

Peacock North

Spring, 1998



Volume 7 Edition 1

Spring Luncheon Set for May 17

Peacock North will hold its 11th annual Reunion/Luncheon at La Maganette Ristorante on Sunday, May 17, at 12 noon. Members, spouses, their families, guests and friends are cordially invited to attend.

If we judge from past experience, all attendees will have a grand time renewing old friendships, and making new ones.

So, mark your calendar right now for May 17th. You're assured of a day you will always remember. Good food, good drink, and good fellowship.

Dig out those old dusty photos and brush up on favorite memories of your pre-golden years in the *Golden Age of Radio and Television*. You're sure to find eager eyes and ears for your pictures and tales.

Fill out the coupon on page 47 – cut off date for reservations is May 1st. Don't miss out, register early.

Join the fun!

PN sends this courtesy copy of our magazine to our friends in the NBCFlorida Retiree group. We extend a special invitation to both join **Peacock North** and, if you are north this spring, to join us for our 1998 Reunion Luncheon at La Maganette Ristorante. See coupon on page 47.



HEINO RIPP'S



P.N. PEOPLE

Dearly Beloved! We are gathered here today because we love each other. For we were together nearly every day for many years, through high elation and deep despair. Today we especially share each other's friendship and like to be together again, thus the Newsletter. As I write, it's almost Valentine's Day, so share the symbol of the day with me and the rest of our "staff," especially Frank, our publisher/editor, whose devoted, free services no one could afford to pay.

If the fellow this next item talks about, hadn't done what he did, many of us wouldn't be getting together like we do. Most of us have never seen him. Who, you ask, is this person? You'll see soon....

But first, there is Garry Simpson, superb TV director

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Impresario Simpson.



Zworykin and his iconoscope.

TV, with the actual historical equipment. The final portion of the show was Dr. Zworykin presenting his most important first-trial experiments. He had applied for a patent on Dec. 29, 1923, that was issued finally by the US Patent Office on Dec. 20, 1938. NBC's ace announcer Ben Grauer was the MC and General David Sarnoff, RCA Board Chairman appeared to congratulate the Doctor.

Garry observed:

"WE WERE ALL VERY CLOSE TO THE BEGINNING OF THIS NEW AGE OF COMMUNICATION!"

An interesting note: When Garry first approached Zworykin

with the idea of doing a broadcast, he was not very excited about it. When asked to see some of his early equipment, so Garry could show some elements of the early experiments, Zworykin, at the time, didn't have a clue as to where all of this gear was. Finally he led Garry to old storage closets and into adjoining buildings at the RCA labs in Princeton, NJ, where Zworykin worked, before he could put his hands on these historic experimental fore-runners.

After the broadcast, RCA had very expensive glass display cases built for the treasures for visitors at the RCA labs to view. Neither Zworykin nor Sarnoff realized that their work had helped to change history – until after Garry's broadcast!

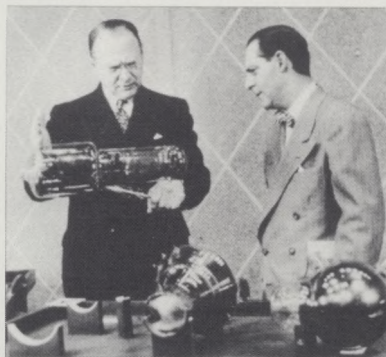
Garry questions?: Since GE bought RCA, do the labs still operate? – Where are the artifacts now? – These should

who succeeded in raising \$300,000 to reopen the Vergennes Opera house that was long abandoned. You all remember Durante walking away through circles of light, on his exit. That was Garry's idea. More of this in next issue.

Yes, the mystery man is Dr. Zworykin, who as Garry put it, "experimented with devices that attempted to turn pictures into electronic signals that could be broadcast and reassembled on the kinescope to actually create TV pictures in homes."

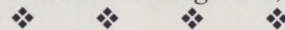
Garry wrote and directed a TV show in 8G to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the invention of all-electronic television, which aired on Dec. 29, 1948.

In 8G, he created vignettes that illustrated important electronic developments that led to the creation of all-electronic



Ben Grauer hosted the tribute.

be in the Smithsonian in Washington, DC. Who knows?
Garry has retired to Vergennes, Vermont



Smooth Moves On Ice.



Speaking of Vermont, we glommed our hands onto the newspaper, *Burlington Free Press* and lo and behold, guess who graced much of the Sports pages! **Jim Schaeffer!** Appearing in a huge write-up and two large photos, as what he is, a hockey star! The paper said Jim is still going strong on the ice at 70, competing in regular men's pickup games. Shown here at Cairns Arena, Schaeffer once played in the New York Rangers' minor league system. Our hockey star lives in Vermont, and did survive the ice storms. Jim told me that he was on his way to Hilton Head for a month or so at Scotty Connal's hideaway to thaw out.



Most of you have read in our Newsletter about our "next guest," as they say in TV, and his kudos for producing News events as well as many political program successes where he's been the head honcho.

We've also read, heard and seen about the TITANIC, especially since the Oscar nominations were announced. Well, how do all these merge?

An item by **Sarah Pekkanen**, (not Estonniann, but probably Finnnish), from Gannett News Service, Wash. DC explains that, for 18 years, a small group of men, called Men's Titanic Society, of which **Bob Asman** (former NBC Producer) is an ardent member, have gathered on the anniversary of the sinking, to honor the ill-fated passengers and the "Spirit Of Chivalry."

Ms. Pekkanen noted that this all began when NBC producer **Jim Sillman** ran across a statue honoring the RMS Titanic, while working on a documentary about little known memorials around Washington. Sillman gathered a few friends together, since the sinking anniversary was coming up, and toasted the unsung heroes.

Time passed and they learned more about the individuals and the reason to celebrate grew. So they got together at the Watergate Hotel's fancy dining room, in tuxedos and feasted on the same elegant menu that the folks



on the ship had that night, even leaving an empty place at the head of the table, at 2:20 am – yes AM, the time the ship disappeared under the water. They limousined with the champagne to the site pictured here. I guess it was Asman that toasted, “We try to do the toasts at the time we felt everyone

would have been at the highest state of duress.”

Bob Asman, as well as founding member **Max Schindler** (TV Director), are members of the society that “toasts men who stayed on the ship so that the women and children might be saved. Their goal is not to gain historical appreciation of the tragedy, but to keep alive an “*appreciation of gallantry.*”

So now you know another aspect of Bob Asman. He likes to drink champagne with the boys in a dark park at 2:20 AM with his feet wet, after a classy filet mignon dinner in a snazzy restaurant. (*Only kidding Bobby.*)

Herb Oxman (Cherry Hill, N.J.) sent an e-mail to Frank Vierling, who sent me a fax copy. In it, Herb says his days are pretty full, but not exciting. Must do 1-2 hrs. of stretching exercises each morning, which he’s done for years. Several times a week he and wife Renee get more physical exercise like racketball and swimming. Golf is added on good days. (*Strange that this should follow Asman’s story.*)

Renee does some freelance translating and interpreting in French/English. Herb does some marketing research. Like most computer folk, Herb feels, “one of these days I’ll have to upgrade from a 486x66 to a pentium II. (*You’re right Herb. My old one is gone. Now its a pentium, 233mhz processor, 65mb DRam, 8gig hard drive, mmx etc. Quel difference!*)

Herb spent 5 days in Vail, CO as part of a tiny group of 70, who took over The Lion’s Square Lodge. They continue skiing in the nearby Poconos (Pa.) and expect to visit son in New Hampshire.

Not to be caught on a couch in front of the TV, they spent a month in France visiting Renee’s family, took in Normandy, Paris, Cannes and Marseilles. This year they’re planning to celebrate their 25th anniversary, something “BIG” in the Caribbean. (*Great choice, Herb, after having tasted sailing there, it’s hard to match.*)

Enid Roth is having a race. She’s going to beat those balloonists on their quest to circumnavigate the earth. So it was onward to India in November. In February its off to the

Sea of Cortez to see the whales birthing little ones, provided that “El Nino” doesn’t interfere. Then to Africa and the Seychelles Islands (Indian Ocean). *The Romantic Islands are where WOR’s John Gambling’s former audio engineer went for their honeymoon and to be there for the rest of their life, an idyllic life. Yes? - Uh, no! - He’s now back at the audio console at WOR, but fondly remembering the Seychelles.*) Sorry, back to Enid. In April she has scheduled China and Tibet. If the hypoxia doesn’t get her in the mountains of Tibet, the month of June will be graced by Ms. Roth in France going bicycling. Handlebar in one hand and a bottle of Beaujolais Nouveau in the other. (*Wonder if Asman would like the France part, only it’d have to be champagne.*) - (*I’m kidding around a bit Enid. I do envy you doing something you thought of long ago, something I probably never will. But, you never know. H*)

Once back in US, she can’t sit and watch her videos, she’s going to live a 4 year promise to herself. She is buying a computer! She’s looking for expert help from all you e-mailers during the learning curve!

Marty Hoade sent us a terse, pithy thought. “GENTLE PEOPLE ... MANY THANKS.” (*It’s our pleasure, Marty.*)

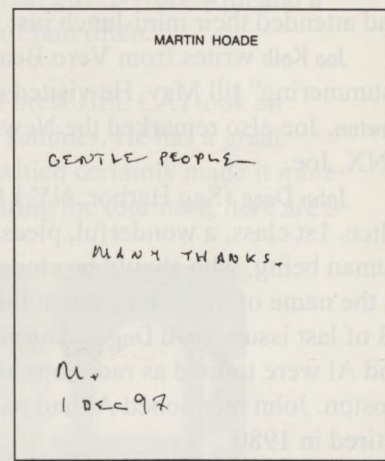
John Trautwein left their Armonk, NY home and are practicing being Gypsies, taking lessons from Enid. With 5 weeks in North and South Carolina to start. Then

off to Europe they went. Four days each in: Budapest, Vienna, Prague, Berlin, Amsterdam, Brussels (loved Bruge) then to Aberdeen, Scotland (*to refresh the brain back into English, be it with a brrr*) to be with their son. (*A bit of a switch, papa staying at the son’s place for a month.*)

John didn’t run into **Don Luftig** in any of the cities, and wondered if Don had used “chroma-key” on his world-encompassing photos. (*Only engineers do that.*) But wait, here’s more! The prodigal folks will return to Venice – no, in Florida and Sarasota to look around. (Like lovable **Hank Bomberger** used to say, “*You never buy a car unless you look under the hood!*” *But then, I think Hank was talking about marriage.*)

Somewhere in there, John did manage to visit **Ruth** and **Herb Greeley** in Melbourne. (*No, not in Australia, Florida – how did they miss that one?*) John reported they looked great and their home and location are beautiful.

Ross Martindale (Yarmouth, Maine) another victim of the Ice Storm of ’98, but all is OK now. Ross writes us to



tell us "Peacock North continues to be a terrific publication. Brought back wonderful memories of many years at 30 Rock – was glad to see so many of us listed in the Over 80 Group. Hope Willard Scott is still around when we hit the century mark!"

"As always, my thanks and appreciation to all of you who give so much time and effort to putting out a great publication." (*Take another bow Frank.*)

Howie Atlas (Long Island, NY) writes that they had a mini-lunch at their usual meeting place – Domenico's in Levittown, NY. Attending were **Bill Delannoy**, **Vinnie Gabrielle**, **Frank Gaeta**, **Bob Mitchell**, **Herb Polak**, **Wes Paulsen**, **Scott Shachter**, **Murray Vecchio**, **Maurey Verschore**, and **Howie**. **Tony Romeo** couldn't make it – an ear problem.

(*Howie mentioned that if anyone is ever visiting the Long Island area, they'd conjure up a luncheon gathering which everyone always says they enjoy!*)

On a sad note, **Howie Atlas**, **Scotty Schachter** and **Frank Gaeta** attended **Bob Mitchell's** viewing in Woodbury, NY. Bob had attended their mini-lunch just the Tuesday before.

Joe Kolb writes from Vero Beach, FL where he's "summering" till May. He visited our old friend **Wally Lawton**. Joe also remarked the Newsletter was "impressive." TNX, Joe.

John Deeg (Sag Harbor, NY.) from NBC Electronic Mtce. 1st class, a wonderful, pleasant, knowledgeable human being, who should be cloned. Thanks John for filling in the name of the video man at the video console on page 43 of last issue, as **Al Dugan**. During the big WW II, John and Al were trained as radio ops at Gallops Island in Boston. John mentioned Al had passed away before John retired in 1980.

Cal Shadwell sent a beautiful card, which I'll quote verbatim: With the arrival of each issue of Peacock North, another day in the ever dwindling number of days, is down the tubes as I sit and read (it) and remember other days among the 12,000 days I spent at NBC:

- ♦ A day with **Bob Weintraub**, **Phil Hymes** and **Norman Ogg** on a golf course in Tuscon, Ariz. before starting 5 days of taping the "AMERICAN," with **Lee Marvin**.
 - ♦ A day that **Ted Nathanson** had kind words to say on my final assignment at Amelia Island. FL tennis.
 - ♦ Every article brings memories. Keep them coming!
- Sincerely, **Cal Shadwell**

Cal, here's another: *Do you remember we were wrapping up the Como Show in Minneapolis, St. Paul. It was 3 am and we stopped for a break and I went up to the big organ keyboard with Dave Hubby to turn it onto play a few bars. We were not successful so we were just playing on the keyboard trying different knobs, switches, etc. We gave up after a while. Shortly thereafter the Police came in. They were looking for someone who was ringing the chimes in a town tower that seems to have awakened the neighborhood.*

My, my, what a strange thing to happen. Must have been those UFO's again.

Speaking of memories, **Horace Ruiz** (New City, NY) attended **Phil Falcone's** church funeral service. As Chris and I made our way across the aisle, I saw Horace and stopped to say hello and introduce Chris to Horace. I drew a blank and fumbled trying to remember his name. Horace, always a gentleman, saw my plight and introduced himself. I was so embarrassed, imagine a man that I admired and worked with for years. Guess the brain is still over saturated with details of all the shows we put on the air. On the AIR, I could remember every detail of the longest, complicated shows, and now I forgot a name! Still many nice memories do remain, thank goodness. By the way, Horace wants to be remembered to you all.

Bernard Jacobs (Tappan, NY) was visiting his son in Sherman Oaks, Calif and stopped by to see **Vince** and **Marie DiPietro**. He reports they both look well, but she has some occasional walking problems. Bernie says that Vince's e-mail address is incorrect on Page 16, last edition. It is vinsays@aol.com – the address on page 16 is incorrect.

Vie Roby sent this epistle to Pete. And I understand that as a youth in college, Vic had a hungering desire to learn a foreign language. His grade advisor arranged for him to take a crash course in English. As you can see, he graduated Magna Cum Laude. Then again, did Pete take the same crash course?

Bob Hanna (Santa Cruz, Ca.) wished "All you Guys and Dolls, Seasons Greetings!"

Bill Howard (Austin, TX.) has caught the bug! – He's discovered the internet (ATT World Net). His address is bill_howard@capmac.org,internet – (I'm not sure of the comma after org.)

Noel Engler announced retirement of: 1. **Al Colacino**, – 2. **Noel Engler** – 3. **Steve Kyritsis**, which began at the Museum of Modern Art in NYC on Dec. 1st.

We wish you three healthy, most enjoyable and lengthy retirement years.

Bill McCord (San Diego, Ca.), announcer par excellence, writes us and all his friends a note. "Sorry to report I must

From the desk of
VIC ROBY

November filth, 1997

Deer Peat —

Due I oh yew sum dewes for Peacock North? If sew, pleas accept the unclothed/Czech therefore.

Ass yew cane sea, Eye did gut a chuckle out off the poem crawled "Editor's Lament" farm necks two thee dewes farm in the Simmer edition of "Peacock North". Eye two have a spilling checker, and it has tolled me that this massage is free of awl errors.

Eye only hope that my Czech is joust ass good.

Breast wishes,

Dieck
Says Vic !!

hobble around on a cane when Olga and I go out. Still drive, but very comfortable when Olga takes over. Still devour each issue of our 'Great Magazine.' Yes, that's exactly what it is! I have passed the 81 year mark. I have warm thoughts of all friends and co-workers that have passed on. It's good to know and remember them."

Gordon Matthews (NYC, NY) (*Tech scheduling, payroll, mother superior, father confessor and a wonderful prince*) sends you this message:

*Congrats & Best Holiday Greetings
to all of you
Journalists Historians Extraodinares!*

Betty Noyes (Baldwin, NY), after reading Betty's note, we're all getting pink from embarrassment by the kudos we've been receiving re: The Newsletter.

Yours, Betty makes us grateful that people do really care. Our humblest thanks to you and all the others who take the time to write.

John Marelli (Baldwin, NY), just became a member. Hope we can live up to your expectations. John's e-mail, by the way is jdmarelli@aol.com OR marl@idt.net

Art Weider (Saratoga Springs, NY) rejoined PN after seeing a recent copy of the Newsletter. He also gave us Al Sagan's name as the missing videoman on page 43 of the last issue.

Art suggests that the 20 meter NBC Ham Net move to the General Class frequency portion of the band – up about 3 khz or back to the 14,242 Khz spot. He asks, "Where and when are the 40 and 75 meter nets? Is there a rosters? If anyone has all the answers, give Art and Vina a call at 518-584-7379.

Gene and Jane Ganes sent us a voluminous Christmas computer masterpiece re: their 1997 escapades etc. Too many pages to even condense. (*However, I must congratulate you on having built your delta shaped seaplane, and even better having successfully flown it for hours! I still relive my first solo flight in a yellow Piper Cub in Staten Island. Still looking for a farm to fly a bird of my own from.*)

Til Connal (Greenwich, Conn.) wrote a nice note re: our articles about Teddy Nathanson and Frank Slocum. (*Two fellows who made my stay at NBC memorable.*)

Vic Lombardi (Bayside, NY) writes – "acute sciatica is slowing me down. Also, in May '96, I had to have a single by-pass surgery. So far tho, doing all right." The Best, Vic.

Paul Roeder (Toms River), wants to be remembered to all PNers.

Jon Burkhart (Maui, Hawaii, formerly from Houston, TX), sent this e mail, yes, from sunny Maui. (*wish I were there.*) He would like you all to add his e-mail address to your lists. It is burkhart@maui.net – He also wants to thank all the PN staff for a wonderful year. To Jon, of particular

interest was the Teddy Nathanson stories and pictures. Ted had done many programs out of Houston and Jon had TDed them.

John remembers, that while Ted was directing a baseball game, he (Jon) had that dreaded moment in every TD's life when, yup, he just had to use the rest room. There was no relief TD, but Ted assured him could direct and switch. Well, protocol, shmotocal. Out the door went Jon.

With his duties completed, Jon returned, and everything seemed to be going well. He sat down and finished the game.

Afterwards, the crew and Jon were schmoozing while breaking down, they said they were getting tally lights on and off, but Ted never said a word. (*I call that teamwork and friendship which there was a lot of. Television is like the human body, it needs all the parts functioning to make it work, and I have been fortunate to have all my guys and gals working 99.9%! – H*)

Jon says, "Ted was a great guy to work with and a marvelous director! I think of him often."

Aloha, Jon.

Diane and Bob Juncosa (Forest Hill, CA) took an extensive tour of Spain this summer. He has a great command of the language, which certainly made it more enjoyable... Instead of repeating the tour now, here are 3 photos Bob sent us.



*Diane
& Bob
in Nerja,
Spain.*



Pas De Trois, Mojacar.



Dinner in Nerja.

Walter Balderson (Clearwater, FL E-Mail is wbalder@ibm.net) writes us on a spiffy computerized letter. Muses that in our modern age, we have so many ways to keep in touch with our NBC family, E-mail, bulletin boards, AOL instant message buddy system, chat room - even P.N. Newsletter. Regards to all. Thinks he may buzz up in May to check out the shows.

? **SOMEONE** sent a clipping from NYTimes. "Your Sept 16 obit of Margo Rose, a puppeteer who with her husband created **Howdy Doodly**, noted that the marionette was a freckle faced redhead, but did not specify the number of freckles. There were 48, one for each state (1946).

Art Zarakas, Woodhaven, NY) sends Hellos to all. Hopes to make an appearance at La Mag. Notices that time has a funny way of quickly passing, now that he has retired!

Looks like "new knees" are selling these days. **Roger Tuttle** has a new set, as does **Frank DiRienzo**, **Fred Wagner** and now **Bill Miller**. Tuttle feels great, rates his at 99.9%. Busy flying his homebuilt plane. Has added a boat to his "toys," since waters abound in Wilmington, NC. I can see Rog & Patricia, anchored in a cove for the evening, enjoying dinner!

Joan Gifford is looking forward to La Mag, as is **Alfonse Grimaldi**, and **Cathy Vukovich** and **Rose de Renzis**.

Yea! We've heard from **Carl Ricca**! Enjoying retirement in Melbourne FL area. He and his children all have homes in the "Sun Tree" development, where NBC broadcast golf matches. Daughter works in the phone room at NBC, just presented Carl with his 5th grandchild.

Dick Doherty went to CBS - worked Letterman as a freelancer. Promises to "Bash-it" at La Mag.

Ed & Linda Rossi (Scottsdale, Az, E-Mail is erossi1505@aol.com)... Linda will be heading to Hawaii soon for the Miss Universe Pageant. Both expect to be in NYC for La Mag epic.

Wandering **Walter Himmelberg**, has settled in at Colorado Springs from FLAT, DRY, TREELESS Texas, to a mile and half from the Olympic Training Center. Often visits there to watch the contenders. Woops, Walt says it's just started to snow in the mountains, and heading his way!

John Libretto (Glen Rock, NJ) is not doing the winter Olympics - "cause CBS is doing that."

Ed Wackernagle (Montana) finds he can't "Ham" any more, he's living in an apartment. Ed will be 84 shortly. Currently having breathing problems. (*we miss your deep rich voice coming over the Ham bands, Ed*)

Russ Tornabene (Evanston, IL) was a co-chair of a farewell party for **Floyd Kalber**, who will do his swan song as News anchor at WLS-TV on March 1. Floyd started in TV News in 1951 at KMTV, Omaha and joined NBC at WMAQ-TV Chicago in 1960. Russ and a colleague organized a surprise gathering, figuring 12 would appear at the restaurant. HOWEVER, they had 68, including **Bob**

Mulholland, **Carole Simpson**, **Joe Angotti**, **Les Crystal**, **John Palmer**, **Dennis Swanson** and many others from out of town. (*A nice send-off for a nice man by nice people. H*)

Anne & Bill Wendell (Del Ray Beach, FL. married 50. years! Bless You!

Ted Everitt (Net commercial traffic) wouldn't miss "PN Newsletter".....for anything. (*Anything?*)

Dee & Bill Goetz (West Bloomfield, MI) Bill is still in stroke therapy, it's slow going, is in good spirits, seems to be adjusting. They see their children quite often, also enjoy their grandchildren, happy to be near family. Bill talks a lot about NBC and remembers the better times. (*I've apparently printed their phone # incorrectly for two issues. I believe the correct # is 248-788-0653. Forgive me. H*)

Don Blair (Venice, FL) while using a Tampa recording studio, learned from the recording engineer that some guy named Brandt came there fairly often. Don called this Brandt and, son of a gun, he was our "**Mel**" Brandt. They plan a rendezvous. Mel lives in Venice, an hour and half nawth.

Via e-mail from **Howie Atlas**: "**Scotty Schachter** proved the saying 'You have a better chance of being hit by lightning than winning the lottery' is true."

He did not win the lottery, but his house was hit by lightning recently. It struck about 3 AM during a horrendous thunderstorm. It blew a hole in the roof, burned out everything connected to an electric outlet (TV's, VCR's, computer, etc.) and all the telephones. Fortunately he had a cell phone in the car to call the fire department. There was no fire despite the 'burned' smell in the house. Everyone is fine. **Howie** adds, "Now comes the bad part; dealing with insurance company and the contractors!"

More via e-mail: **Jim Sunder**, in his inimitable way, informs us that "**Lee Pliskin** has added to his collection of electronic gear this week (weeks ago now). He has acquired a pace-maker." Jim adds, "I don't think there were any unusual complications." He is home now - give him a call or write: **Lee Pliskin**, 130 E. Ninth Street, Beach Haven, NJ 08008. Phone: (609) 492-3526

And last: **Kate Ryan** (announcer **Bill's** widow) sends thanks for **Bill's** obituary in our Spring 1997 issue. She says, **Bill** often talked about his years with NBC and the "pros" he worked with. "They were the best, from film editors, directors, engineers, writers - everybody." He just felt privileged to have been a part of the group that "GOT IT RIGHT." □

That's all for now. Ripp

JOIN YOUR FRIENDS
La Maganette, May 17

Your Show of Shows



by heino ripp



OUTSIDE THE INTERNATIONAL THEATER
AT COLUMBUS CIRCLE



STARS OVER BROADWAY. THE SHOWS OPENING



THE PRODUCER, MAX LIEBMAN



Imogene, Mel Brooks, (Carl Reiner?), Max

Sid



The 2 Kids

Ripp



A read-thru, Cocoa, Brooks, Kallen, Max, Sid, Tolkin



Imogene
doing her
burlesque
routine

The
Hickenloopers,
Sid teaching
Imogene to
drive.





At this time, Bob Johnston did audio. The live on-air balance of the orch sound was superb. No nuance was missed. In a recording studio would have taken hours to achieve.

Sid and Carl Reiner in a *Silent Movie*.

Rich and married, Sid falls in love with Imogene, a waitress, and wound up in the gutter.



Daughter Shelly, Florence, (Mrs C) and Sid at home



Judy Johnson & Bill Hayes

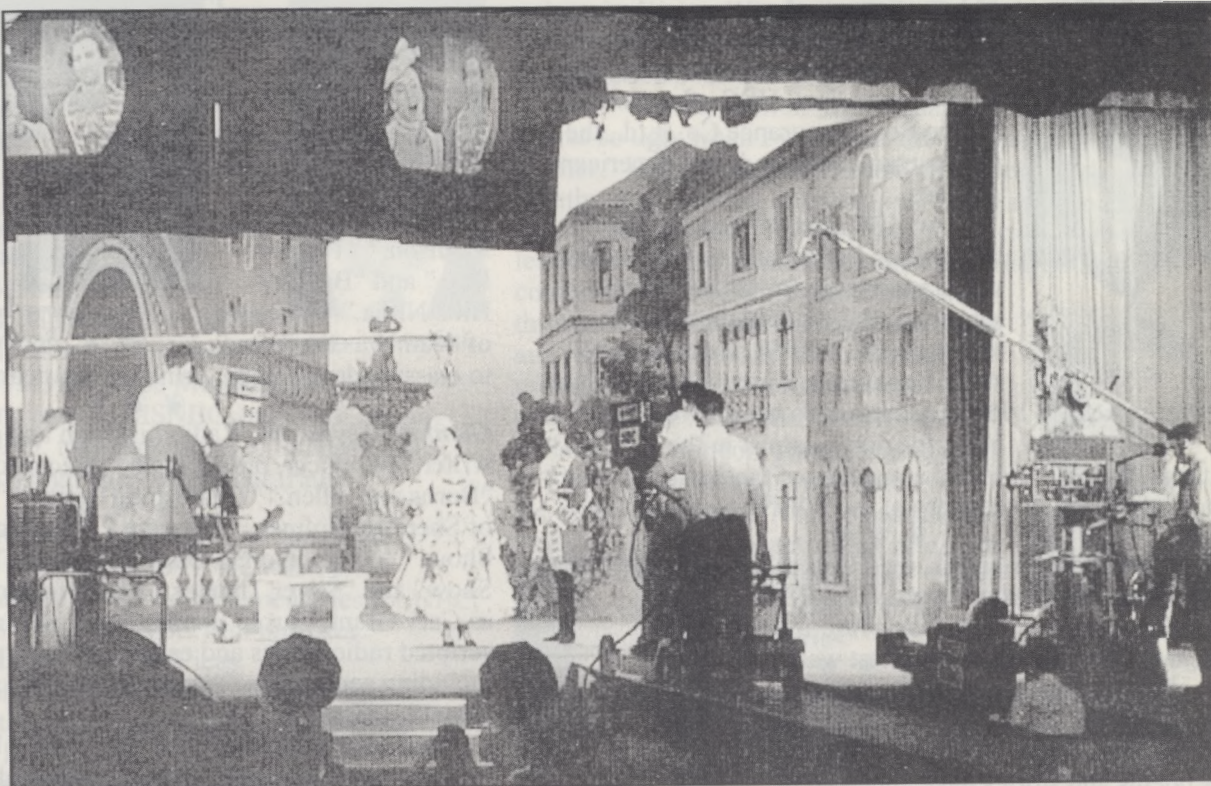


Margarite Piazza, beautiful lady, lovely voice, and Jim Starbuck: Besides doing all the coreographing & staging, always filled in where ever needed.

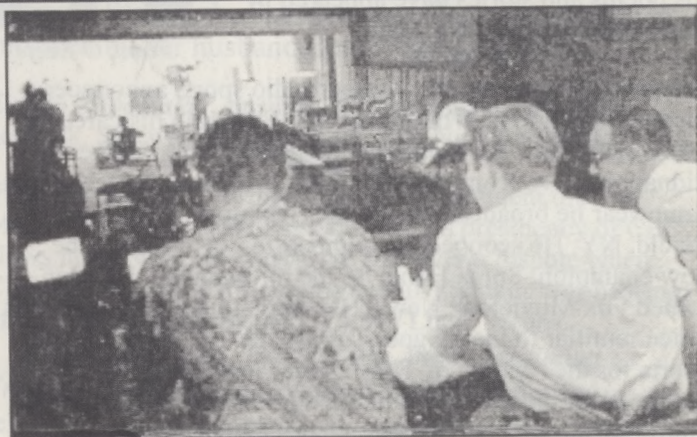


Bambi & Rod Alexander

Margarite Piazza and Jack Russell doing an aria. Don Mulvany on the "Sanner" crane, Marvin Shiness on the center dolly camera, Nick Rawluk dollying Marv. Can't make out others. When we were in the Center Theater, Jack Russell's wife passed away during dress, but Jack stayed on and sang a song that has kept going through my mind all these years. Boy, he was some guy to be able to do that.



TD me, Director Bill Hobin, Max & Marcia Kuyper, AD.



In Cntrl Rm, viewing the stage x/Dir. Hal Keith, Me and Max



Writers Lucille Kallen and Mel Tolkin



At dress Reh. down the aisel to right, Lucille Kallen, Tolkin, Jess Kimmel (Ass't producer) Brooks and anyone else you can recognize all scrutinizing from an audience point of view. Our run-thru-Dress Reh. ran one hour and half almost always!

Rita D. Young, 77, of Lewiston, Maine died in Nov, 1996. Rita was a native of Turner, Maine. A graduate of Leavitt Institute and Nasson College in 1940 she joined NBC after working for the Royal Insurance Co., Ltd., the Pennsylvania Railroad, and American Airlines.



Rita – about 1953.

At NBC Rita worked in Studio Scheduling in the early to mid 50s and was a supervisor for all the tv and rehearsal studio scheduling. After leaving NBC in 1958 she co-founded A&R Services in Kirkwood, Mo. Upon her retirement in 1964 she returned to her native Maine.

While in New York she was a soloist in the International Chorale and a member of the 3 church choirs and had served as secretary of the NY-NJ Nasson Club.

Frank O'Keefe, Engineer, died December 19 just two hours after reaching his 78th birthday. Cause of death was a rare form of cancer which affects the chest wall.

Frank was a cameraman with a beautiful Irish tenor voice and often used it to entertained his coworkers. Several of his poems and stories have appeared in this newsletter over the years.



Frank O'Keefe.

Edward Thorgeron, 95, pioneer radio sports announcer, died at his home in Wolfeboro, NH. Ed began his career in 1927 with NBC. He broadcast the news of the Lindbergh kidnapping live from Hopewell, NJ, on March 1, 1932. That same year he broadcast the Winter Olympics from Lake Placid, NY. He scooped the competition by bringing the new champion, Sonja Henie, to the microphone. He soon joined Fox Movietone News. His staccato delivery made his voice familiar to movie goers across the US. He produced sports for the "March of Time" series and was an independent producer of radio and television commercials. Until retiring in 1959, he was a news commentator with Dumont Television.

Al Collins, "Jazzbo," the host at the Purple Grotto on NBC radio in the 1950s, died in California last fall at age 78 from prostate cancer. He was the "Tonight Show" host for 13 weeks between the reigns of Steve Allen and Jack Paar. During his career Al worked at many radio stations on both coasts, including WNEW and WINS, New York. A big man, his attire included a formal jumpsuit.

Dave Marr, A pro golfer in the 1950s and '60s. He was a contemporary of Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus in their hey days, and later switched to tv golf commentator on the BBC, ABC and NBC. He died of cancer at 63.

Chris Farley, comic. Chris, who had a run on "Saturday Night Live" from 1990 to 1995 died in his Chicago apartment in mid-December. He was 33 and in the midst of a blossoming career. Some compared his tv performances to that of the late John Belushi – "frenzied, edgy physicality."

Farley had appeared in 7 films and was skedded for 3 more. They included "Wayne's World," "Coneheads," "Airheads," "Billy Madison," "Tommy Boy," and "Beverly Hills Ninja." The cause of death was attributed to massive drug-taking, drinking and heart disease.



Chris as Huru the ninja in the 1997 movie "Beverly Hills Ninja."

Glenhall Taylor, 94, Radio historian and pioneer radio writer, announcer, producer and director of such shows as "Burns and Allen," "Ozzie and Harriet," "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes," "Blondie," "The Dorothy Lamour Show," "Dinah Shore's Open-House," "The Jimmy Durante Show" and "Silver Theater," which featured such film stars as Cary Grant, Carole Lombard and William Powel. He scripted radio shows and early television programs, including segments of "Death Valley Days" hosted by Ronald Reagan.

He recorded radio's hey-day in such books as "Before Television – The Radio Years," published in 1979.

Mr. Taylor explained the origin of Jimmy Durante's memorable sign-off, "Good-night, Mrs. Calabash – wherever you are" which many assumed was a reference to a real person. Durante was impressed by baritone John Charles Thomas' radio show closing, "Goodnight, Mother," and wanted to adopt a similar ending.

Agreeing that it should be funny, the writers sat around one night, trying to come up with odd-sounding surnames for a mythical woman. One writer lighted his calabash pipe and proclaimed: "Good-night, Mrs. Calabash." A few shows later "wherever you are" was added.

Harriet Van Horne, tv columnist died of cancer in New York at age 77 in mid-January. She was one of the big three in New York radio and tv criticism, along with Jack Gould and John Crosby, back in the 1940s and 1950s. Van Horne wrote a 5-times a week comment for the NYWorld-Telegram. The trio "were admired and feared," as the NYTimes obit recalled.

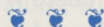
After 20 years on the radio-tv beat, Van Horne switched to a general commentary column in the NYPost. She later said listening to radio and watching the tube for so long had made her dull and sterile.

Van Horne got her first newspapering job, with Greenwich Time, after placing a saucy job want ad that read, "Blue-eyed blonde with nose for news and a way with words, fresh out of college." (DG)

Bill Hobin, 74, Director of sitcoms such as "Three's Company," "Maude" and "The Red Skelton Show," died February 15 in Tucson. Bill joined NBC at WNBQ and directed "Garroway at Large." He later teamed up with producer Max Liebman to direct "Your Show of Shows."

John Paul Monahan 3rd, to use his formal name, the husband of "Today" show hostess Katy Couric, died in late January of colon cancer. Doctors discovered the illness early in 1997 and operated in June. He was 42 and the father of the couple's two young children, Elinor 6 and Caroline 2.

He had met Katy when they both worked in Washington in 1989. She moved to New York when she got her "Today" show break. He became a full time Manhattan resident when he joined a local law firm in 1993. NBC used Monahan as a legal analyst on the net and also on MSNBC and CNBC during major cases since 1995, including the O.J. Simpson trials, and the Timothy McVeigh and Unibomber trials.

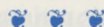


George A. Vicas, producer and director of television documentaries died in October, 1997. He was 71.

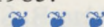
For over 30 years he produced documentaries for NBC, CBS, ABC and PBS. His 1969 NBC film on Artur Rubinstein won an Emmy for Mr. Vicas.

Born in Germany he moved to the United States in 1930. He served in the Army counterintelligence corps during World War II.

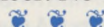
He spent 10 years with NBC, making films like "Germany: Fathers and Sons – A Barrier of Silence," and "The Pope and the Vatican" before moving on to independent production work for clients like PBS and National Geographic.



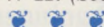
Bob Mitchell, Engineering cameraman. Bob passed away in his sleep January 30. He was 73. Apparent cause of death was a heart attack. He is survived by his wife, Jean, and two sons, Robert, Jr. and Ray. He met his wife, Jean Contorno, while she worked as a nurse in the NBC health office. During WW II Bob served in the 507th Parachute Battalion. He retired from NBC in 1985.



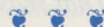
Woody Dowd, AD, of cancer. No other details.



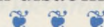
Lee Jones, 36 year NBC radio veteran is dead at 87. Lee was in the Philippines and made a recording of Kay Kyser announcing the end of WW II. (See PN's 1996 Summer edition.)



Leonardo Nole, weightlifter, who posed for the Prometheus statue at the Rock Center skating rink has died at age 91 in Sacramento. He posed for sculptor Paul Manship over a period of 3 months. His model fee was \$1 an hour. During World War II Nole posed for a Defense Department statue depicting a typical GI. It's at the Pentagon.



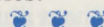
Tom Brown, Engineer, died in February, after a lengthy illness. Tom had been a Tops clerk at NBC and later served as a vacation relief engineer in Field Operations. After NBC he worked as a recording engineer at RCA Victor Records which ultimately became BMG (Bertelsman Music Group). He had been on long-term disability leave from BMG.



"Jay" Monahan.

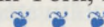
Henny Youngman, dubbed by columnist Walter Winchell "King of the One-Liners," like his immortal "Take my wife, please," died Feb. 24 of flu complications. He was 91.

He was born in White Chapel, England, in 1906. "I was so ugly when I was born, the doctor slapped my mother," Henny quipped. He arrived in New York six months later, settling in Brooklyn. "I was a groupie for Berle," Henny said. "I picked up a lot of stuff from him. I learned a lot." He became the quintessential Catskills comedian, developing a shtick unvaried through seven decades; snappy one-liners and rapid-fire jokes as likely to bring a groan as a guffaw. He appeared in countless clubs from the Catskills to the Palladium in London, from Atlantic City to Las Vegas, working more than 200 shows a year into his 70s. He continued working into his 90s, appearing briefly in the Martin Scorsese gangster epic "Good-Fellas" with Steven Spielberg on his "Tiny Toons" cartoon series.



Doris Steen Williams, 84, Broadcast Executive, died January 7. Doris retired after 43 years with NBC. She was a contract administrator and co-founder of Network Standards, Practices and Compliance. She is survived by her husband David among others.

Evelyn Shoemaker, business affairs manager for radio network. She was living in York, PA. No other details.



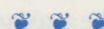
Fred Friendly, 82, former CBS News president died on March 3 after a series of strokes. Fred's presidency of CBS News lasted only two years. He quit over a dispute when CBS decided not to air congressional Vietnam War hearings in favor of soap operas and "I Love Lucy" reruns.

For a short time, after the war, Fred (*Ferdinand Friendly Wachenheimer*) worked for NBC radio and television where he introduced a panel quiz show, "Who Said That?" and produced "The Quick and the Dead," a four-part radio documentary about the birth of the atomic bomb.

At CBS he collaborated with Edward R. Murrow to virtually invent documentary television. One of the best-ever was the memorable Murrow documentary "See It Now" dismantling Sen. Joseph McCarthy's demagogic anti-Communist witch hunt.

Fred won 10 Peabody Awards during his distinguished career which ended with his retirement in 1993.

He was an early advocate for public broadcasting and developed a series of Seminars on Media and Society that aired on PBS.



The members of Peacock North extend heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the families of our departed friends.



Henny.

Philip Frank Falcone 1912-1997

Philip was born December 3, 1912 in Yonkers, NY of parents Elizabeth (nee Stabile) and Pasquale Falcone, immigrants from the towns of Avellino and Potenza in Italy. Growing up in the Bronx, he was the second of four children. His father died in 1925 when Phil was 12. Still a student at Dewitt Clinton High School, and 16 years old, Phil took a job as a night page at NBC in June 1929. One memorable assignment was in 1930, when he escorted Albert Einstein to the studio where the renowned scientist delivered a radio address on Palestine.

Phil remained with Guest Relations until June 1933, when he entered Engineering, coincident with NBC's move from 711 Fifth Avenue to Rockefeller Center. His next post was a relief apprenticeship in Field Engineering preparatory to becoming a Studio Engineer in November 1934. During his first five years with NBC he was a student at City College of New York and the RCA Institutes. In 1934 he acquired his amateur radio license, W2HIO. He also cultivated an interest in the outdoors, hunting and fishing.

Many years later, his wife Janet had some opportunities to bask in the afterglow of those early radio days. Janet describes walking together down Fifth Avenue and hearing, "Hi, Phil," as a gentleman passed. Janet asked Phil if that wasn't Fred Allen, and sure enough, it was. Another street encounter was with Gertrude Berg, author of *The Rise of the Goldbergs*, allowing Janet to eavesdrop on Ms. Berg and Phil's conversation. Janet still has a vase that was sent by singer Morton Downey filled with candy and cookies on the occasion of the birth of Phil, Jr..

Phil was the first NBC employee to be drafted, in 1940 for World War II. He was released and then quickly recalled after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He served in North Africa and in Italy as a Captain in the Signal Corps, shooting training films, and documenting battles. Among his unit's projects was the film *The Battle of San Pietro* directed by John Huston. Phil was awarded the Purple Heart and two Bronze Stars.

Phil first met his wife to be, Janet Wirth, on a vacation cruise in 1947; she was a book editor, living in Philadelphia. When she was transferred to New York City, serendipity brought them together again as they met by chance on 49th Street. They were married in September

1948 at The Church of the Heavenly Rest on Fifth Avenue, and set up their home nearby, on 92nd Street just off Fifth. Soon after came sons Philip Jr. (born 1950) and Roger (born 1952), and moves first to New Hyde Park, and then to Parkway Village, Queens NY, where Janet and Phil resided for 40 years.



Janet and Phil, Christmas 1949.

Returning to NBC after the war, he had the opportunity to work with the NBC Symphony under Toscanini. He continued in radio, engineering a six-month Lucky Strike Tour of domestic military bases with Guy Lombardo in 1951-52 and began to work in television, including shows with Bob Hope, the Max Liebman specials in the early 50's, and *Nat King Cole* and *Perry Como* shows. The kids recall visits to *Howdy Doody*, *Children's Theater*, *Mr. Wizard*, and the Brooklyn studios for Hallmark Hall of Fame dramas and the NBC operas, Mary Martin's *Peter Pan* and an Ethel Merman special.

Phil kept diaries of his assignments from 1957 to his retirement from NBC in 1977 and beyond. He covered practically all presidential conventions, annual elections, and inaugurations. After John F. Kennedy's inauguration in 1961, Phil returned home from Washington enthused with Kennedy's plans for the new space program, and the opportunity to meet officials of NASA to review blueprints related to tv coverage. Beginning with Alan B. Shepard, Jr.'s historic 15 minute, 22-second suborbital flight on May 5, 1961, which successfully put the first American in space, Phil worked on Mercury, Gemini and Apollo coverage, spending a total of 415 days at Cape Canaveral/Cape Kennedy from 1961 to 1975.

Following Phil's chronology: he worked on the *Jack Paar Show* starting in 1961, along with the Emmy-winning *Purex Women's Specials*; Chet Huntley and Mitch Miller starting in 1962; twelve *Macy's Parades* starting in 1963; ten *Orange Bowl Parades* from 1965; six *Miss America Pageants* starting in 1966; *That Was The Week That Was*, 1964; six circus shows starting in '66 in Greensboro, Baltimore and St. Petersburg; several *Ice Capades* starting in 1966 along with *Lake Placid Olympic Games*; some golf, football and baseball. He notes in his diary the NABET strikes in 1967 and 1976; and primaries in Oregon and California in 1968 (Phil was in a mobile unit outside

Democratic headquarters in Los Angeles when he captured the sounds of that fateful moment when presidential candidate Robert Kennedy was assassinated). Phil started on the *Doctors* soap in 1969, along with a *Bancroft Special*; *Somerset* from Brooklyn starting in 1970, and *Nightly News*; *For Women Only* in 1971; *Not For Women Only*, *Watch Your Child*, and *3 On A Match* in 1972. Live commercials and RCA events such as stockholder meetings and press conferences were regular assignments along with occasional shifts on *Local* and *Huntley-Brinkley* news, religious shows, *Match Game*, *Jeopardy*, *Concentration*, *College Bowl*, and the *Tonight Show* starting in 1965. There were CMX and PCP-90 assignments in 1974 along with *To Tell The Truth*, *Weekend* and *Tomorrow*. In 1975 Phil traveled with Robert Sarnoff, in the continental US, Alaska, Geneva and London. 1975 also began an almost weekly assignment as PA mixer for *Saturday Night Live*, which continued until Phil's retirement.

On December 20, 1977, with a career spanning 49 years at NBC, Phil was honored at a retirement reception attended by more than 250 friends. An NBC press release quoted NBC President and CEO Herb Schlosser's testimonial, that "Phil is a very warm human being, with a smile, and with a word of encouragement for people above, below, and all around him. He's a marvelous individual and we thought the most appropriate thing we could give him would be a silver lifetime pass to NBC. We want him to feel that he can come here anytime and tell us what to do." NBC correspondent Edwin Newman said, "We are here to wish everything that is good, everything that is fine, everything that is desirable to an exceptional man, Phil Falcone, who is one of the most beloved men at NBC... There are few things that are more reassuring to somebody who is on the air than the knowledge that Phil Falcone is at work"

Soon after his retirement, now a freelance sound engineer, he was tapped by Reeves, Unitel, Matrix and Centrex, and by public television station WNET, for various projects. In 1978, Phil recorded the Wendy Wasserstein drama *Uncommon Women and Others* debuting Meryl Streep, and *Mourning Becomes Elektra* for WNET. From 1978 to 1991 he worked on 11 beauty pageants including *Miss Universe* in Peru and *Miss Young International* in the Philippines. He did sound for many episodes of *Slim Goodbody*, *Sesame Street* and *3-2-1 Contact*, a season of *Inside Story*, and a *Glen Miller 40-year tribute*, all for PBS. In 1980-81 he did two seasons of

Pinwheel, a children's puppet series on Nickelodeon. He worked with Horace Ruiz on *Love Sydney*, *Guiding Light*, *William F. Buckley* and others. In 1980, Phil engineered town hall meetings for presidential hopeful George Bush, and traveled for a time with the Reagan-Bush campaign. Phil helped launch pioneering satellite video teleconference services provided by Merrill Lynch, starting in 1982. He worked on a made-for-tv movie called *Special Report* in 1983.

The Museum of Broadcasting, in its infancy, engaged him to handle the sound for many events, including a lecture series by Lucille Ball in 1984. Phil also began a long relationship with General Foods, applying his live satellite video teleconferencing skills. He was hired for the first annual *MTV Music Awards* at the Radio City Music Hall in 1984, and did the sound for a 22-show season of *Kate & Allie* at the Ed Sullivan Theater. In 1985 Phil did the sound for several more *Kate & Allie* shows. 1986 included a show for the Davis's, James McCracken, and a program from the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. In 1987 he joined with Bob Davis and Horace Ruiz to record *Othello* at Newark's Symphony Hall.

Phil worked again for NBC during six weeks at the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, Korea. In 1990, he traveled to Seattle for the Goodwill Games for Turner Broadcasting.

Heart surgery in 1991 and cancer surgery in 1995, both successful, slowed him down a bit. Meetings and social events with fellow retirees, as well as chores and doctor appointments filled his calendar in recent years, and he continued to enjoy retirement until suffering illness again in August 1997. Phil passed away on November 11, 1997.

A memorial service for Phil was held at St. Helen's Roman Catholic Church in Westfield, NJ on November 15, where his family, co-workers and friends celebrated Phil's life. Phil is survived by his wife Janet, now living in Westfield, NJ; sons Philip Jr. of Westfield and Roger of Lafayette, CA, and grandchildren Joshua, Rachel, Elizabeth and Michael.

A four-year college scholarship has been established by the family to honor Phil. It will be administered by NABET Local 11 in New York City, and will first be awarded in March, 1998.

Roger Falcone

Philip F. Falcone Jr.

(See page 23 for other pictures.)

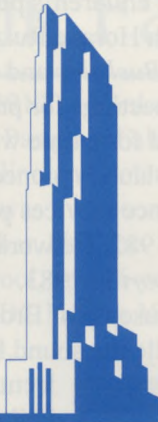


Phil with Phil, Jr. and Roger, 1954

at 30 rock



by Dan Grabel



The Hype War

Listen to the closers on the evening news shows and you wonder which newscaster draws the biggest audience. **Tom Brokaw? Peter Jennings?** Certainly not **Dan Rather**. If you listen closely, NBC closes "Nightly News" with "America's most watched evening news program."

ABC-tv phrases it this way to fudge a bit, "More Americans get their news from ABC television than from any other source." Of course, ABC television includes all its news shows and any peripheral stuff on independent radio shows that buy ABC coverage news, so the reference is not just to the Jennings show. Its a nice way to sound like you're number one, when, in reality, you're number two.



Jerry and friends sign off.

Seinfeld

Call it chutzpah, call it financial independence, (I knew NBC was paying Jerry too much) the comedian's deep-sixing the number one program in America goes into the annals as one of the great walks of all time. Obviously, long gone from his memory are the days when, like a lot of other young comics, the highlight of the year would be a gig

at some comedy bar where the drinking got as much attention as the jokes.

The shock for NBC, as one wag put it, was like finding coal in their Christmas stocking! Equally intriguing as the actual quitting, was the way the story leaked out on Christmas day. The NYTimes had it on page one with the details coming from the inevitable "anonymous source." Apparently, NBC and producer Castle Rock were going to keep the story under wraps until January when Time Magazine was skedded to disclose it along with a cover photo of Seinfeld.

Seinfeld, getting one-million a show, \$24-million for the season, was offered a raise to \$5-million per, but held fast to his decision to ankle after a 9 year run. Even if he had only extended the current deal, he was good for another \$48-million.

"Seinfeld," the show, earned one billion dollars this year for NBC. It was the most popular tv comedy show of the decade. The situation caused so much interest that at least 2 New York papers, the Times and the Post, wrote editorials about it.

It will be interesting to see how Castle Rock uses the other 3 comics from the show. Each had signed for another year at \$650,000 a show. With no top banana, can they draw? Stay tuned.

Chancellor Remembered

Three years ago, shortly before he died, the University of Pennsylvania honored the NBC commentator John Chancellor for his lifetime contribution to journalism. Now, the University's Annenberg Public Policy Center has renamed the honor the John Chancellor Award and in December it awarded a \$25,000 prize to Wilson F. Minor, a 75 year old southern journalist whose many titles include Jackson, Mississippi bureau chief for the New Orleans Times-Picayune. A 50 year crusader against corruption and racism, Minor is a syndicated columnist and publishes his own weekly alternative newspaper.

The award was created by Ira Lipman, a southern businessman who, as a 16 year old student in 1957, had first seen Chancellor in action when Central High School in Little Rock was integrated despite Governor Orval Faubus. Lipman, who later became friendly with John, once told him, "You changed the world."

Geraldo

Enterprising Geraldo Rivera has decided to stay with NBC rather than move along to Fox TV. There was a bidding war for his services – he must have a slick agent – and Geraldo decided to take the \$4-to-6 million dollar Peacock package for a six year deal, plus stock options, to make him one of NBC's highest priced stars. He'll do Rivera Live on the network, get some new anchor duties on either CNBC or MSNBC, host four primetime NBC News



Geraldo Rivera.

specials a year on criminal justice, continue as a legal commentator on "Today" and whatever else he can fit into the day. Remember when he went by the moniker Jerry Rivers, before Hispanic connections became more acceptable?

Rivera said he's happy to be out of the talk-show world. One tv columnist noted that Rivera "lugs to NBC News a lot of tabloid baggage." There was a

rumor that he might substitute for Tom Brokaw on Evening News, but that has been denied. But if you're Geraldo, and you're a dreamer, that ain't a bad dream. What say, Brian Williams?

Steeverino

Steve Allen, the versatile all-round talent who really created the late-night type of tv show (The Tonight Show) on NBC which is now standard, is still in his hot, creative mode at age 75 in North Hollywood where he has a full-time office staff of six to help with his many efforts. USA Today carried a story we quote: Allen works 8 hours a day, 7 days a week. still writes music, has written some 20 books, poems, children's stories, doing a biography, did a 2-night gig at the Cinegrill in Hollywood. "He brought an irreverent spontaneous sensibility to tv comedy," said USA Today, and his ideas are still copied today by the David Letterman show, for one, when Dave charges out into the street to do an impromptu spot.

(Peacockers: if you have any Steve Allen anecdotes from working his NBC shows, why not put them on paper and send to Pete Peterson.)

Willard

Willard Scott has teamed up with mystery writer Bill Crider to create Murder Under Blue Skies – Willard's fourth book. The central character is a television weatherman. "We hope it might go into a tv series," says Willard.

Brinkley

David Brinkley, who has spent a lifetime in the public eye, and entirely in a favorable light, must be floored by the reaction to his decision to front for Archer-Daniels-Midland, a former sponsor of his Sunday morning tv show. Of course, he's in retirement from the show but some of the audience might be confused by his brief essays as spokesman for the agricultural giant. NBC rejected the ads – the fact that he was now a spokesman, not a commentator, was confusing, it said.

Brinkley said he wasn't doing it for the small fee he

is getting. He's a long time friend and neighbor of ADM's chairman.

Former CBS correspondent **Daniel Shorr** says he was offered more than \$1-million to be a pitchman for Avis Rent-A-Car, but refused. **Walter Cronkite** said he was offered \$5-million to do 4 car commercials. **Bernard Kalb**, ex CBS, said he got a 6-figure offer from Shearson Lehman, the brokerage firm.

But other tv news-people also have gone commercial, some during their news careers, some afterwards: **Chet Huntley** (American Airlines), **John Cameron Swayze** (Timex), **Ed Murrow** (Columbian coffee), **Linda Ellerbee** (Maxwell House coffee), **Kathleen Sullivan** (Weight Watchers), **Mary Alice Williams** (Nynex) and **Dick Valeriani** (Shearson).

The criticism may be strong because the Brinkley spots appeared on the same Sunday show he had hosted in the role of commentator. Marshall Loeb, editor of the Columbia Journalism Review, pointing out Brinkley was now a retired newsman, said "I cannot get morally outraged (over this)." But **Joan Konner** (exNBC), the publisher of the Review, said "I think its awful."

Seminars

Everybody at 30 Rock is going to class these days. They all attend mandatory "Integrity" seminars. Newspeople have also been reminded that they should use sound discretion when they offer anonymity to sources on good news stories. Is it legit? Necessary? Don't use it to make a story more dramatic. But if you promise anonymity, make sure the person or voice is not recognizable. And perhaps, more importantly, blot out identities on all tapes – in case some lawyer subpoenas the material at a later date.

QNBC

GE's CEO, **Jack Welch**, is very high on a project at NBC called "Six Sigma." WNBC staffers attended a January meeting in 8H for something called the NBC Quality Council, hence, the Q in QNBC. General Manager **Dennis Swanson** was one of the main personages on the tele-conference which was broadcast by satellite to O&Os.

Integrity, as we all know, is vital to an organization with such a high profile as NBC and we think, as retirees, it was something we did not have to be reminded about in the golden days.

Over-open Open Mike

NBC news prexy **Andy Lack** and **Roger Ailes**, formerly NBC/CNBC, etc and now Fox's news chief, have been at odds for some time (Lack was involved in getting Ailes pushed out of CNBC's top slot) and the animosity continued in the fight with Fox to get the services of **Geraldo Rivera**. Feeling his oats, Lack made a comment to



the NYTimes that ended "I am America's news leader." Boy, that was some boasting mouthful and you might



expect trade reaction. There was. Someone at the NYPost, like Fox, owned by **Rupert Murdoch**, doctored a photo to make

Lack look like Napoleon – right hand in tunic, funny hat, and his hand on a globe. It was distributed to broadcast row via E-mail and must have caused many chuckles.

Lack may have had the last laugh. He showed up at a Today show party wearing a Napoleon hat!

Birthday

That birthday party we referred to must have been the "Today Show's" 46th anniversary – 1952-1996 – and still going strong. I suppose a good many PN members once worked "Today." We did, **Roy Silver** did. I still remember Major's coffee and cake shop at the RCA Exhibition Hall, **Buddy Minnella** and **J.Fred Muggs**. (Anybody got some anecdotes for our next issue?)

Free Time for Politicos

NBC President **Bob Wright** says if the government requires the tv nets to give free air time to candidates during campaigns, the same rule should apply to cable tv. Wright made his comment after appearing before a presidential commission to determine if broadcasters owe the public something in return for the new spectrum they were awarded – a \$70-billion gift. Cable got zilch, and doesn't think it should give time or cut rates to campaigners.

Sports Replays

Boy! How do you make an umpire angry? Show a tv replay and clearly point how they goofed on a call. Happens all the time. Baseball's men in blue don't like it and the argument was sent to arbitration. Maybe baseball should go to the videotape on questionable plays.

Olympics

This was CBS's last shot at Olympic coverage until well into the millennium – NBC having sewn up deals for quite a while with the next 5 Olympics. But the guys at Black Rock raked in big bucks during the 17 day spree at Nagano, Japan. While NBC got \$400,000 per 30 second spot in the summer games at Atlanta, CBS got \$500,000 this time, and had sold out 97 percent of its commercial

time back in December. It expected the take to reach \$550-million. It paid \$375-million for the rights.

Atlanta rights costs NBC \$456-million but sales totaled \$680-million – more interest in summer than winter, and the live coverage times were more favorable for a USA audience.

Chrysler and Ford are each spending 50-million for spots! Boy that's a lot of Jeeps and Thunderbirds. One non-athlete whose future is sure to improve after the games is actor Fritz Weaver who taped about 50 commercials for the CBS theme spots "Share a Moment with the World."

Ad Alley

For eons folks in the ad business have been creating one minute spots, then 30 seconds, then 15s and now they think the time has come for 20 second spots. You can say a little more, catch some attention, and still keep costs down. One industry source, who checked 200 advertisers, says 45 percent of marketers will use that length within the next 10 years.

Bye Bye Football

NBC said its last hurrah to pro football with the Super Bowl game in January and now it will be a waiting game to see if the net was correct in not topping the CBS bid of \$500-million, as the price for one season of the madness.

The boys over at Black Rock have been hurting ever since Fox-tv grabbed a football package that kept the game off CBS.

NBC carried thirty-three seasons of pro football, dating back to 1965, when former tv cameraman Carl Lindemann, turned Sports Dept vice president, said "\$36-million for a five year football package? a staggering figure." It actually totalled \$8 1/2-million a year when you factored in division championships and all star games. Curt Gowdy and Paul Christman handed the announcing chores in those days.

Hmmm, maybe the show packagers should start another league to keep everybody happy, or televise Canadian football, which was tried some years ago. Other options? How about rugby? Its more exciting than football, continuous action with no constant hiatuses between plays.

Foot-in-Mouth-Boo-Boo

Don Ohlmeyer, NBC's West Coast president and the honcho for entertainment, was not optimistic about ratings when Cleveland Indians and Florida Marlins were matched for the World Series. He said he hoped it would end in 4 games. Critical reaction came swiftly and Ohlmeyer apologized. Well, Don wasn't all wrong. The first game garnered the lowest ratings ever, 11.3 and a 22 share compared with a high rated series game in 1991 which scored 21.7 with a 34 share.

Lows Instead of Highs

For quite a few years NBC has been king of the hill and perhaps some got lulled into the thought that it would go on forever. It hasn't. As all wise men (and women) know, no great run of luck lasts forever. Now, NBC has been reminded of that sad fact when it posted its worst ratings in more than a year early in December. Youth-oriented shows like "Jenny," "Men Behaving Badly," "Union Square," have fizzled. What's more, viewership is down 5 percent. So are they worried up on the 52nd floor? No! Financially, '97 was a record year – up to about \$1.2-billion in pre-tax cash – up about 20 percent!

Its not all bad news. NBC was number one for the season. "Nightly News" is still king, and "Today" is getting its best ratings in 50 years! Even **Jay Leno** sometimes comes close to the **Johnny Carson** ratings. And in the 18 to 49 year old age bracket NBC is numero uno. Nevertheless, its nice to be number one in ratings too. Our guess is, however, the stockholders will settle for number one in income.

Wonderful

Like the movie "Miracle on 34th Street," Jimmy Stewart's "It's a Wonderful Life," is now an annual fixture on the tube at Christmas time and it will be on NBC for at least 6 more years, through 2003. Produced in 1946, it will run in black-and-white, just as it was made.

Mister Dow & Mr. Jones

NBC joined forces with the venerable and authoritative Wall Street firm when they merged tv news business operations to cut losses both were suffering in overseas activities. CNBC will get the right to use Dow-Jones editorial material and DJ will take an ownership position in MSNBC Business Video.

NBC lost \$40-million on Asian and ETO business tv last year and Dow Jones did too. They each expect to turn a profit in about 2 or 3 years, after drastically cutting staff – NBC cut 150 in Hong Kong, 56 in London.

News Makers

Former NBC correspondent **Arthur Kent** (for specific identification – "the Scud Stud"), will be back on the tube



in America this summer when a proposed one-hour weekday morning international news show produced in England is shown in the U.S. Titled "WorldWatch," it will be offered free of charge to public broadcasting stations and the talk is that both

WLIW and WNET are interested. Corporate sponsors would pick up the \$8-10 million annual cost.

NBC fired Kent in 1992. He sued. There was a cash settlement and NBC made a public retraction about Kent allegedly refusing an overseas war assignment to Bosnia.



Steve Friedman.

Remember **Steve Friedman**, the "Today" show producer? (Who could forget him?) He's now vice president and station manager of WCBS, NY and also is in charge of the news and promotion departments.

Connie Chung is back at work – this time at ABC, where she is doing spots for "Prime Time Live." (I'll bet they are mostly on tape.)

Mike Schneider, who once anchored weekend editions of "Today," is considering a run for the U.S. congress in New Jersey.



Connie with an organ recipient patient on "Prime Time Live."

Johnny Carson has contributed \$one-million to the Carson Regional Cancer Center at his hometown, Norfolk, Nebraska.



Sentimental Johnny.



Fine Art - still going.

Art Linkletter, who hosted shows on NBC 30 years ago, came out of semi-retirement to assist Bill Cosby on a new kid series Cosby is producing – "Kids Say the Darndest Things." Linkletter, still chipper at 85, is on the lecture circuit and gives 70 talks a year! He did that Cosby-type show a generation ago.





"Meet the Press" host through 2004.



Penza comes home to NBC.

Tim Russert thought he had a scoop and announced that the new White House dog would be named Luke – same name as Russert's son. Wrong. The pup is named "Buddy." Said Tim, "I was barking up the wrong tree." Tim recently signed a new 7-year contract.

Ralph Penza is back at Channel 4 after 2 years of liberty. He had been at local for 15 years when they decided to dump him. Now, with **John Johnson** and **John Miller** gone, the station apparently needed a strong, familiar face. Penza will be a senior correspondent and substitute anchor.

Axer Axed

Remember the Saturday Night Massacre at CBS in October 1996 when vice president and GM **Bud Carey** (ex NBC) zapped 7 of the station's big name news stars including **Michelle Marsh**, **John Johnson**, and **Tony Guida**. It was part of Carey's effort to turn the station around. It didn't work and Carey himself was shown the door a year later.

To give you an idea of the thinking at CBS, **Peter Aronson**, a news producer, sent E-mail messages a few months ago to newspaper police and court reporters offering them bounties of \$500 to \$1,000 for news tips that get on the air! Additionally, CBS wanted stories that had not yet run in the papers.

Jonathan Klein, the president of CBS O&Os, acknowledged the plot but said he wished the language was not so blunt – "We will pay..."

Sounds like amateur night to us. Where did these execs get their journalism training?

The editor of the Pittsburgh Post Gazette pointed out that Newspaper Guild reporters have a contract with their employer that they can't work for a competing medium without permission. (NBC has a similar policy).

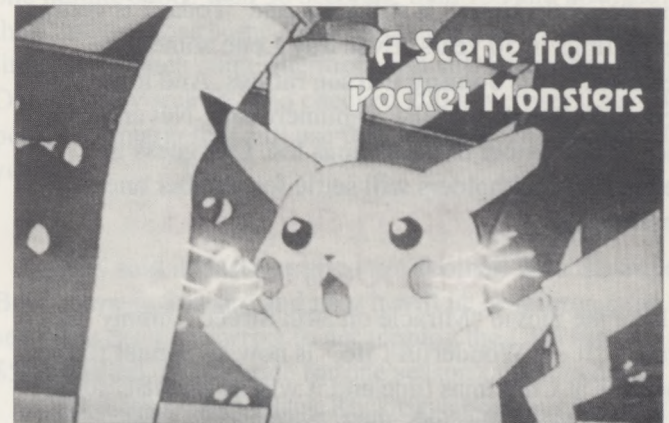
Guest Shot

A tv fan of the "Tonight Show," is dying to be invited on as a guest and has collected 95,000 signatures, he says, supporting his own-initiated invitation. Mike Babone, 34, is a Ft. Lauderdale mechanic and he collects the signatures everywhere he

goes – football games, shopping centers, etc. The show will have none of it for fear it will spark others to do the same thing.

Flash Reaction

In Japan last December, kids were watching an action-packed animated tv show when brilliantly flashing scenes came on the screen – part of the action – and hundreds of watchers went into convulsions, spasms, nausea, lost consciousness, or suffered other affects. At least 729 were hospitalized. The show, titled "Pokemon," (meaning "pocket monsters") is very intense according to one Japanese scriptwriter and demands extremely close attention to follow the action. Since the kids were watching



it at home, it was not a case of mass hysteria. The producers said they had used the same technique hundreds of times prior to the incident. Tv Tokyo later canceled airing the show on 30 other Japanese stations. The tv characters in the show were created by Nintendo.

One analyst said some people are susceptible to viewing rhythmic, strobe-like flashing lights which can disrupt normal brain functions.

Kids Watch

At home in USA a new survey says the average kid between the ages of 2 and 11 watches the tube for 312 hours per year – up from 295 hours during the '95-'96 season. Boys watch more than girls.

Courthouse

Actress **Hunter Tylo** was awarded \$5-million by a jury of 2 men and 10 women because producer **Aaron Spelling** fired her in 1966 when she became pregnant. One of the jurors was, herself, pregnant. Lawyers said Tylo's role called for her to be a "vixen, seductress, adulteress," and pregnancy ruled that out. Unfortunately for Spelling, Tylo showed up in court in mini skirts and didn't look preggers – although she actually is pregnant again with another child. Ironically, Tylo, who was supposed to perform in the tv show "Melrose Place," actually never appeared in the show.

The Web

Like every other business and promoter, WNBC has an address on the web. It is www.newschannel4.com. I'm always amazed to see so many stations promoting their web address. To me, it's a suggestion to switch from watching the tv to surfing the net and since you can't do both simultaneously, that can't improve ratings. I would think advertisers would complain.

Baseball's Saintly Joe

Nobody doesn't like Joe Garagiola. (If we may use a play on the Sara Lee cake slogan). Joe, who is always identified as a ball player, probably was less successful in that career than he was as a tv commentator and a "Today" show star, and is today as an after-dinner speaker. Sure, Joe had writers like the late Frank Slocum, for some of his air work and probably his book ("Baseball is a Funny Game"). But he has always been fast with a rejoinder. And witty as well as garrulous.

Well, that's too long a preamble to why he is in the spotlight again (as reported by columnist Ira Berkow of the NYTimes

recently). Joe is much involved in BAT, the Baseball Assistance Team. This is a group of former baseball players – the cream, DiMaggio, Ted Williams, Bob Gibson, Sandy Koufax, et al, who quietly have been raising money for the past 11 years to help players who were not as successful financially, and who are in need of assistance. BAT held its annual awards dinner in New York in mid-January.

Berkow also disclosed that Joe makes the rounds of the spring training camps in Florida (and probably in Arizona where he lives), telling young players that they are better off chewing gum than tobacco.

Fore

NBC seems to like those long-term sports deals. It has signed another 6-year deal with the U.S. Golf Association for the men's Open, the women's Open, the Seniors, and the Amateur through the year 2003.

Ahhhh-bout Face!

Cuba and the Catholic Church were expecting a ton of international publicity when Pope John Paul visited there, but just as he was about to arrive the Monica Lewinsky-Clinton love story broke in Washington. Brokaw, Rather and Jennings, newly-arrived in Havana, skedaddled off the

island to get back to the scene of the bigger breaking story. Old standby Brian Williams filled in for Tom in Cuba.

Super Bowl Original

How does an ad manager explain to the client that, sure, a 30-second spot on the Super Bowl program is worth \$1,300,000? Over at Pontiac, ad man Bob Kraut uttered these precious words, "There is no bigger media event, and people tend to pay attention to the ads." Hmmm, remember that bathroom break analysis they had one year up in Wisconsin when they measured the water consumption when the program switched from game action to a commercial break? However, some sponsors return year after year, including one 1997 sponsor we never heard of, Auto-By-Tel.

There were 59 30-second spots in January. Do you remember the ones for Oracle? Westin? Iomega? and Tobasco? Boy, you gotta shake a lot of Tobasco into Bloody Marys to pay that bill.

Where Are They Now?

Foreign correspondent Jim Bitterman now reporting for National Public Radio. We heard him checking in from Switzerland....Lisa Meyers, who pops up in many places, now heard again on NBC TV.

Miniaturization

These days miniaturization seems to be a keyword in industry. The thinking, we guess, is making it smaller is making it more convenient. Maybe. Anyway, miniaturization is the word that came to mind when we came across this photo we took of EJ-cameraman **Joey Gafa** on a visit to 30 Rock.

Some years ago during a NABET negotiation, the union objected to the idea of a "one man band."

Management prevailed (again), so all the nets went from a 3-man crew that included a cameraman, soundman and electrician – established back in the film days by IATSE – to a lone ranger. Today, special jobs might get more than just the versatile cameraman.



Joe, at home with a mike.



One man band Gafa

Could be 100 pounds of equipment in that shopping cart, too much for one guy to handle and watch over for theft. But that's the way they travel these days.

Joey, by the way, started out at NBC eons ago as a motorcycle courier, one of **Bob Butterfield's** cavalry of men on bikes.

End Piece

I had wrapped up the writing of this column when I thought about two items I had waste-basketed, articles about **Deborah Norville** (excerpt from her book "Back on Track") and **Jane Pauley**. (in USA Today). Then it struck me that here was such a contrast that I should share it with you since

you probably had not read both of them and both are part of our past.

Deborah, the femme fatale, swept into notoriety when she grabbed the "Today" show job held by midwestern, girl-next-door Jane. Pauley went on to other things – "Real Life," which bombed, and now the utterly successful "Dateline."

The "Today" debacle was the first bump in her career and she dealt with it. Despite the setbacks, Pauley says "I've never felt more committed, more competent, more confident." She has a famous husband, cartoonist Gary Trudeau, 3 kids, an elegant West Side apartment, and a \$2-million paycheck.

When Deborah was bounced from "Today" she too eventually landed in a popular tabloid, "Inside Edition." But in between she went into depression and we suppose the book is part of her recovery. She



"More confident" Jane.



Debra, "Back on Track."

explains her problems as "the curse of being a Type A personality," More, "On the surface I had it all: Park Avenue apartment, husband, famous, financially comfortable, but sometimes I cried and sat on the same sofa all day."

"We have to experience the downs of life to appreciate the ups. I'm still here. There's a sort of wicked pleasure in knowing I am on the screen there, still haunting those people who thought they'd never see me again. The future seems as limitless and as full of promise as it ever did. Maybe even more so."

Family Squabble

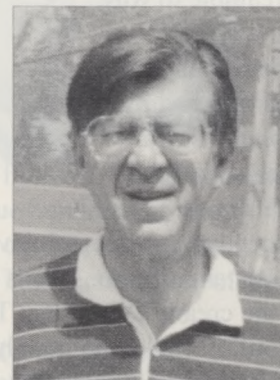
NBC, Time-Warner and TCI are the joint owners of the successful Court TV cable operation and, as you might guess, there's been a constant family squabble among those heavy hitters.

They decided to sell Court TV, then changed their minds. Now, the idea is to let Time-Warner run it with the other two laying down ground rules. How long will that solution hold up?

The only one smiling must be Steve Brill, who created the network and got all, or part, of the \$120-million the 3 others paid for it. Now, Brill has sold his minority interest in Court TV for \$20-million and has quit the operation.

Thanks

As usual, our thanks to avid newsman **Roy J. Silver** who reads everything that is printed about tv and its personalities and provides us with tons of raw fodder for this column. □



Roy J. Silver.

*Editor's note: The toughest job in writing is finding material for **PN**. If you have any story for this column kindly send it along to me, Dan Grabel, via E Mail: dangrabel@aol.com or by snailmail to: 31 Cohawney Road, Scarsdale, NY 10583.*



Photo by Herb Polak

Long Island mini-lunch group at Domenico's in Levittown, November 18, 1997.

Left to right:

BILL DELANNOY
SCOTT SCHACHTER
MAURY VERSCHOORE
JIM SUNDER
GARY IORIO
WES PAULSEN
MURRAY VECCHIO
FRANK GAETA
HOWIE ATLAS
HERB POLAK



We Get Pictures



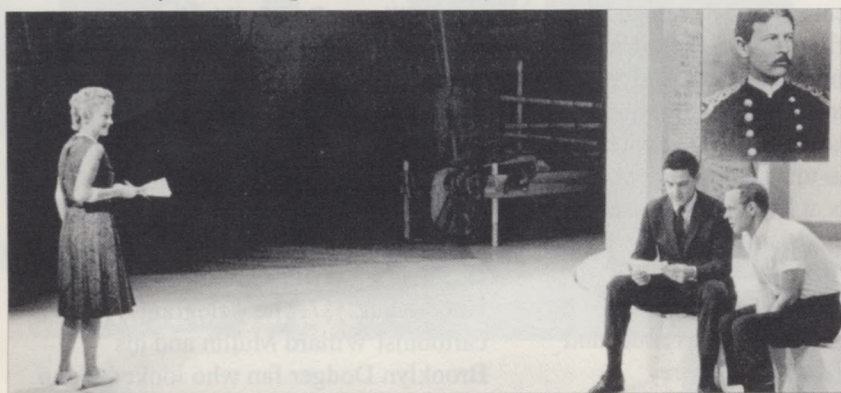
"EXPLORING" control - Hank Folkerts, TD; Craig Fisher, Producer; Lynwood King, Director; Lillian Russo, AD.



"EXPLORING" Christmas Show. Ginny Seipt and Skitch Henderson.



What's the joke, guys? Heino Ripp, TD and the late Carl Linemann, VP of Sports, at Sapporo, Japan.



The famous "EXPLORING" turntable in 8H. Host Dr. Al Hibbs, of Jet Propulsion Labs, and Director Lynwood King. That's Ginny in left field.



Sapporo Olympics, 1972. Two video tape wizards, Buddy Shadel and Murray Vecchio.

Pictures from Ginny Seipt's Photo Album



Thanks for the pix, Ginny.

WHATEVER BECAME OF...

by Dan Grabel

I was sitting in my comfortable wing chair at midnight earlier this year reading a collection of newspaper columns, the epitome of stuff banged out on the old Remington by famous scribes such as Walter Winchell, Mike Royko, Leonard Lyons and Herb Caen. Caen, has written a daily column since 1935 in one or another of the San Francisco papers. He titled one column "*Whatever Became Of....*"

It was inspiration for **PM** and our thoughts started to stretch back half a century and more. Here's our own New York collection of.....

"Whatever became of....."

Men who removed their hats in the elevator when ladies were present....Men who wore straw boaters in summer... Guys with those home made shoe shine boxes and the 25 cent shine....Those news kiosks run by vets which used to dot so many street corners....Orange Julius drink stands ...And NedicksChock Ful O' NutsSchraftsthe Horn & Hardart AutomatsSager's Restaurant, The Champlain and other, wonderful cheap bistros on 49th street ...Toffenetti's and Hector's in Times Square....Farm Fair, the vegetarian place....Brentano's Book shop, and Scribners....Roller skating in the residential neighborhoods on Union Hardware ball bearings....Kids' games: stickball, boxball, Johnny Ride a Pony, Three Steps to Germany, "Salugi," "Ring Alee-vio," and grabbing someone's cap and tossed it from teaser to teaser....And "Apple core, Baltimore, who's your friend?" (and you'd toss the apple core at him).

Whatever became of trolley cars, especially the open air ones that ran the rails in summer. And the 3rd, 6th and 9th avenue Els....The Double Decker Fifth Avenue Coach Company buses at a dime a ride....The annual walking race from City Hall to Coney Island, which was usually won by the same guy every

year....Traffic policemen atop little platforms on Fifth avenue..... Blackboard eraser fights in high school (now they use knives and guns)Those roll-your-own cigarette machines....Banko, Screeno, and Dish Night at Loew's Rio in Washington Heights....White flannel pants and Moe Levy, Howard and Crawford Clothes....dirmdls for the ladies and "The New Look"..... Saddle shoesPoodle skirts....Panama hats from Panama.....Bow ties, barely preserved by Irving R. Levine, Charles Osgood and Senator Paul Simon....Bobbed hair, and those barber shop poles with the red and white striped rotating device outside so you'd know it was a clip joint..... Chemist's shop with the red and blue balls hung in the window, indicating something.

Whatever became of Charles Atlas magazine ads and the skinny kid who always got beach sand kicked in his face until he finally took the Atlas mail order course and developed muscles to fight back.....Try that, Richard Simmons! The free elephant dung Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey occasionally offered when the circus was in town....The 50 cent hockey seats at Madison Square Garden....And Madison Square Garden, no matter where it was located — Madison Square, or 50th and 8th avenue, or 33rd and 8th avenue, and still named Madison Square Garden....And John Condon, the voice of the Knicks....The Polo Grounds, where they didn't play polo, but they did play baseball..... Cricket games played by West Indians in the shadow of that old ball park.... Beer gardens (really before my time)....Cavernous Luchow's Restaurant on 14th street, which sounded Chinese, but was staunchly German fare and a great place to go on a late date and enjoy coffee and a huge apple strudelSaturday night polo at the 7th

Regiment Armory on Park Avenue. We often impressed dates with a visit there. Cheap too.... Meyerowitz Opticians, which used to be all over townB.Altman, Best & Co., and Plummers.

Whatever became of hula hoops and Duncan yo-yos. Remember, they'd often have an oriental guy who was an expert with the device and he'd visit all the neighborhood candy stores to promote it in Springtime....The nickel ferry ride to Staten Island.... Steeplechase, the funny place, at Coney Island, and the clown who controlled a floor-level air blast which embarrassed the sweet young things who foolishly walked by unaware of coming exposure....The Herald-Tribune, Journal American, World-Telegram, The Sun, and PM....News buffs who waited at shops at 7:30pm so they could go home with The News and The MirrorColumnists reporting New York life and sports: Dan Parker, Jimmy Powers, Joe Williams, Red Smith, Jimmy Cannon, Winchell, Leonard Lyons, Pegler, Heywood Broun, Eleanor Roosevelt's "My Day," and actress Lorraine Day's column, "Day with the Dodgers." Her spouse was manager Leo Durocher....C.D. Batchellor's editorial cartoons in The News, including the safe-driving series "Inviting the Undertaker."The Telegram's cartoonist Willard Mullin and his Brooklyn Dodger fan who looked like a bum....Burris Jenkins in the Journal-American....also Bill Gallo in The News.

Whatever became of bar-keep Toots Shoor and his "Hi-yah, crum bun!"Jazz joints on 52nd street, Eddie Condon's in the Village.... Coney Island Velodrome where bikes raced around the steep, high walled track. Six day bike races at the Garden, with tired peddlers resting between shifts in little tents in the center of the track....Entertainment by radio's Easy Aces, Fred Allen, Fibber Magee and Mollie, Martin Block and his

Make Believe Ballroom. Bobby Benson, the kid's daily radio show....Everlasting Barry Gray, lately departed....The Lucky Strike Hit Parade.... And Monsignor Fulton Sheen and his mesmerizing eyes.....Father Devine and Harlem angels....The U.S. Navy and its bi-annual visit to New York harbor....Walgreen's Drug store, Times Square hangout for Broadway hopefuls....Cromwells at Rock CenterLewisohn Stadium concerts..... Painless Parker, the dentist....Vincent Lopez 'ork at the Taft Hotel and his devotion to "numerology"....Hop scotch, "knock-knock" phrases, Little Audrey nonsense3-card Monte sharks on Fifth avenue and along 46th street....Those guys who used to string folded paper dolls adjacent to a building and make you think there was some magic involved as they mysteriously danced up and down.... Street-vendors shaving ice from a block and sprinkling it with syrup....Hucksters with horse-drawn wagons selling fruit and veggies.... Used

clothing solicitors shouting "Hi Cash Clothes!"....

Whatever became of Adam Hats, Thom McAn and Buster BrownMacy's Red Star electric delivery vans...The Cunard, Moore-McCormack and Holland American line ships docking on the west side....The Dayline to Albany....The Fall River line to Boston....Ivy league crew races up the Harlem River with spectators aboard a slow moving railroad train pursuing the action.... Amateur night at the Apollo theatreHoboes who used to drop a string with stickum to pick up stray coins in sidewalk grates.

Whatever became of Union Square's orators....Guy Lombardo at Jones Beach.....Willie Sutton.....the Collier Brothers....Billy Rose.... Radio's Jimmy Fiddler and his Hollywood reports delivered at machine-gun speed....And why doesn't anybody say "Hubba-hubba," or "Yow-zah," like Ben Bernie, or

"Drat!" like Colonel Hoople in the comics, or "You cur!" or "How about that?" like Mel Allen, or "Holy cow!" like Phil Rizzuto, or "So Long until tomorrow," like Lowell Thomas, or "There's good news tonight," like Gabriel Heatter, or "Hop-scotching the world for headlines," like John Cameron Swayze?

Yeah, whatever became of them? □

Editor's note: Well before you got to the last line of this article you've been saying to yourself, "He forgot about da-da-da, and la-la-la." You can join in. So how about some contributions. We've got a second column in the typewriter with lots more, but no room this time. You must remember some things we've missed. Send them in to me,

Dan Grabel



Washington, DC
June 11, 1941
F.D.R. Inauguration



Phil
Falcone

Someplace in
Italy, 1943.

Heino
Ripp &
Phil.



1960 J.F.K.
Convention,
Los Angeles

Photo by Robert R. Jensen
Studio City, CA

nbc milestones

part two

1956 Chet Huntley and David Brinkley gain national acclaim for their election coverage and their subsequent *Huntley Brinkley Report*. Pre-recorded video-tape makes



first appearance on *The Jonathan Winters Show*. Nat King Cole on NBC is first major black artist to have his own network series.

1957 *Wagon Train* and *Goodyear TV Playhouse* debut. Jack Paar becomes host of *The Tonight Show*.



1959 *Bonanza*, first TV Western series in color, begins 14-year run.

1960 NBC initiates Presidential TV debates (*Kennedy and Nixon*). First *NBC White Paper* is produced beginning a long-running documentary series.

1961 *NBC Saturday Night at the*

Movies marks first regular network showing of theatrical feature film.

1962 Johnny Carson takes over as host of *The Tonight show*. *The Virginian* debuts as TV's first 90-minute series.

1963 NBC News devotes 71 hours to the assassination and funeral of President Kennedy. NBC is the first network to devote an entire evening to a news documentary a three-hour report on the Civil Rights movement.



1964 NBC presents first-made-for-television movie and establishes new TV format. NBC Sports televises the Tokyo Olympic Games.

1965 *Today* is the first regularly scheduled program to use communications satellite transmission. NBC's entire night-time schedule is now in color, another TV first. Bill Cosby becomes first black actor to have leading role in a series, NBC's *I Spy*.



1967 *Ironside*, popular detective series starring Raymond Burr, debuts.

1968 A revolutionary concept in comedy, *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In*, debuts.



1969 NBC News launches *First Tuesday*, the first NBC monthly "magazine" show.

1971 *The NBC Mystery Movie* rotating three different detective series, introduces Peter Falk as Lt. Columbo.

1972 Breaking new ground, NBC launches *Tomorrow*, a late-night talk program.

1974 One of TV's most successful family series, *Little House on the Prairie*, is launched.

1975 *Saturday Night Live* debuts, presenting 90 minutes of live sketch comedy.



1976 NBC's telecast of *Gone With the Wind* draws largest audience to date for an entertainment program.

1977 NBC movie presentation of *The Godfather* attracts 80 million viewers and more than 90 million people watch made-for-television epic *Jesus of Nazareth*. NBC wins broadcast rights to 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow (The games are later boycotted by the US after Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.)

1978 NBC's *Holocaust* miniseries attracts 107 million viewers and wins 21 major awards

1980 NBC's miniseries *Shogun* wins huge audiences and critical praise.

1981 Landmark series *Hill Street Blues* is introduced. The innovative police series is destined to become one of TV's most honored programs.

1982 The debut of *Late Night with David Letterman* introduces a new irreverent style of TV comedy. Other innovations are the debut of *NBC News at Sunrise* and *NBC News Overnight*. Debut of such quality primetime series as *Cheers*, *St. Elsewhere* and *Family Ties* makes NBC a favorite with critics

1983 NBC programs receive 133 Emmy Award nominations —most ever by one network — and 33 primetime awards, more than the other two networks combined Tom Brokaw takes over as the sole anchor of *Nightly News*.



1984 *The Cosby Show* debuts and rapidly becomes TV's most popular series. NBC carries first network TV stereocast: *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*.

1985 *Today* airs the first ever live telecast from the coliseum in Rome the first time American TV cameras have been allowed inside the Pauline Chapel, the Pope's private chapel. Pope John Paul II celebrates mass for the *Today* staff.

1985 NBC has its most successful season in 10 years with 12 of the top 20 programs, including *Miami Vice* and *Golden Girls*. NBC becomes the first commercial TV network to transmit all programming to stations via (Ku-band) satellite system, and the first to institute stereocasting.



1986 General Electric acquires RCA and becomes NBC's parent company. Robert C. Wright is named NBC's President and Chief Executive Officer. NBC News launches "Skycom," a domestic and international satellite system facilitating news exchange between NBC-TV affiliates

To be Continued



FOREWORD *by Russ Tornabene*

I have a friend here in the Midwest, a pioneer of television who worked at the first NBC studios in New York. I met him because our wives are active in a spiritual study group, on the lake shore north of Chicago. He is Reinald Werrenrath, Jr., known as Werry. I asked him for copies of photos of his days at work in 1938 (yes, 1938). Werry not only provided the photos but a narrative to go with them. So, instead of trying to describe what he saw and did, I am merely writing a foreword to his narrative, which he entitled "The Early Daze."

Werry is not only a pioneer in television. He was a builder and an architect who brought a creative dimension to the new medium. He designed and created studio lighting systems, special effects and animation techniques. Werry had seen theater productions as a young man. His father, Reinald Werrenrath (Sr.) was a successful actor and singer on the New York stage.

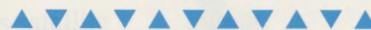
Werry was encouraged by his mentor, Capt. William C. Eddy, to try to use the new tool of mass communications, to experiment, to build, to design, to innovate, to invent. The captions for the photos tell you what that charge to Werry became in the studio.

During World War II, Werry served as an officer aboard an aircraft carrier in the Pacific. After the war, he joined Eddy at Chicago's W9XBK (now WLS-TV) to launch the B&K Corporation into broadcasting. Later, Werry accepted a director assignment at WMAQ-TV, where the fabled general manger Jules Herbuveaux was developing a line-up that included Garroway at Large; Kukla, Fran and Ollie; Ding Dong School, and Quiz Kids. Later, Zoo Parade with Marlin Perkins, then director of Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo, joined the prestigious list. (Zoo Parade became the Mutual of Omaha Wild Kingdom, but Werry did not follow the show into syndication). In 1956, Herbuveaux was General Manager when Channel 5 became the first all-color TV station in the world, and an exciting place to work.

Werry's record shows he set standards for coverage of the first live TV coverage in Chicago of Cubs baseball, college and Bears football, and golf. After he left NBC, he directed Championship Bridge, Championship Bowling, Let's Go to the Races, The World Series of Golf and Wonder Circus, all of which had long runs. Then, to round

out a long and successful career in visual communications, he worked for an educational film production company, making films that are still being shown.

I'm proud that he's my friend, that this year he and his wife, through whom I got to know him, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. His narrative about the "Early Daze" follows. (Russ was Vice President, Public Affaire, NBC News.)



The Early Daze

By Reinald Werrenrath

There are not

many people still around who worked in television in its earliest days, but, of course, that depends on what you mean by "earliest." How does 1938 sound? That was the beginning of studio television at NBC in Radio City, New York.

I was on the Page and

Guide staff, which at that time was kind of a training ground for those who aspired to work in radio. Some of my contemporaries on the staff who made it were Ray Forrest, Dave Garroway, Gene Rayburn, and if I remember correctly, Carl Reiner.

I was standing in the hall of the 3rd floor studios one day when a tall man (about 6'4") came out of an unused studio and said, "Hey, we need some help in here. Do you want to build some lighting units?" Knowing absolutely nothing about lighting units I, of course, said "sure."

The man was Bill Eddy who had been hired by NBC to create a lighting system for their new TV studio. So I went

into the studio and never came out.

We built big broad banks of lights using sockets mounted in electrical boxes and connected by short sections of electrical conduit. The largest ones, as I remember, were made up of 3 x 4 sockets making a total of 12. There was a 500 watt internal reflector



The single-six mounting.

bulb in each socket so these units were designed to put out 6,000 watts of light. We suspended several of them from a grid of pipes on the ceiling and added some small units on stands on the floor. We also made a couple of single units for special lighting situations. The idea was - don't worry

about artistic lighting on the set, just pour enough diffused light into the shooting area to get a picture.

One of my jobs was to take a direct reading light meter and check all these areas. We were told that the cameras needed 1000 foot candles of light throughout the set and that's what they got.

When those 500 watt internal reflector bulbs were pouring light onto the set they were also pouring heat, and many performers who were so anxious to try their skills in the new medium were unpleasantly surprised by temperature conditions.

One of the first dramatic shows produced in the studio was part of a Russian play titled "A Game of Chess." In it a Russian nobleman was confronted in his home by an anarchist who had vowed to kill him. The nobleman offered the anarchist a glass of wine in which he had secretly dropped some poison. Unfortunately the glass of wine had also been sitting under some hot lights for long enough to bring it to a boil. When the anarchist drank it, the death scene that followed had a realism that set new dramatic standards.

When I joined the engineering department, I also joined NABET as a lighting technician. I especially remember some of the engineers for their tolerance of the lowly greenhorn in their midst. In addition to Bill Eddy there was Ray Monfort, Rah Davis, Ferd Wankle and Al Protzman. The chief engineer, O.B. Hanson, took a keen and sympathetic interest in everything that was going on even

among the small fry.

The first producer we had was named Tom something, and he was a man of considerable experience in show business. I remember a squabble he had with one of the

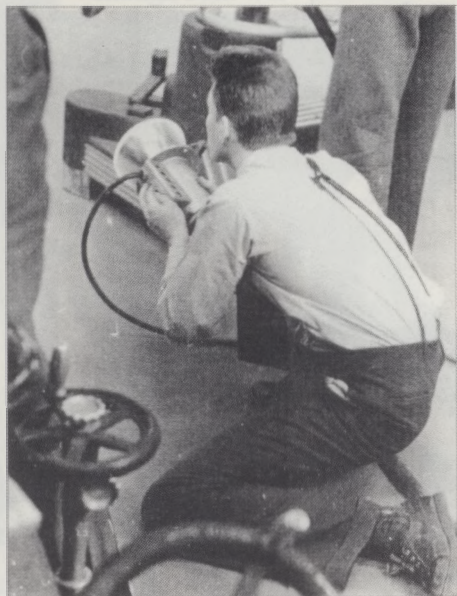
cameramen about proper framing of the picture on this man's camera. The optical system in those early cameras was primitive to say the least. They gave the cameraman a picture on ground glass that was upside down and backwards. With this he had to keep in focus and follow the action on the set. Think about what this involved. When he saw on his ground glass that a person was moving to the right he had to pan left to follow the action. Also, to provide head room on the shot he had the some problem. He had to do the reverse of what his eyes were telling him. The squabble lost its steam when the producer came down from the control room to the studio and looked in the camera.

Bill Eddy, Walter O'Hara, and I worked as a team on the lighting, but Bill was very creative and full of ideas, and this got us into things that went far beyond lighting. For example, somebody wanted to do a show that needed a scene of a city with a harbor full of ships. Bill, being ex-Navy, sensed the opportunity to do something really creative, so he volunteered our team to build a working model of a busy harbor-city scene. Of course, Walter and I knew nothing about model building, and I'm not sure Bill did either. But that didn't stop us and we were eventually able to create something that resembled what was asked for.

Early on we realized that the word "busy" meant movement, so Bill devised a track under the water of the harbor so that model ships could be seen moving majestically through it. But how to camouflage the track? Easy, put some paint in the water and make it opaque. How to mix the paint in the water? Easy, get a small turtle at the pet store, put some water based paint on his back, and let him loose in the harbor while we worked most of the night to finish the model. In the morning when the crew took their first look at it on camera they were surprised to see a new species of sea monster in among the ships. The model was eventually used on the air, but by then the monster had disappeared.

Once the production people discovered a creative team in their midst, their imagination took wings. We were asked to build a model of a frog animated so that it could open its mouth and blink its eyes. We started by using ping pong balls for eyes, which meant the model had to be about 18 inches long. To make a model that size takes a lot of wire coat hangers and paper mache (a polite name for wet toilet paper). The final result would not have compared with the Budweiser frogs, but it served its purpose.

We'd been in operation for about six months and had done some fairly complicated shows when the powers that make big decisions decided to schedule a demonstration for the Press. The same producer, Tom something, decided to do a murder mystery which would be repeated several times for a changing press audience in a specially equipped theater.



Reinald Werrenrath with a hand held flood — Studio 3H



Reinald seen on a TV receiver in O.B. Hanson's Connecticut home, sent as a test from the New York studio.



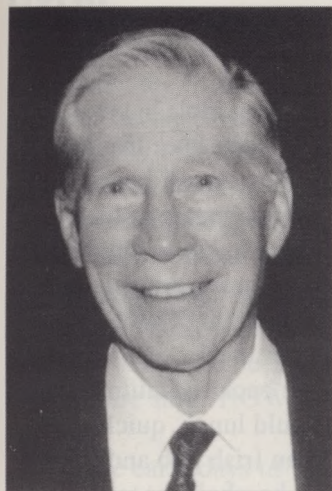
"Atmosphere" For Television - The development of television has created more work for those experts known in the radio world as "special effects" men. Whereas in radio broadcasting "atmosphere" has to be provided only for the ear, in television the eye must be satisfied as well. This picture taken in the television studio of the National Broadcasting Co. in New York, show steps in preparing typical visual effects for a television program. This particular program called for a scene showing a harbor with several battleships anchored off shore. Using much the same technique employed to build miniature sets for movies, the special effects men first set out to construct a small-scale replica of the harbor. In the later second stage of construction, a laquered surface will be made with the ships in place, and a shoreline with docks and buildings. The tiny motors which powered the ships had to work flawlessly, because there were no "second takes" in the live-only TV of the late 30's and early 40s. (picture and caption from Cleveland Plane Dealer Art Gravure Section, July 7, 1940. — Reinald is on the left.)

Once again the producer brought his plans for some complex close-up scenes to the creative team (us) to see what we could devise. It was decided to make a close-up studio in our workshop on the 8th floor where the special effects could be built and operated separately from the 3rd floor studio. The scenes would be live, of course, and would be integrated (smoothly) into the live show emanating from the big studio. Someone asked what we were going to do about a camera since all the studio cameras would be tied up. That was a stumper, but I've always remembered this moment because it really showed the caliber of the engineers working on this project. One of them turned to the other and said, "Joe, (I'm not sure of the name), can you build a camera for us?," and Joe said, "Sure." So we had our own camera and we built a table-top set up for a number of quick change effects – like an ink bottle being spilled, and an exploding something. I'd like to

say it was all integrated smoothly into the show, but there were a few missed cues and one scene where an unscheduled hairy arm (Walter O'Hara's) was caught on camera. Oh well, it was a mystery show and we felt that one more mystery (whose hairy arm was it?) probably added to the impact. The press gave its first look at TV a mixed reaction.

Bill Eddy (see page 31) was indeed a truly creative individual. Being part of his team both in New York and Chicago was an unforgettable experience, perhaps because everything we did was a "first." He had previously worked in the TV studio of Philo Farnsworth, one of the creators of the electronic television system. Bill's Navy training and submarine service had also given him a solid background in electrical engineering.

There were two devices that he developed in those early television days that I particularly remember. Strangely

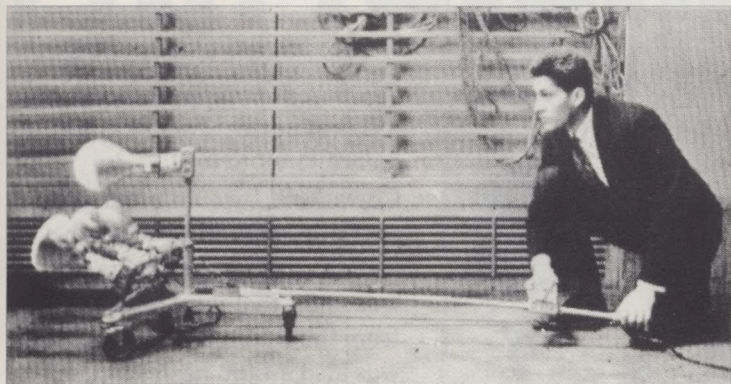


*Reinald "Weery" Werrenrath
in a recent photo.*

enough both were primarily optical devices. The first was a system for dissolving or superimposing between still pictures or titles using a half silvered mirror and individual light source controls. Titles or anything else could be superimposed on a picture and one of our most successful demonstrations was a scene in which we could, by manipulating the lights, add or subtract a bathing suit on a nude form. Everyone worried that this might

someday get on the air and eventually it did, but only during a test period when little or no audience was watching. Anyway nobody wrote a complaint about it.

The second optical device was called a "projection kaleidoscope." It was simply a kaleidoscope barrel, such as you would find in any toy store, with a projection lamp at one end and a projection lens at the other. The ingenious part was in the material (the kaleid?) that was projected and reflected into that familiar symmetrical pattern. We devised

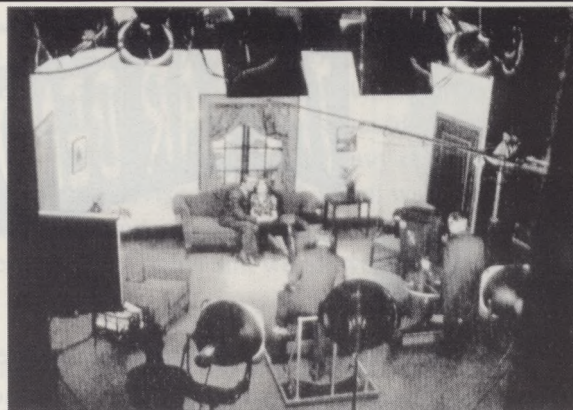


Portable foot light.

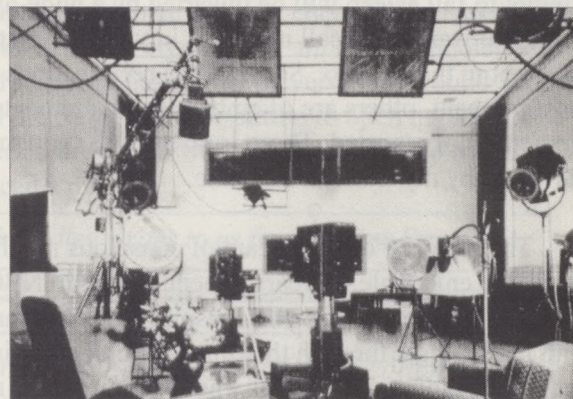
a continuously flowing pattern of changing shapes by first painting and eventually photographing them on 35 mm film. We used a motor driven sprocket wheel with variable speed control, and eventually developed a system in which the ever changing shapes could be synchronized to music. It was used effectively by several of the early TV producers in New York and was later used in Chicago as the central design theme of one of the stage shows at the Chicago Theater.

Bill Eddy's ingenuity and inventiveness were an inspiration to everyone who knew him. □

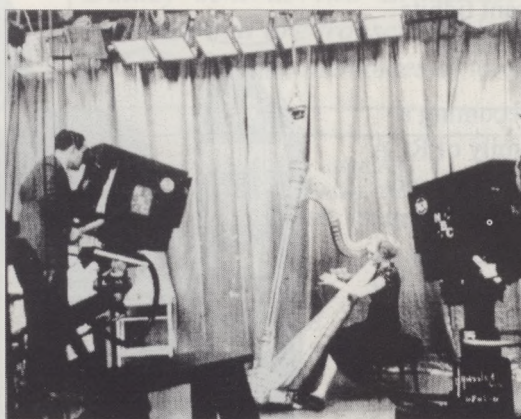
*1936
studio
drama.*



*Studio 3H
looking
toward the
4th floor
control
room.*



*Illumination
by a battery
of 500-watt
units.*



The floor broad.



The double three unit.

The six lighting pictures on this page and the one on page 26 are from an *RCA Review* article of April, 1940 which was a reprint of an article, *Television Lighting*, by William C. Eddy, originally published by the *Society of Motion Picture Engineers*, July, 1939.



THE EAR BENDERS

By Dick Dudley

Each evening when I collapse onto my bed, transcendental nostalgia arises and it is amazing how an attempt to fall asleep will be thwarted by a wide-awake brain that wants to recall moments in your life that you have put in the out-box. Some of the recollections are most pleasant, others are of embarrassing moments that are better not reported. There is no need for you to be burdened by my fluffs at the mike.

The majority of the stream of conscious recollections are of the enjoyable 45 years I spent at the old NBC. Even my REM nightmares are NBC inspired, dealing mainly with my struggle through the ruins of Pompeii trying to get to the studio on time. But what I want to do is mention some of the pleasant tidbits that arise from insomnia.

Of course, becoming a member of the family of RCA was a thrill for a 23 year old stage-struck youngster from Nashville Tennessee. Then to see, in person, the sounds that had come to him from his old Atwater Kent radio, was almost too much to bear. WOW! There is Graham McNamee, the pope of announcers rushing down the hall. He says hello to me, I am in the studio with Vaughn De Leath watching her play the organ. She is not as angel-like as I had thought and was, indeed, a bit on the plump side and too old for me but there she was in the living flesh. Mi-GAWD, I am in 8H attending a performance of the NBC Symphony and there in living glory is Maestro Arturo Toscanini turning the William Tell Overture into classical music instead of the theme song for The Lone Ranger. Fred Allen nods to me in the hall and I ride on the same elevator with Just Plain Bill

and John's Other Wife.

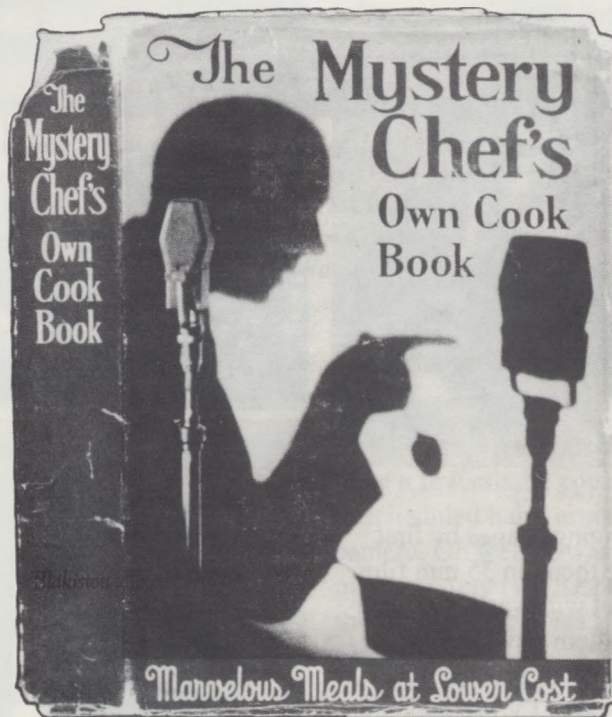
After a while, the luster of meeting idols in person begins to fade. No longer do I thrill when I see David Harum or Stella Dallas in the hall. The awe did come back when I SHOOK HANDS with Albert Einstein in his Princeton home. I was, assigned there to cover him being interviewed for The Eternal Light program. And sleeping or not, I will always remember the aura that flowed from the wiry hair of the first genius I ever met.

My bedtime memories take me back to Kaufman and Bedrick's Drug store where one could lunch, quickly, at the counter. Hurley's when it was an Irish pub and Connie would leap over the counter with a baseball bat to oust a miscreant. My mouth waters as I recall those wonderful ham steaks with poached egg that Sol prepared so well, The Martinis weren't bad, either.

I remember the fellowship, offered by the other announcers. Milton Cross stepped off of his dignity to tell me an off-color joke and Ben Grauer became my Guru and Mentor. He even gave me a key to his little office on the 4th floor to use as a lounge at night. It was

windowless, not as deep as a well, nor as big as a church door but did suffice.

Those early mornings when you could scrounge a danish and a cup of coffee from Major at the TODAY SHOW. John Curran and I would often go up to the Rainbow roof where he had discovered a place to get free gems that were leftovers from the Rainbow Room. There was also a little nosh shop about a mile down in the bowels of the RCA Building that could be reached only by using the delivery elevator by the side entrance. The experience of descending so deep into the catacombs was better than the food.



Well worn dust jacket from a prized possession.

NBC had class in those days. I remember black tie being worn after 6 o'clock. There was a small elevator in the once middle halls for the personal use of Directors, Engineers and Announcers to get to their studios without being tainted by rubbing elbows with the Hoi Polloi on the public lifts.

I float back to listen to Ted Malone recite a poem and to see what the Mystery Chef is cooking up, he never used his name because his mother thought it was unmanly for a man to cook. I cleared up the mystery and discovered that his name was John McPherson, the "MYSTERY" thing was also a gimmick, something that everyone in radio tried to have in those days. Cherio on his morning program kept cages of canaries in the studio and they chirped away, especially when Pat Kelly sang Irish ditties. That was before he became head of Announcers. Norman Brokenshire said "HOW Do YOU Do, how DO you do?"

In the early days of TV Bill Eddy (see page 28), an engineering marvel, cut Matisse like objects from white paper and placed them in a design on black velvet. He mounted a camera over them photographing them as he moved them slightly. By doing this he developed an abstract film which he synchronized to music and the few people with TV sets watched the result with fascination.

Bill came up with many other inventions, but he could never do anything about the hot lights which turned the studio into a sauna. Unfortunately, we could not wear bath towels in the studio, but had to wear heavy makeup and blue shirts which televised white. A towel was used to dry off after the show and you weighed ten pounds less. Today there are cool lights and we all weigh ten pounds more.

Just as I am stopping off in Yorkville with Ray Goulding, after a Bob and Ray show, to sip some German beer and munch on some pungent cheese and black bread, I finally fall asleep. I dream that I am in the Announcers booth and someone has changed everything around and I can't find the right switch or button to open my mike. I miss a station break. Oh well, let Don Pardo do it. He doesn't need a mike. □

Dick Dudley writes to us from Willow Street, PA.

MEMORIES

Along with his EAR BENDERS column, Dick Dudley sent us two Broadcast Operation Routines that are transcribed here. They will bring back some memories of long ago.

SUNDAY, JULY 6, 1952 TV BROADCAST OPERATIONS ROUTINE ISSUED BY ED COSGROVE

9:30 WNBT Chapel (3B)-L
9:45 Animal Fair (F&N)-L
10:00 Time for Adventure (F&C)-L
10:30 Childrens Hour (HUD&5E)-L
11:30 Skating Theatre (5E)-L
11:45 DiMaggio's Dugout (F)-L
12:00 Jon Gnagy (F)-L
12:15 WNBT Film (F)-L
12:30 Thru The Enchanted Gate (3B)-L
1:00 Let's Travel (5E)-L
1:30 Frontiers of Faith (CHI)-L&N
2:00 Hats In The Ring (CHI)-L&N
3:30 Man Who (CHI)-L&N
4:30 Fearless Fosdick (F&6D)-L&N
5:00 Zoo Parade (CHI)-L&N
5:30 Sky King (CHI)-L&N
6:00 Are You Positive (3B)-L&N
5:30 Cisco Kid (F)-L
6:30 Once Upon a Fence (PHILA)-N
7:00 Meet The Press (CHI)-L&N
8:00 Big Payoff (NA&F)-L&N
9:00 Goodyear Playhouse (8H&5E)-L&N
10:00 Summer Theater (3A)-L&N
10:30 American Forum of the Air (CHI)-L&N
11:00 Eleventh Hour News (B&F)-L
11:15 Texas Deleates Debate (CHI)-L&N
12:00 Eleventh Hour Theatre (5E)-L
1:30 Meet The Press kine (5E)-West Net Only

TUESDAY, JANUARY 4, 1955 TV NETWORK CENTRAL BROADCAST OPERATIONS ROUTINE (ISSUED BY FRED RAWLINGS)

7:00 Today (EXH) 5F
10:00 Ding Dong School 5F
10:30 Way of the World (8G) 5H
10:45 Sheilah Graham Show (HLWD)
11:00 Home (CHI)
12:00 Tennessee Ernie Ford Show (HLWD)
12:30 Feather Your Nest (HUD) 5F
3:00 The Great Gift (PHIL)
3:15 Golden Windows (B-67) 5F
3:30 One Man's Family (HLWD)
3:45 Concerning Miss Marlowe (A-106) 5F
4:00 Hawkins Falls (CHI)
4:15 First Love (B-106) 5F & 5FA
4:30 World of Mr. Sweeney (6B) 5E
4:45 Modern Romance (8G) 5E
5:00 Pinky Lee Show (HLWD)
5:30 Howdy Doody (3A) 5F
6:45 Esso Reported (B1&D-67) WRCA-TV 5F
7:30 Dinah Shore Show (HLWD)
7:45 Camel News (3A) 5F
8:00 Tums 1955 Musical Revue (Cent) 5H
9:00 Fireside Theater 5H-V
9:30 Armstrong Circle Theater (3B&3F) 5F
10:00 Truth or Consequences (HLWD)
10:30 It's a Great Life 5H-V
11:00 11th Hour News (B-67) WRCA-TV 5F
11:15 Steve Allen Show (HUD) WRCA-TV D-67
11:30 Tonight (HUD) 5E

Remembering Mel Allen

By Catherine Faulconer

When Mel Allen died in June of 1996, there was a column about him in The New York Times. The headline was "A Voice With Heart."

I had known the voice had heart, and not because I was a sports fan.

Back in the 1960's, at NBC Radio, I was assigned to write a weekly segment of the program "Monitor" for Mel. I was told my lack of knowledge about sports didn't really matter. We had a writer for sports news, the highly-regarded Roy Silver.

My challenge, was to develop material that would somehow add new dimensions to the Allen personality. (How do you improve on an original? I thought.)

Anyway, for the first Saturday in spring I proposed a feature based on the Rodgers and Hart song "Spring Is Here." The idea was to play an instrumental version of the ballad and Mel would read the lyrics over the music. He thought I was

certifiably nuts. But he liked me. We were, after all, fellow southerners. He agreed to do it. ("If you say so, darlin'.")

Imagine that voice of his, from the song's opening chorus words, "Spring is here, why doesn't my heart go dancing?" to the closing and most poignant words, "Spring is here, I hear."

I secretly believed Mel identified with those words, for they reflected the kind of man the songwriter was – lonely at the core.

When the music faded out, those of us in the control room were silent and stunned. Some of us had tears in our eyes. For someone accustomed only to being his wonderful cornball self, Mel had been downright eloquent, and wistful.

Our unspoken words and the expression on Mel's face said what he himself was too modest to say: "How about that!" His was indeed a voice with heart, one that echoes in my own heart even now. □



Spring Is Here

Once there was a thing called spring
when the world was writing verses
like yours and mine.

All the lads and girls would sing
when we set at little tables
and drank May wine.

Now April, May and June
are sadly out of tune
life has stuck a pin in the balloon.

Spring is here!
Why doesn't my heart go dancing?
Spring is here!
Why isn't the waltz entrancing?
No desire, no ambition leads me,
maybe it's because nobody needs me.

Spring is here!
Why doesn't the breeze delight me?
Stars appear,
Why doesn't the night invite me?
Maybe it's because nobody loves me.
Spring is here I hear.

From Rodgers and Hart
"I Married An Angel" – 1938.

Fleetwood Repays Verdi for All That Good Music

Insomniacs will remember the overnight hours when, just after midnight, the theme music, "Greensleeves," would ooze its way through the radio speaker to introduce Fleetwood on NBC's "Music Through the Night." Harry Fleetwood presided at that spot for many years, starting, I think, in the 1950s. A lover and singer of classical and baroque music, he did more than his bit for serious music last year when he contributed an impressive \$250,000 to the Parks Department of the City of New York to provide funds for refurbishing and maintaining a pocket-sized park called Verdi Square. You may well have passed it and not known its name, at 73rd street where Broadway meets Columbus Avenue, and there is, indeed, a 25 foot tall statue of Giuseppe Verdi looking down, probably with a pigeon on his head!

"I think of Verdi as a neighbor," said Harry, who lives just a block away.

Fleetwood, who all who attend the La Maganette luncheons know, towers at 6 foot 7, so he is hard to miss. He broke into radio in 1938 in Camden, NJ. He once sang

in English on a Paris radio station, and in French on a Philadelphia station. Applying for an NBC job, when the station must have been known as WEA, he beat out 1,500 smooth, baritone voices.

Harry, who has been a personal friend for eons, said he made the contribution to memorialize his brother James, a choral director and pianist who died at age 54 in a veteran's hospital.

Is Verdi his favorite composer? "No," said Harry, "Mozart is. But I've played all of Verdi's 28 operas (Aida, Falstaff, Otello) more times than I can remember."

(Dan Gabel —Tnx to Daily News for original info.)



Fleetwood, of the smooth baritone voice.



Helen McKinley (Tonning) sent us this picture. Gene Rayburn and Hermione Gingold pose with her outside the English Grill, where "Monitor" held its 10th Anniversary party (early 60's).

NEW MEMBERS

Peacock North

- Diana Butler — Irvington, NJ
- William Dwyer — Pebble Beach, CA
- Sid Friedman — Wayne, NJ
- Robert Garthwaite — Forked River, NJ
- Lillian Hickson — Jamaica, NY
- John Marelli — Basking Ridge, NJ
- Arthur Oppenheimer — New York, NY
- William Palmerston — Atascadero, CA
- Wesley Richards — Merrick, NY
- Robert Rooney — Sayville, NY
- Michael Silver — Hoboken, NJ
- Miriam Simmons — Mt. Vernon, NY
- Douglas Skene — Roslyn Heights, NY
- Joyce Werney — Yonkers, NY

KEN'S

KORNER



by
Ken Arber

STEVE ALLEN

Having worked on the "TONIGHT SHOW" with Steve Allen, I am always interested in what he is doing, especially while living here in Florida, where Steve comes to do a show in the winter season. Last year he worked at the South Florida Fair Grounds in West Palm Beach.

This year he was advertised for a show with Phyllis Diller. However it was cancelled, and Steve said he had nothing to do with the show being dropped, and he thought it was because of the low number of advance tickets sold. He then said he would promote his third mystery novel which has been published – a new 75th birthday special has been aired on local PBS station – and he and his wife Jane had just filmed an episode of the TV Series Homicide.

I remember Jane, when my wife Jaye and I attended a gathering at Steve and Jane's home in the 1950s. She was a very pleasant hostess. All the fellows working on the "Tonight Show" attended.

Steve was late arriving at the gathering, and Jane asked me if I would help her in the kitchen, slicing the ham and the turkey that she was serving, I said I would, even though I was unfamiliar with carving a turkey.

When Steve arrived, he immediately went over to meet Bobby Rosengart, the drummer in the orchestra, and Steve sat down at the piano and played and sang some songs, and a good time was had by all.

Recently when the Kaplan Jewish Community Center Off Broadway Series contacted Steve to do his 1982 comedy, "Seymour Glick Is alive, But sick," he agreed, and churned out some up-dated material, and new jokes.

According to a recent Guinness Book of World Records, Allen is the most prolific song writer in modern times with some 6,000 tunes to his credit.

JOE DICSO

Recently Joe Dicso, long time stage manager on many NBC shows, stopped in at Studio 6A, where Conan O'Brien's show emanates, and spoke with my son Glenn.

He said that if he had known I was going to write the piece about "Star-Time Kids Show," he would have given me some added information, that I could have used.

It seems that Joe was working on a show in which the now famous defense attorney Barry Sheck was being interviewed. I am sure you all remember him as one of the defense attorneys on the O.J. murder case. I believe it was called the Dream Team, consisting of Barry Sheck, F. Lee Bailey and Johnny Cochran. Barry was also the defense attorney on the recent British nanny case, I believe her name was Woodward.

Joe, in conversation with Barry, mentioned that he had only once before seen Sheck spelled the way he spelled it. Barry asked where that was, and Joe said quite a few years back the producer of the NBC show "Star-Time Kids" was George Sheck, who had to step in between two Star-Time kid's mothers who were having a "catfish" over a cameraman on the show. Barry said that producer was his father, and he remembers the show as a kid. I must admit that would have been a nice bit to the story, that appeared in Peacock North Winter edition of "Ken's Korner." The director was Ted Nathenson, George Sheck, the producer and I was the TD.

WESTINGHOUSE

From Associated Press

Westinghouse will lose its winner's appeal, and even its name when it sells its non-nuclear Power Generation Business to a German Competitor and sheds its three industrial businesses. Westinghouse will become CBS Corp., purely a media Company, by 1998.

The company founded by inventor George Westinghouse in 1886 who perfected the use of alternating current electricity.

This year the company said it will sell its lucrative Thermo King Transport Refrigeration Business for \$2.56 billion to Ingersoll Rand.

The Westinghouse name will cease to exist on the New York Stock Exchange and its stock will trade under the CBS Ticker symbol.

Stewart MacGregory

Around 1949 NBC formed a Psychological Warfare unit for the Army, similar to the unit I served in during the war. The unit was commanded by a Colonel Gruber, who was employed by the Daily News in charge of the printers. The Captain was Bill Bushkin an NBC employee whose secretary, by the way, was Doris Vetter, now the wife of the president of our NBC Florida Retirees group.

At a meeting of the warfare unit, all the members, officers as well as enlisted personnel were called for a 9 am meeting in downtown New York City. There were about ten officers and about 25 enlisted men. All the officers arrived on time, but several of the enlisted men were late, so Colonel Gruber and his assistant Mike McTigue decided to

find out the reason so many of the enlisted men were late. Each man questioned as to his excuse for being late, had a different but amusing story, such as, "I would have been on time, but my wife asked me to take out the garbage, and living in an apartment building, it required my going from can to can looking for one that was empty enough so that I could deposit the garbage, consequently I missed my subway." This went on for quite awhile, each story being more funny than the first, until Lieutenant MacGregory raised his hand. Mike McTigue, asked Lieutenant MacGregory what he wanted, and Stewart said he wanted to tell why he was late, to which Mike said that it was not necessary for officers to report lateness, but MacGregory insisted he wanted to give his reason, so Colonel Gruber said "Go ahead Lt." So Stewart then said, "Sir, I was busy selling my SUGAR PLANTATION THIS MORNING." This brought down the house and everyone realized the humor of Stewart's remark, even the Colonel broke out in laughter. The meeting then continued in a more realistic manner. I must admit for quite a while after that, I too used the expression, "I was BUSY SELLING MY SUGAR PLANTATION," whenever I was late for a rehearsal.

Stewart MacGregory was always good for a laugh, from his days as a sound effects man to his Unit Manager days.

Phil Falcone

I was shocked and saddened to learn of the death of Phil Falcone, as I am sure all his friends and fellow workers were.

I first met Phil, the day I was hired at NBC New York, on Friday the thirteenth, April 1934. He was in the outside office of O. B. Hanson, Margaret Primont and George McElrath. Mr. Bob Close sent me down to George McElrath, to be approved for employment.

I waited to be called into George's office, and looked at Phil and was hoping I would be hired and work for NBC like Phil Falcone, fortunately George McElrath approved me and I started that day.

I would meet Phil many times in the next few years, when I would visit control rooms for the studios, as he was a radio audio engineer. After a few years I too became an audio engineer and of course got to know Phil quite well as we were fellow radio engineers. Around the late 30's the military draft became law and Phil entered the Army in the signal corps at Fort Monmouth, NJ.

After he served 18 months he was released and returned to NBC, and once again we worked together. About six months or so after the December 7th Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, all formerly trained and released army personnel were called back to military service and Phil found himself back in the signal corps, but this time he was assigned to the film training division at the Astoria Studios in New York.

At this time I realized my draft number would soon be coming up, since I was classified as 1-A. I decided I might as well enlist and try and get into the signal corps at Fort Monmouth, NJ, since I lived in New Jersey. The signal corps should be better than the infantry and Fort Monmouth was known as the country club of the services. With this in mind I called Phil at the Astoria Film labs for information on how I could enlist in the Signal Corps. His help was invaluable to me. He told me to see Major Frances (Fred) Shiedel of NBC Master Control, who, with his First Lieutenant Hummel, was in charge of the Fort Monmouth signal school. He arranged for me to get enlisted right away. This took three days and eventually I became an instructor in the school, for which I owe Phil a thanks. I might add Major Shiedel's sergeant was Sergeant Wing, whom I remembered as an elevator operator at NBC Studios in New York.

After the school, Major Shiedel assigned me to the 1st Broadcast Station Operating Detachment as a Master Sergeant and I eventually wound up in a psychological warfare station broadcasting in Algiers, North Africa.

One day, to my surprise, who showed up at our studio in Algiers but a young Lieutenant in a shiny new uniform? It was Phil Falcone. He stopped in to visit with us NBC engineers who were running the studio. Walter Brown, was in charge, a former studio engineer and field supervisor, Vic Tervola, recording supervisor at NBC NY, and Jack Anderson, sound effects engineer and myself.

After the war we all returned to Radio City. When TV started up, Phil transferred from an audio engineer in radio to an audio engineer in TV. I followed. When Phil left the "Who Said That?" show, I was assigned to replace him. It was a panel show with many famous guests. It was my first big show and Phil showed me all that I needed to know about that show.

When I retired in 1974 a party was held at the "Down Under" restaurant for Jack Irving and myself, Jack Kennedy, VP of Engineering, said, "Ken, when Phil Falcone retires, I will retire also, as I remember you both breaking me in to become a studio audio engineer."

As you can see Phil was liked and admired by all who knew him – management, the union, clients, and talent.

We all shall miss Phil. May he rest in peace. □

P.S. The first fan letter I received for writing the "NABET Newsletter" for Local 11 in New York, was from Janet Falcone, Phil's wife. I sure appreciated it. Ken

Ken and Jaye Arber live in Boynton Beach, FL.

Don't forget to make your reservations for our May 17 La Maganette luncheon.

How NBC News Gearing Up for JFK's Fatal Day.

by Jim Holton

Radio newsman Jim Holton retired from NBC in 1981 after several decades of service in important jobs. In the 1950s and 60s the aural medium was a strong competitor of the fledgling tv industry. "Monitor," for example, NBC's Friday to Sunday radio show was hosted by personalities such as Dave Garroway, Morgan Beatty, as well as major names in Washington and Hollywood. And when big stories broke, NBC Radio spent big bucks to cover them. One of the biggest came along in November 1963 while Holton was News Program manager (he retired as a VP for radio news).

Jim's big interest these days is the history of American railroads in their heyday and that's reflected in his personal letterhead which carries a drawing of the Reading & Schuylkill Valley RR. He lives in Reinholds, PA. near retiree Chet Hagan. (Dan Grabel)



I was news program manager for net radio in November 1963, and was returning from lunch with my boss, Russ Tornabene, when I noticed the "beeperless" phone off the hook in the radio "fishbowl" adjacent to the 5th floor studio elevators. Also, there was not a soul in the room, which seemed very odd, since there should have been an editor and a tape engineer there. Curious about it, I went in the room and, hearing a plaintive voice coming out of the phone, picked it up.

"Thank God," said the voice, which it turned out belonged to Robin MacNeil, who was covering JFK's trip to Texas for TV and radio. He explained with some agitation that whoever answered the phone had put it down and simply disappeared. "Jesus, Jim," he said, "somebody shot at Kennedy and I'm ready to do a spot. I jumped off the press bus and I think I'm ahead of everybody else with this."

While I was listening to MacNeil, the tape engineer, Henry Huestis, magically appeared and indicated he was ready to take in the spot.

"Shots were fired as President Kennedy's limousine drove through downtown Dallas today.....," the spot began. MacNeil went on to report that he did not know if the President was hit but that the car had sped off at great speed for a hospital, leaving behind a scene of chaos and panic. Within seconds we had reracked the tape and at 1:40pm got on the network with a bulletin hotline.

There are conflicting claims about this, but I am convinced we beat everybody on that report, which was the first word about the shooting to reach outside Dallas (except for the military, of course). Merriman Smith, of UPI who was the wire service pool reporter did get a message via radiophone to the Dallas UPI bureau apparently a few minutes earlier. The UPI desk man who took it in called the police to verify the report before they did anything about it.

MacNeil, when he got off the bus, had run into the nearest building to find a phone. It just happened to be the Texas Book Depository Building. As he entered the lobby a rather agitated young man in shirt sleeves had pointed to a nearby office where he could find a phone. And MacNeil later told me he believes that was Lee Harvey Oswald.

Getting that spot on the air was the start of an agonizing 60 minutes for me as I took over the network, with Morgan Beatty and Ed Newman doing the air work in studio 5C and Bob Goralski chiming in with Washington reports. MacNeil by then had gotten to the Parkland Hospital and was feeding phone stuff to TV. At 2:34pm President Kennedy was confirmed dead. Looking back on it, that was the longest hour I've ever endured in my life.

Somebody came into the operations room and said I was to go to Bill McAndrew's office for a meeting in five minutes. I turned the desk over to Bill Fitzgerald and, before going to McAndrew's office, picked up the phone to call my wife. When she answered, I tried to say something and found I could not speak. The enormity of what had just happened had simply overwhelmed me. All I could do, I admit, was weep for a few moments.

McAndrew had pulled together a sort of news task force which would fly to Dallas as soon as possible. Somebody in Transportation had done some remarkable work so that a city bus would be outside 30 Rock in a half hour to take us to Idlewild (obviously, it had not yet been called JFK) for a special Pan Am flight to Dallas.

When we got on the bus there were seven of us: Frank Jordan, Washington bureau chief who was in town for a meeting; Ed Newman and Herb Kaplow, correspondents; Frank Kelley, veteran Herald Tribune editor who was a kind of floating news manager for NBC News, myself and two others whose identities I've forgotten. Like much of what happened that fateful weekend, the bus ride was eerily unforgettable. People passing on the street looked normal, seemingly unconcerned – or perhaps unaware – that a historic tragedy had befallen the country. That was spooky.

Kaplow had a portable radio with him and its erratic reception only allowed us to hear fragments of the continuing coverage of the story. At one point there were reports that Lyndon Johnson had suffered a heart attack, might even be dead!

"If he goes, who's president?" someone asked. After brief discussion it was agreed that the Constitution said the

third person in the line of succession was Speaker of the House.

"Oh my God," was the reaction. "John MacCormack!" He was the aged Massachusetts political warhorse whose best years had been long past. The mood in the bus changed from sorrow to shock and alarm. Of course, it turned out that those were just rumors.

After we were airborne in that huge Pan Am 707, the pilot got word that Air Force 1, bearing the body of the late President and the newly sworn in Lyndon Johnson had departed Dallas for Washington, and we changed our destination accordingly.

Since the plane carried only us 7 NBC passengers, most of us hung around the open door of the cockpit and heard a frightening exchange as we cruised over eastern Maryland when the pilot asked for clearance into National Airport.

After explaining our purpose, the pilot received this unequivocal response from an obviously overwrought air traffic controller:

"Pan Am 672 (or whatever). Clearance to National Airport is denied. You better get the hell out of the Washington air space until we get a very, very important aircraft on the ground, or you're going to be scattered all over Maryland."

Well, a little later AF-1 was on the ground at Andrews and we were permitted to land at National. We all went out to Nebraska Avenue and prepared to go to work. The Washington bureau staff, however, had things well under control and we were advised to get something to eat and try for a good night's sleep at the Statler Hotel. But first I had to check in at a hastily organized pool meeting at ABC's Connecticut Avenue bureau downtown. That meeting, with revolving players, would continue, almost without pause, for the next three days as funeral plans were worked out and the networks and the phone company, with advice from the White House, orchestrated one of the broadcast industry's most remarkable performances ever.

Later, Frank Kelley and I left WRC in a rental car for the hotel, but, moved by the day's momentous events, decided to detour via the White House and Capitol Hill on our way. Again, as on the way to the Idlewild Airport in New York, we were struck by the fact that, on this briskly cold, clear night, there were many people on the streets, but now there was something different about their manner. They seemed to be moving aimlessly, except along Pennsylvania

Avenue at the White House where small knots of people clustered silent and unmoving outside the big black fence.

Lights were on throughout the Executive Mansion, but our focus was on the tall windows in the East Room where we knew the President's body soon would be installed to lie in state. On Capitol Hill, too, there were muted signs of intense activity as Congress prepared for its role in the forthcoming funeral events. We finally got to our hotel, but most of our group confessed the next day that none of us got much sleep that night. Next morning I



Jim at the 5C News Editors desk.

joined Ed Newman for breakfast in the hotel's dining room. As soon as we entered the room we both were aware of an incongruous element in the atmosphere. In the background, loud enough to be all too obvious, a Muzak machine was pumping out bright show tunes on the loud-speaker system. As soon as we were seated, an annoyed Newman asked the waiter to bring the manager, to whom Ed, in a controlled fury, suggested such music was hardly appropriate during a time of national mourning. The manager muttered some incoherent and less than agreeable excuses. With that, an elderly gentleman at the next table joined in the protest in no uncertain terms. He was George Meaney, the imposing president of the AFL-CIO. The Musak was turned off.

I have one other personal recollection of that unforgettable weekend. I spent the next three days supervising the radio coverage from the basement studios of WRC. My anchor man for most of the coverage was Russ Ward, a veteran radio newsman whose calm, thoughtful ad libs perfectly fit the nature of the event we were covering.

On the last day, the day of the funeral, after the moving sounds of taps echoed the last notes at Arlington Cemetery, Ward prepared to go into a prepared closing that would wind up four days of unprecedented, non-stop coverage of one of the Twentieth Century's most portentous events. I turned away from the studio for a moment to gather my notes and suddenly became aware of that terror of radio broadcasting – dead air. Looking into the studio I saw Ward trying to speak, but nothing came out. As had occurred to me three days earlier, the enormity of what he had been reporting had caught up with him. After what seemed like an eternity, Russ pulled himself together and was able to get through his prepared closing.

Like everybody else who took part in that remarkable four-day performance, it was a time I will never forget. □

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"SAY KIDS! WHAT TIME IS IT?"

HE wore a plaid shirt, bluejeans, and cowboy boots. Forty-eight freckles – one for each state then in the union – dotted his face. Fifty years ago this past December, Howdy Doody began his 13-year run on television. He would become the first children's TV superstar.

◆ **DOODY CALLS.** During the show's heyday, almost 30,000 pieces of mail arrived each week addressed to Howdy. In 1948, he ran for president and received over 1 million votes – more than independent candidate Henry Wallace. The studio audience, or "Peanut Gallery," seated 40 children. Ticket demand was so strong that pregnant women requested seats four years in advance for their unborn children.

◆ **CHIP OFF THE BLOCK.** In 1950, Howdy-licensed items, including comic books and records, earned \$15 million, or \$100 million in today's money. Three Howdy albums were simultaneously on the *Billboard* Top 20 list. He became NBC's top moneymaker. By 1953, Howdy's daily audience was 15 million, more viewers than Barney currently attracts weekly – and four times more American households now have television sets.

◆ **TIMELESS.** There were three Howdy Doodys. The original resides in a display case in "Buffalo" Bob's North Carolina living room. Twin brother Double Doody is in the Smithsonian. The third, Photo Doody, used for publicity pictures, recently sold for over \$113,000. □

Lee Nerile, *US News And World Report*, December 15, 1997.



Irv Sobel (NY film engineer) brought this article to our attention and writes: "The film crew that added the commercials and film segments on Howdy's 'Scope Doodle' were myself, John McGinty, Larry Dworkin, Walter Miller, and Harold Mofsen."

Don't throw too many ripe tomatoes at the CBS eye. For the next dozen years NBC Olympic coverage is going to be the target of the same journalists who have taken CBS over the coals for its production of the Nagano games. Could be some CBS Sports executives will remain holed up in the mountains of Nagano. Might be safer than coming back to Black Rock.

We've scanned a bit of the comment and we like the smart alecy remarks of Tony Kornheiser in the Washington Post. To wit: "CBS is showing so much tape you wonder if Rosemary Woods is directing." And, "If ice dancing is a gold medal sport, so are the Spice Girls." And "We are a culture of immediacy. CBS is sitting on the results like its hatching eggs."

With a 14 hour time delay – Nagano vs. New York – CBS knew it would have problems. Then the weather, phew. Blame El Nino! Blame Nagano's location on an island known for variable conditions. Hey, they even thought they might have to truck in some snow before northern Japan got socked with storms which wiped out programming.

And the ratings! Oy! CBS had good numbers in Albertville and Lillehammer. But they took a slide at Nagano, 12% behind Albertville, 36% behind Lillehammer. CBS guaranteed advertisers 19.6 ratings/27 share. It was closer to 16.7/27 share. That could have meant some "make goods" to placate the time buyers.

Did you think there were a lot of commercials? How about 19 minutes every hour. John Krimsky, the U.S. Olympic Committee's managing director for business affairs, complained. Some nerve. If the International Olympic Committee hadn't demanded so much dough for the tv rights, maybe we'd have seen more sports less commercials. People who watched Canadian tv said it was very good, so the pictures were there. NBC, you are fore-warned.

A Miami Herald columnist said CBS should have sent in Dan Rather. Rather? What's his E.R.A.? He also said there was no Nancy-Kerrigan-Tanya Harding incident. Hey Nancy, offer her the other knee. This guy also wanted more standby human interest personality pieces. He obviously has no idea what it takes to produce a tv feature.

CBS OLYMPIC

CBS Gets a Black Eye at Nagano

By Dan Grabel

Its hard to blame CBS for the lack of well-known American winter sports stars. Most winter sports get little press coverage, so how can viewers be aware of Picabo Street, Tomy Moe, Tara Lapinski, Nancy Kwan, and the guys who made that

sexy two-man trip down the luge run?

CBS took a lot of flack, too, for not tearing up the show routine when skier Hermann Maier – the Austrian who had that flying spill and came back to win two medals – made a gold medal Super G run 20 minutes into the broadcast. CBS saved the tape for the next day. However, they did cover one Picabo Street run live, and another was delayed 23 hours.

There also was a lot of criticism about CBS on-air people wearing the Nike swoosh logo on their parkas. Maybe we have to get used to that? These days you see commercial logos everywhere. Ever see a closeup of a football helmet with the manufacturer's name clearly in view? Or a world cup skier emblazoned like a billboard! Hey, how about an Indy 500 race car? Or your favorite golfer?

The Olympic people, however, managed to put those bibs with an Olympic logo on everybody, so it was hard for others to advertise on Picabo's chest. Except for the Phoenix clothing, which put their name on the collar, or down the sleeve below the reach of the Nagano bib.

The commentators: I was exasperated by Scott Hamilton's uncontrolled, giddy, elation every time a skater did a triple something. Certainly, he had watched them many times in practice sessions, so he knew what was achievable. Tim Ryan did not add much to the skiing events. I know he's a Canadian and probably a good skier, but for comment all he could tell us was the skier's time going through the "vacuum cleaner," or some-such critical place on the slope. Jim Nantz held my interest.

So in the end, did CBS attract enough 18 to 34 year olds? And will they stay with the big eye through the next rating period?

Now, NBC becomes the next punching bag and let's hope Bob Wright and his producers study the mistakes and avoid most of them in the next venue, as we say in Olympic-speak. □

DENVER STATIONS FACE RENEWAL FIGHT

By Dan Grabel

WHEN was the last time a television station was really worried about renewal of its FCC license? Not too often. But in Denver, a media-watch group wants four stations to reduce crime and violence news as a condition of renewal and this could be a national test case.

The stations involved are the three nets (KUSA is the NBC station) and one independent. They're not too anxious to comment on the fight but the CBS news director said "We absolutely run all our stories through a filter."

That may be hard to swallow since KCNC (CBS) had the second worse record according to Rocky Mountain Media Watch. Fifty-four percent of its news coverage concerned crime, violence, terrorism and war. The NBC

station had the least offensive record, 45 percent.

The crime and violence stories may be legitimate gripes, but how do you overlook terrorism and the occasional war? One defense for the stations is that the FCC no longer sets a criteria for stations to meet.

The media group, however, says the stations are a threat to public safety. It wants more coverage of the environment, education, arts, poverty, children and health. All laudable, possibly dull, and defiantly more work than pointing a camera at an ambulance, a fire, and a "perp."

On a national basis, Denver is no worse than the rest of the country. The AP says a University of Miami survey found twice as much crime news as political news on local tv, and 15 times more crime news than education news.

Anyone watching local tv can easily come to the same conclusion as the watch dogs. Maybe all we have to do is upgrade the intelligence and interests of the news directors and station managers. And get a filter with smaller holes for that CBS guy in Denver. □

A Rogues' Gallery of Voices

Yes, they were rogues, those golden-voiced staff announcers of the 50's. At least they were roguish enough for NBC to keep a log of their on-air misdeeds. It surfaced a few years ago, along with a collection of 8 x 10 glossies of the faces the public never saw, but that many of us knew well.

Here are some of them, with excerpts from that black book of errors.

Berlv Pfi70r



Bill Rippe...

6 am com'l did not go out due to non-arrival of anncr. WNBC locals given by Ray Goulding.



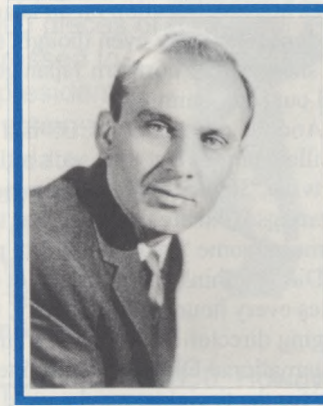
Roger Tuttle...

During NBC News, misread clock, gave close cue at 12:58:25. Realized error and continued to 12:59:25.



Mel Brandt...

"All Aboard For Adventure" not on due to anncr and ET not arriving. Had 30 sec. dead air, then switched to Net prm.



Howard Reig...

12mid WNBC news cancelled, WNBC took net news, then "Music Through the Night" opened by one of the office staff. Annrc arrived 32



Wayne Howell...

Refused to stay when Collins ill. McCord called in on day off.



Harry Fleetwood...

No log page. (Either someone filched it or he was perfect.)



Fred Collins...

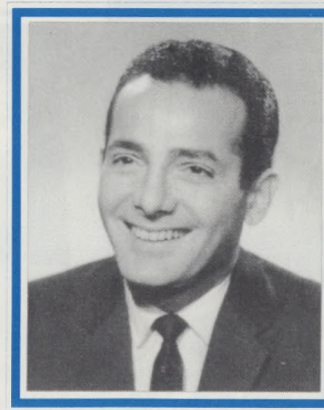
WNBT no audio on stn brk com'l, annrc absent making phone call.

**Gene Hamilton...**

Another missing log page.

**Ray Barrett...**

World News Roundup newscaster upcut due anncr's slow switch after cutin.

**Jerry Damon...**

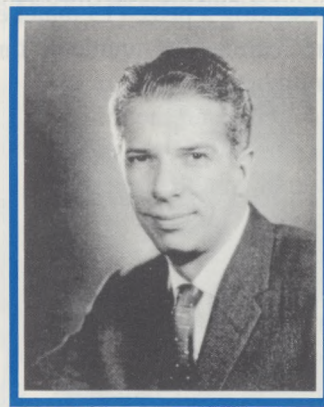
Yet another missing log page.

**Bill McCord...**

Due to anncr's slow switch to nemo for "Playhouse on Broadway" first 2 sec of pgm was lost and came in on "...adies and gentleman."

**Dick Dudley...**

Refused to stay after 11:15 when Collins called in ill. McCord had to be called in on day off. (same story as Wayne Howell!)

**Vic Roby...**

Annrc took the 1-minute Robert Hall com'l to studio instead of regular 20-sec. However ET used was faded out on natural pause in music.

**Bill Hanrahan...**

No automatic chimes due to switchbank error, annrc failed to ring manually.

**Don Pardo...**

WNBC double audio 4 secs over Ehlers coml. (Pardo had bad fall necessitating 3 stitches in arm.) (some excuse!)

**Art Gary...**

WNBC local & promo annrc did not get on air due to annrc's late arrival in 5X studio, resulting in 25 sec dead air.



Concentration

by Norm Blumenthal

Concentration went on the air in August of 1958, and we did it live from Studio 3A. The concept was based upon a card game called, "Concentration," in which all 52 cards in the deck were placed face down on a table. As each player turned a card, both players would try to remember where they were. The player making the most matches, was the winner. In our TV version, we used only 30 cards, each representing a prize (15 matches). Our electronic game board featured 30 numbered three-sided boxes (one side for the number, another for the prize name, and the third for a part of the rebus puzzle (a combination of pictures, letters and words, example: 2 Bee Oar Knot 2 Bee, "To Be or not to Be"). Contestants making a match, got the prize credited to them, two parts of the puzzle and the opportunity to solve it. If they did, they received all of the prizes credited to them. It worked great in dry run-thrus, but we had no idea of how anyone's mind could work fast enough, under pressure of live TV, to pull this off. So, we made the puzzles as simple as possible. That was our big mistake. People were solving the puzzles so quickly we had no game, it was dull, and unchallenging. It went so fast, no one could rack up enough prizes to make it exciting. We had created a bomb! We were in deep trouble.

Before the premiere, we had prepared a few hundred of these "easy" puzzles. What to do? All that work had to be trashed. New, harder puzzles had to be created and fast. Problem was, we only had less than 24 hours to do it for the next "live" show. Rushing back to my office, I had to come up with new puzzles I prayed would work. My graphic artists worked through the night, and just about finished by airtime. Not knowing the degree of difficulty necessary, I could only prepare for one show at a time. Each day I learned something new, and we sweated out the

foreboding daily deadline. Fortunately, by Friday of that first week, I had a better idea of what would work. This was a strip show (daily, Monday thru Friday), so we were forced to work round the clock, all weekend long, to get ready for the next week's shows. The next several weeks remained as hectic, until we built a backlog of puzzles to sustain the daily production needs. It worked! Most of the engineers and stagehands liked the show, and felt it was good enough to last at least thirteen weeks. They were right, it lasted

over thirteen years, actually, fourteen and a half years on network.

But, that wasn't the only problem we faced. This was a time that game shows were teetering on the brink of obsolesce. Notice, I said, 'game show,' as opposed to 'quiz show.' None of us wanted to be associated with the giveaway shows that were not only giving away astronomical monetary awards, they were giving away the answers. The quiz scandal was front-page news.

We were running scared. Anyone could go to the newspapers with some trumped up story about our integrity. Our contestants were treated with kid gloves, we dared not offend any of them. Sore losing players could easily cry foul, and the press would gobble up the story. How we survived is tough to answer, I suppose it was just because we were honest. NBC hired ex-FBI agents to set up standards and practices to make sure we stayed clean. Some of their tactics were difficult to work with, but we did.

One example I will never forget involved the transportation of the daily puzzles from my office, on the third floor of 30 Rock, to Studio 6A in the same building. The thirty cardboard pieces of each puzzle had to be placed inside a box with all edges securely taped and placed inside a large heavy-duty kraft envelope (also firmly taped on all sides). All of the taped areas had to bear a wax seal imprint of my initials. The three or four puzzles to be used that day,



Hugh Downs from the cover of a 1964 sales brochure.

were then placed into a suitcase equipped with three combination locks. When the trek from the third to the sixth floor was completed, the standards and practices people were on hand to make sure no one had tampered with the top-secret material. I fought this nonsense, with arguments like: no one except me would know which puzzle was for which game, the pieces would have to be put together like a six foot jigsaw puzzle, and, if anyone was clever enough to find out where my office was, which suitcase contained the puzzles, the order of play, the lock combinations, getting around the wax seals, etc, they deserved to win. Naturally, I lost the battle and had to comply.

We did get more than a scare when a contestant solved a puzzle on the first match. All that was revealed was a tiny bit of a drawing that looked like a piece of steel. The contestant made a wild guess, "Brigitte Bardot," and was right. She thought the metal might be part of a bridge. It was. The drawings: A bridge plus a picture of a jet, a bar and a rolling pin kneading dough. Wow! Another heart-stopper was saved by the bell (used to signal no more playing time on that show). After finishing two puzzles, I had the stagehands load the third puzzle in case time permitted another game. Hugh Downs must have taken too much time, so I called for the bell. According to the rules set up by Standards and Practices, that puzzle had to be unloaded and stored away for the future. On the next show, the contestant who made the first match, revealing two blank areas (no parts of the puzzle showing), took a wild guess, "The Queen of Sheba." I almost fainted, that was the unused puzzle from the day before. After the show, I asked the player why she tried that guess. She said, she had a dream the night before about appearing on the show and that was the puzzle. That close call forced me to thank Hugh Downs for talking too much.

During the fourteen and a half year run, the roster of backstage people who got the show on the air reads like a virtual 'Who's Who' of TV. The thousands of miles of credits include just about every Unit Manager, Graphic Artist, makeup person, stagehand and you name it, who ever toiled at 30 Rock, 67th Street and even the converted Broadway theaters. At first, the top guns of the engineering field sneered at our show. They felt it was beneath their status, they had worked the "really BIG shows." But, this quickly changed, when most of the big-time productions went west, and variety shows lost out to Hollywood-produced dramas and sit-coms. All they had left in NY, were a few talk shows, soaps and the lowly game shows. At that time, network execs admitted that the profits made on game shows paid for the nighttime flops.



Norm hosting the 10th Anniversary show with Announcer Bob Clayton and Emcee Hugh Downs as contestants.



8G Concentration control room. Bill Hildreth, Technical Director; Lynwood King, Director; Ellie Tarsus (Norm thinks); Norman Blumenthal, Producer and Unit Manager (can't remember name). Jim Miles, Assistant Producer, with visiting children in back.

Much like every other producer, I had my list of favorite engineers. Each week, I fought it out with Tom Smiley as he tried to change "my" crew. I never forgot that, and when I recently showed up at a Florida reunion, I spotted Tom at one of the tables. I headed for my old nemesis, whom I hadn't seen in over twenty years, and screamed, "What are you doing to me? You changed my crew again!" Without hesitation, he followed through with the same arguments he had always used. He knew exactly what I was doing, and we both enjoyed a good laugh. □

Norm writes to us from West Hempstead, NY.

Sing Along With Mitch

By Hal Alexander

One of the most popular shows on television in the early sixties (1961-1966) was a one hour musical program called, SING ALONG WITH MITCH.

Patterned after the old fashioned, "community sing-alongs," it became an immediate success. It was also a natural for recording on video tape. The show however still retained that live look because it was shot in very long takes.

It was a large and impressive looking show, consisting of some twenty-five male singers and eight female dancers. The host, or conductor of the "sing-alongs" was one of leading figures in American popular music, Mr. Mitch Miller.

The format of the show was quite simple. It was really nothing more than wall to-wall singing. The men stood in small groups and sang endlessly as the girls danced about adding a certain style and beauty to the often dull proceedings. The program simply reflected middle Americas taste in popular music at the time.

Each program had what was called a "sing-along" segment where the lyrics of the song being performed was placed-in the lower portion of the screen and one had only to follow along with the bouncing ball to join in the fun.

Mitch himself was quite an imposing figure. A very distinguished looking man dressed in a black silk suit and sporting a stylish well trimmed beard. He would often stand awkwardly on a small square box waving his arms about as he conducted, the all-male chorus. His jerky and sometimes comical movements added a certain charm and innocence to the show.

In 1961, I was one of the stage managers assigned to the show and remained with it for over two years.

The hours were very long. On production days, we would often work far into the night. It was not at all unusual for the show to be still taping at one or two in the morning.

In an effort to add some variety to the show, Mitch employed several female soloists. One was a lovely young sixteen year old girl named Leslie Uggams. A delightful and talented young lady with a big voice. Today Leslie is a accomplished stage and nightclub performer, but in the early sixties, she was just developing her own style. It was just marvelous to watch her grow. As a performer as well as

a person. Leslie sang one or two solo numbers on each show and also worked with the men in several of the large production numbers.

There was however one number I'm fairly certain she would have gladly missed. It involved the entire gang plus a real live donkey with an over-active libido.

The setting was an old style Mexican village. The men, dressed in ponchos and sombreros were happily singing the popular standard, "South Of The Border."

Leslie, a small donkey, and myself stood off to one side just out of range of the camera as we watched the proceedings.

Leslie held tightly to a rope tied about the donkey's neck as she waited patiently for her cue to enter the scene.

Now glancing down at the small animal, I simply could not believe my eyes. The donkey had obviously fallen in love. He was smitten all right and the situation seemed to worsen by the minute. I stared in complete and total disbelief. This was no mere infatuation. It was certainly the largest display of true love I had ever witnessed. (I later learned from the animal trainer that it was undoubtedly Leslie's perfume that had caused the problem.)

Leslie however saw nothing. She stood quietly watching the taping as she waited for her cue.

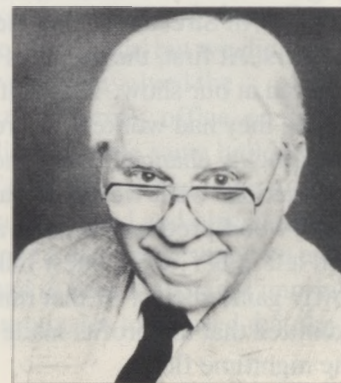
There was simply no way I was going to send Leslie and the animal into the scene. Certainly not in his present condition. I quickly looked about for the "stand-by" camera and asked cameraman Joe Boss to frame up a shot of the hind-quarters of the donkey. If the animal was going to miss his entrance, I wanted the control room to see the reason why.

The instant the picture appeared on the control-room monitor, it was greeted by wild and hysterical laughter.

Suddenly my head-set sprang to life. It was the voice of our TD, Walter C. Miller.

"HAL, he exploded in my ear, "YOU'VE GOT SIXTEEN BARS TO GET IN THERE AND RELIEVE THAT DONKEY!" □

*The Alexanders, Hal & Pat,
live in Woodland Hills, CA.*



A Message From

Pete Peterson



Thanks for all the kind words from the membership regarding the PN newsletter. As the annual membership renewals come in, there are a host of notes in appreciation for the efforts of our newsletter group. The kudos go to Dan, Heino, and Frank for their keen ability to put it

all together so well. Their endeavor is to make it fun as well as informative reading. The good news is that our membership roster is still increasing. We're sending a courtesy copy of our PN newsletter to all of the members of the Florida NBCFR group for their enjoyment. We invite them to join Peacock North. There are already many who are members of both groups. We encourage anyone who cares to write to us on any subject or matters relative to their years and times at NBC. Recently there was a discussion with a group of retirees who affirmed that the old pictures that were taken of friends and events from their days at NBC would probably be discarded in a dumpster or a garage sale someday. If you are in possession of such pictures, please stop hiding them in dark closets, besides, soon nobody will even be around to recognize and remember faces or names. Do everyone a favor and send them in to us NOW, while they still have some meritorious use. We can put them in the newsletter for all to enjoy. Yes we will return them to you after publication. Size, color, shape or even slides makes no matter, we can use them. Thank you!

There is a new recognition of folks in the 70 to 80 year bracket for events that took place in their earlier years. It is about the difficulties of "The Great Depression Years" and the war years that followed. It is about the group's unselfish sacrifices and how they came together united with a common purpose to fight and defend the country that had just put them through the "GREAT DEPRESSION." It was about how they fought for the cause of liberty and freedom and to win a war that would insure democracy for generations to come. It brought opportunities for a governmental system that the whole world could adopt and enjoy.

Yes, somebody finally noticed. I was watching recently in a bit of amazement when Brian Williams, on an MSNBC interview program, said of his father's generation, "their contribution was the most important event of the 20th century." Now it could have been a mistake, but it wasn't, he said it twice.

Then again, a few days later, I was watching a PBS show "America in the Forties" the theme of the show was about the same subjects – the "Great Depression," and the war and how that comparatively silent generation came together in unison to put down Hitler's and Tojo's tyranny so very successfully. (I called a few of our PN'ers during the show, and they too enjoyed the viewing, and taped it.) The next morning, on WQEW 1560AM in NYC (forever on our kitchen radio) the morning man, a pleasant clean cut guy, Bob Jones (our vintage) was all in praise of the TV show. (Got a little choked up about it too!) Then, I thought that would be the end of it. Wrong! To my amazement, that nice young fellow Tom Brokaw, who is now about 58 years old was being interviewed by Tim Russert on a CNBC show said to Tim, "He thought the most important events of Tim's father's generation was..." (similar words of praise). Tom revealed he's writing a book on the subject. He believes this was one of the most important episodes of the century. A time that contained countless personal heroic stories. *(It produced a remarkable era. It is about our generation, you distinguished PN people, and the people of those times.)*

It is nice to know when someone takes notice. Tributes often come late in time and life. As you can see I'm proud to be a member of this generation. It is always a pleasure to be in your company at our gatherings. What's disconcerting is that we are losing members in greater numbers as exhibited in our Silent Microphone columns.

One such loss was the passing of Phil Falcone an NBC Radio engineer (later TV audio engineer). Phil was a charter member of Peacock North. He died just as we were putting the Fall issue of our newsletter in the mail. We included a last moment "tombstone" notice with the mailing, and in this issue we are expanding on Phil's life and the valuable contributions he made to radio and television and to those who knew him. His abilities and the excellence of his work raised the level of the art. My own first opportunity to receive his friendly help was back in my radio days in the forties. I was suddenly assigned

to be the control board engineer for an NBC Sunday night full radio network show. Phil was to operate the turntables, and Gus Sisko to operate the reel to reel audio tape machines, (which were, at the time, the newest cutting edge of audio technology, leaving behind the age of disk electrical transcriptions). Phil made numerous suggestions to us both, and by following his recommendations for the complicated technical lash up of wires and system routing devices, brought together a perfectly successful technical achievement. I felt good, but I knew it was Phil's doing. His unselfish help in assistance and his honest effort to make NBC sound good on the air shall not be forgotten by many who worked alongside him.

Losing yet another friend, everyone's funnyman, Henny Youngman. I was working the Jack Paar "Tonite" show, as the Video Engineer and relief TD (for more than 5 years '57-'62) and on the air 1.5 hours "LIVE," each night at the Hudson Theater on 44th St. just off Broadway at Times Square. It was a wonderful assignment. My position, in the narrow control booth, was adjacent to the TD and director. There was a sliding glass door that separated me from them, usually left ajar. I cannot recall how many "REALLY BIG NAMED STARS" would come into the control booth each day, wanting to confer with the busy director, but they could only enter from the door that was behind me. They would end up standing next to me in this slender control booth waiting while other acts rehearsed. Almost invariably as they stood and lingered next to me, I would offer them a chair that I had judiciously placed beside me. There they would sit beside me at the video equipment console and wait. It was a unique opportunity for me to meet and chat with them. Often they got interested in the video equipment while waiting, what with TV being so new. I found myself explaining the little green squiggles on my video oscilloscopes to some pretty Big Stars. One such star was funnyman Henny Youngman whose death we report in this issue. One evening during rehearsal "break time," Henny heard us tech types chatting about where to grab a quick bite. I said I was going directly across the street from the front of the theater to that little "hole in the wall" deli shop that had pastrami so good, it could challenge the "Carnegie" or "Stage"

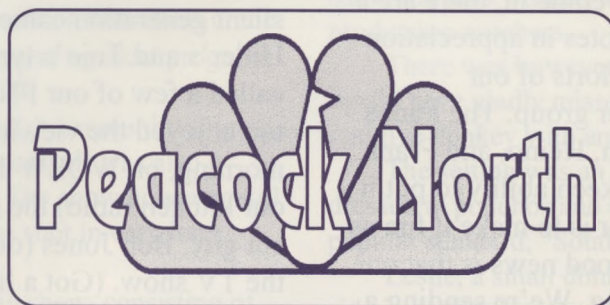
delis. A bit later, I was there ordering my pastrami with coleslaw in a deliciously, heavenly, succulent sandwich. The door opened to this little 2x4 cubicle two steps up storefront. In came Henny. He turned around and grabbed the Siegel door lock and clicked the lock shut, ordered a sandwich like mine and then proceeded to fire away one liners from his monolog from the show that night. Benny the old proprietor and I were in tearful stitches by the time he got through. "So c'mon," Henny demanded of Benny, "where's my

sandwich!" Benny was on the floor laughing so hard I thought he wouldn't be able to get up. I had tears running down my cheeks, it was the best, the greatest! A private showing of the funniest NY type jokes from the master himself. Henny Youngman

will live in my mind as the King of the "One Liners" forever. And I'm sure we'll all miss him... Someday, soon, I'll write about some funny events of various "Tonite" show performers... about attractive singer Diahann Carol, or dapper Adolph Menjou, or some of the Gabor sisters, and others, and some of the most near the edge events with Paar himself, but I'll be running out of page space for the list of fun days.

Behind the scenes at PN are some folks who do great works and are not known to many. One such nice person, who has helped us with the PN Newsletter, is Don Gogarty. He was the person instrumental in introducing us to the colorization of the newsletter masthead and throughout each issue and the glossy paper we currently use. Don will be retired from NBC this spring after 52 years but will be active as a PN member. Thanks for your help Don. Happy retirement.

Thanks too to Russ Tornabene for introducing us to the early days of TV lighting by Reinald Werrenrath, Jr. And thanks to Catherine Faulconer (Fariss) for her Mel Allen piece and Hal Alexander's recount of the innocent days of "Sing Along" with Mitch Miller, and Jim Holton's interesting account of NBC News activities on JFK's fatal day, his own reactions, and those about him. The Rogues Gallery of Voices shows us how handsome that announcing staff was THEN, but they're even better now when seen LIVE, and in full maturity! (Those jibes on technical error captions under the pix got past me to the printer



guys, so I'm sorry about that.) Those announcers are all good guys and good supporters of Peacock North! The producer of "Concentration," the famous game show, lets us in on the difficulties of putting one of TV's most successful game shows on the air. Thanks Norm Blumenthal for the insight.

All in all, another wonderful newsletter for all to enjoy! Do you have a story for us? Please send it in.

We're coming up to that big event soon. Yes!! Our annual Maxi Luncheon at LaMaganette in NYC. Each year we have the best of times together. All our regulars make it a great event. Folks from far away places show up to be with the gang and it's a Super Sunday for all the greatest working folks ever assembled in the history of Radio and Television and in one place at one time. It's the only place to be on Sunday May 17, at noontime, where you can relive your own vibrant youth, tell and hear those great tales and see those beautiful faces once again. No one would ever want to miss that chance! So Please Be There!... and just thanks for being.

Regards, Pete

La Maganetta Ristorante (825 Third Avenue) is located on the northeast corner of Third Avenue and 50th Street. See you there.

Sunday, May 17, 1998 at 12 Noon

La Maganette Luncheon

I/we will attend the Spring Reunion.

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*And a special thanks to
Peg Peterson and Lois Vierling*

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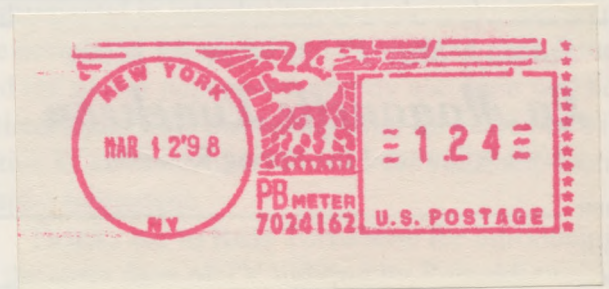
Open to NBC Employees with 25 Years or more.

A PICTURE FROM OUR ARCHIVES



A 1962 Berle show satirized filmed historical epics, with Milton as Cleopatra, Jack Benny and Charlton Heston as Ben Hur, and Kirk Douglas and Laurence Harvey as Spartacus.

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Spring Luncheon
Set for May 17