Nothing Can Go Wrong!" What revelations! And Mort Hochstein gives us a second look at his assignments to Germany.

Gloria Clyne exposed her youthful entrance into show biz for us with her entertaining story about her tippy toed entrance at the Roxy. Glo is doing just fine with her newly found endeavor to be a writer. She's working hard at it, and we wish her fun and success in making it happen. Cissie Lindemann has more to share with us too. Additional material will be coming soon. I especially enjoyed all the things that Tony Bloch wrote in his article. Many of us worked on the shows he mentioned. PN is an opportunity for our members to let loose and relate experiences, just as Tony did. Let's all share in the fun.

Kenny Arber just keeps going, like the rabbit. He's

recharged and still going strong. (Nearly 90). Thanks, Ken.

We are about to take the summer break for fun and relaxation. We hope everyone has a great time to enjoy the summer.

I feel happy to have had the opportunity to contribute and serve during the life-span of Peacock North. We have lasted for fourteen years. Our membership has increased over the years from 30 to 900 on our roster. In the process, we have developed a fine fellowship community. And in this process, our internal community has been culturally nourished as we have raised and shared our collective intellect on matters that affect us all. With awareness, we can feel hopeful that our spirit has carried us this far and may continue to do so in spite of the ominous aging difficulties we face ahead. With a need for help in carrying PN forward, we would like to recruit a more youthful set of leaders to sustain the longevity of this fine organization. Therefore, I'm asking for that kind of dedicated help to take over the reins and continue on. Please contact us for your opportunity to serve our great membership in some way.

Recently we enjoyed reading the latest edition of Peacock West's newsletter prepared by Helen and Joe Strauss. We wish them the best in their endeavor to share experiences in the medium's history and growth. We are sending some copies of our newsletter to our friends in the west, and extend an invitation to join our PN group — any Peacock West member is qualified. We hope we can share our experiences for the benefit and enjoyment of all our readers.

If any would like to be on their mailing list send a modest 5 bucks to: Joe Strauss, 255 20th Street, Del Mar, CA 92014.

Last words: Congratulations are in order to Elizabeth Vierling, daughter of our publisher Frank and wife Lois. Elizabeth, a biochemistry professor at the University of Arizona, Tucson, has been honored with a Guggenheim Fellowship for her work on gene mapping to be used to improve agricultural productivity at high temperatures.

Love you all.

Regards,

Pete



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Gloria Clyne Tony Nelle

Mort Hochsrein Roy Silver

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With special thanks to Peg Peterson

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A PICTURE FROM OUR ARCHIVES



Circa 1948, *LIVE* from Studio 8G — *The Late Mr. Bean*, starring Lillian Gish and Burt Lydell.

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First Class Mail



*Have a great summer.
See you in the fall.*