

Peacock North

SUMMER, 1996



Annual Lunch Turnout Sets Record

by Dan Grabel

PEACOCK NORTH celebrated its 15th anniversary at their 9th annual Spring Luncheon on June 2nd, and nearly 200 veterans and spouses or significant others filled La Maganette Ristorante in



Pete opened the festivities.

Manhattan, down the block from the GE building, to swap stories, renew friendships, and hear anecdotes from those invited to the podium by host Peter Peterson.

It was the biggest turnout ever, nearly 200 diners, and included a lot

of retirees who decided finally it was time to make a first appearance. People like Broadway's Estelle Parsons, and graphic artist Lou Cuevas (now of ABC-TV) hugged dozens of old comrades and expressed disappointment that they hadn't attended these get-togethers in year's past.

Again, many showed up before the noon starting gun and stayed until the last morsel of pastry was devoured around 4pm.

Pete expressed it for many when he said, "We are not just an organization, we are a large family."

Marie Finnegan made a point of contacting Today Show "originals," people who had worked the show when it was created in 1952 (this writer joined Today in 1955 and did not qualify for that special table!) Quite a few answered her call including the aforementioned Estelle Parsons, who is in rehearsal for a new play at the Round-About Theater, graphic artist Lou Cuevas, who is still riding a bicycle around Manhattan although he has grandfather status, Helen Patretti O'Neill, Muriel MacPherson, who was Today's first "weather girl," Phylis Govan, Alida Mesrop, (now President of Audrey Cohen College),

Continued on next page.



Letty Sinclair Hudak, Marie Finnegan, Muriel MacPherson, Estelle Parsons, Lilly Russo, Helen O'Neil, Phylis Govan, Alida Mesop, and Lou Cuevas.

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Letty Sinclair Hudak, Lilly Russo, and in from Albuquerque, Ann Kramer.

Other long distance travel honors went to Hal and Pat Alexander from Woodland Hills, CA, Bob Asman from Washington, DC, Aavo Koiv from Arlington, Mass, John and Jane Lough from Brewster, Mass, Ed



Gary Iorio, Aavo Koiv, Jack Marshall - Jack came all the way from 48th Street!

and Linda Rossi from Scottsdale, Arizona, Dom and Nancy Salviola from West Palm Beach, Bob and Diane Juncosa from Foresthill, CA, Michael and

Madalyn Gilligan from Lyme, NH, and Marjorie Shields from Boca Raton, FL.

Peacock North's roster has grown to 700, with 450 of them on the rolls as active dues payers. (If you are aware of any eligibles, ask them to join now.)

Pete noted that our sister organization, NBC Florida Retirees, had another successful reunion, this one in Orlando in March and are planning their 1997 reunion for San Francisco. (See page 37.)

Pete thanked his newsletter staff including Publisher Frank Vierling, and editors/writers Heino Ripp, Ken Arbor, Don Lufig, Dick Dudley, and this writer for keeping the membership informed and for strengthening the organization. A special thanks went to Don Gogarty and Mike Orlan at NBC Reprographics for making this slick newsletter slick.

The day's anecdotes were provided by Bob Rippen, who directed the Howdy Doody show starting in 1948. It was NBC's first regular color show, and



Don Luftig and Dave (SNL) Wilson



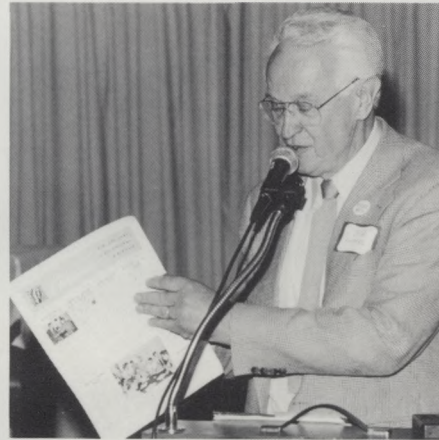
Two smooth talkers, Bill Hanrahan and Dick Dudley with Ruth Hanrahan.



Bob Rippen

Rippen created the first 2-city split screen with Howdy in Chicago and Buffalo Bob in NY. His crew included Bob (Moose) Daniels, and Bud Yorkin, (later, producer of "All in the Family") Carl Lindeman (later president of NBC Sports). Dominick Dunne (now a renown magazine writer), Leo Driscoll, Brooks Clift, Dave Handler, Lilly Russo, Heino Ripp and announcer Ed McMahon, who held on to his "day job" at a Philadelphia station until he was sure he could make it at NBC New York. Rippen recalled that in 1949 he had 2 summer interns on the job — Felicia Warburg, who later married Bob Sarnoff, and Pat Kennedy, who had a brother that later worked at the white house.

Pete Peterson recalled working that kid show along with a young piano player who continually dashed into the control room to ask how his playing sounded. He was assured that during a break someone



Bob Asman brought along a 1948 NBC Chimes.

would play back the tape for him to hear. The piano player was Barry Manilow.

Bob Asman, now the Executive Producer of the Commission on Presidential Debates, summed up the memories when he said, "We came into

television at the right time and we got out at the right time." Amen. Asman began his broadcast career as a guide in 1946 along with Scotty Connal and Jim Schaffer.

Another speaker, Lois Marino, will work the Olympics,

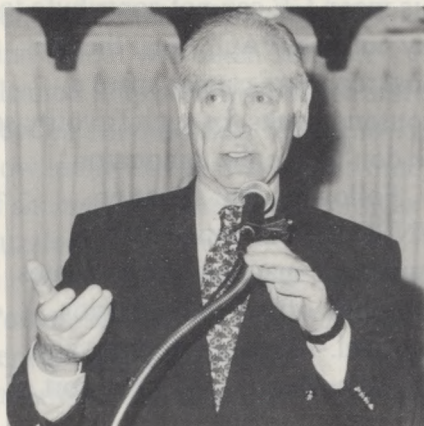


Lois Marino

A Trio of Speakers



Director Dave Wilson



Announcer Mel Brandt



Announcer/Poet Vic Roby

overseeing coverage of the boxing events. Hey, makes sense, Lois worked for Madison Square Garden following NBC and ducked a few punches.

Director Dave Wilson, who joined NBC in 1951 and was the longtime director of Saturday Night Live

said, "We were broadcasters!" A sentiment echoed by speaker Mel Brandt who said, "We had the best time." Vic Roby closed the speakers' list reminding the crowd that some of these friendships went back 4 decades. □

***More pictures from La Maganette for our album.
Everyone enjoyed short speeches, good food, and good company.***



Ann Kramer and Audrey Marshall



Peter Tittle - Arthur Gary



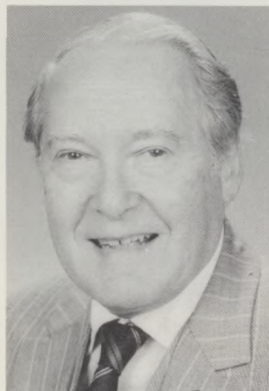
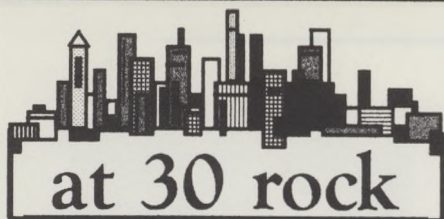
Enid Roth, Dave Wilson, Heino Ripp, Bob Van Ry



Marie Finnegan and Letty Hudak

For more La Mag pictures turn to pages 17 - 23 - 43

(More on page 23)



By
**Dan
Grabel**

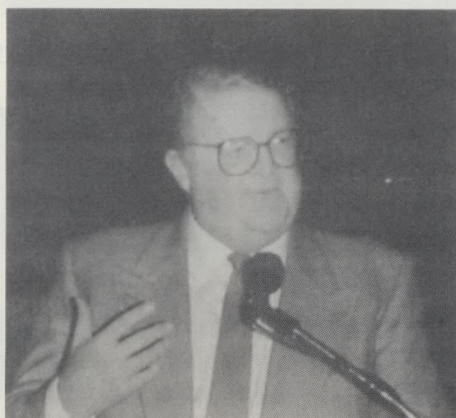
Editor's note: As a bit of apologia, we know that some of this column is far from "Today's News Today." We do not have the AP, UPI or Reuters to supply us with grist, just a few good contacts on the inside and on the outside. And if its *still* news to some readers, we feel we're doing our job.

It is a big political year, so let's go to press with something very political — an innocent gaff by **Chuck Scarborough** which put NBC local in a tizzy. Our personable and highly visible anchor man is a desirable guest at public functions and gets many invitations, so even he can succumb to the entreaties of people like Senator Dole and Steve Forbes and kicked in a thousand bucks to their campaign war chests. WNBC President and General Manager **Bill Bolster** attended the Forbes event with Chuck but apparently did not open up his wallet. Back in 1991 Chuck donated a thou to the Bush-Quayle reelection campaign and in '92, \$500 to Penn. Senator Arlen Specter. Scarborough had his knuckles rapped, nothing more, and admitted a political contribution by a journalist can reflect on the impartiality of himself and his

employer. Chuck will sit out the 1996 presidential campaign. Does this mean GE can not contribute to any political PAC? Final thought: most reporters cannot spare a thousand bucks for such frivolity so we don't have the temptation.

Following that situation, WNBC put out notice that employees may not be candidates for public office without prior approval. We recall decades ago that **Don Meany** was some sort of councilman in his hometown in south Jersey. And wasn't there some loose talk one time that **Chet Huntley** was thinking of running for office in Montana after he retired. [**Lee Carlton** (engineering) was a NJ State Assemblyman (1966-68) during his working days at NBC. *EV*]

In the April issue of John Kennedy, Jr.'s "George Magazine" **Tom Brokaw** wrote the "If I were President" column. On handling the press, Tom wrote, "They would not have open access." What about an unanswerable newsman's question: President Tom's reply would be "You might be right. Next question." Tom wrote that his main goal would be to restore a sense of common purpose to the land. Hey! Brokaw for President. Maybe it was



Bill Bolster

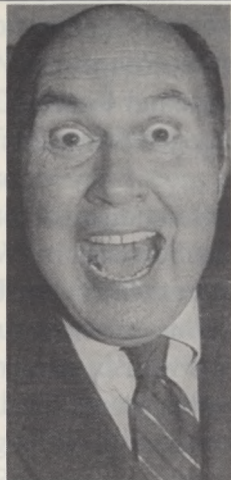
Brokaw, not Huntley who had elective desires? Now, I think it was!

What does America think of the press? The **Lou Harris** pollster organization took a survey with these results: Only 14 percent had a "great deal of confidence" in the print press. 57 percent had "only some confidence," and 30 percent had "hardly any." TV news fared a little better with 21 percent having a "great deal" of confidence.

Do you get the feeling that there's more puff and less programming on television? You're right, according to the American Association of Ad Agencies. Non programming material was up 2.8 percent in prime time last year. Fox was the worst "offender," broadcasting 15 minutes, 22 seconds of ads and promos each hour, while NBC was clocked at 14 minutes, 45 seconds, and CBS and ABC a bit less.

In the February sweeps period, WNBC captured the sign-on to sign-off ratings crown for the first time in a decade. The entire staff was treated to cocktails and canapes at the Rainbow Pavilion for that accomplishment. The Today show was the leader in its time slot and so was the 11pm news and Jay Leno. Channel 7 had the edge in the news at 5pm and 6pm. In January, everyone at the local station got a storm jacket for the great job they did during the many winter snow storms.

People: Movie and theatre critic **Pia Lindstrom** announced her retirement from News 4 in February after a 23 year run. NBC



Willard

Scott moved himself into retirement. He'll still do occasional pieces for Today....*You're all eligible for Peacock North membership....***Linda Ellerbee** is hosting a monthly interview show on the computer World Wide Web. It is called "Encarta on the Record," for more information punch this up on your computer - <http://www.microsoft.com/encarta>. Sez Ellerbee, "If this is where journalism is headed, I don't want to be the last one to get there. "Err, Linda time will tell. Encarta is a CD-ROM encyclopedia. The show



Linda Ellerbee

won't exactly be television, since the pictures will be still video images that will bounce on the screen every 8 seconds....**Gloria**

had kind words for her, said she has a number of outside media projects in mind - but no details. The decision was Pia's.After 16 years on the Today show grind, 62 year old **Willard**

Clyne's 1979 Caddy, stolen once in 1991, has disappeared again after being parked in Manhattan. The first time it was taken the thief cleaned it up with a paint job and new air conditioning. Who knows how lucky Gloria will be this time, if she recovers the 25 year old gas guzzler?

New face at 30 Rock. **Bridget Potter**, ex HBO, has been named senior vice president for entertainment, East Coast. Her area will include the network, CNBC and NBC's superchannel in Europe



Chauncey

....What's humorist **Chauncey Howell** doing these days?

Chauncey, who we always regarded as amusing but too erudite for the tv crowd, is producing "New York Beat" videos for New York State's Division of Tourism. The feature stories are distributed by satellite to tv stations around the state. He was the most intellectual reporter on the local staff at WNBC and was the scion of an early American family that had a town named for itself, Howell, New Jersey....**Ken Bode**, who used to be a quadrennial fixture on NBC presidential campaign coverage, has joined CNN. He's also a professor of politics and the media at DePauw University....Also at the Ted Turner net is former NBC-er **Arthur Kent**. Not the NABET

Kent, nor the correspondent/A-News Kent, but the Scud Kent. He's working as an overseas anchor, based in London. After leaving NBC in 1992, Kent worked for the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. while pursuing his \$25-million law suit vs. NBC. It was settled in '94 for an undisclosed sum. Its always "undisclosed," so we don't know who won. But if Kent didn't get much, certainly NBC would be bragging about a courthouse victory to discourage other litigants....It is said **Chris Wallace** of ABC was among the reporters "Dateline" was trying to woo. He thought about it, they say, but then figured he'd be appearing in a lineup against daddy Mike Wallace on "60 Minutes," and that might not enhance family relations. Chris, once of NBC, is staying put with Prime Time.....National reporter **Bob Kur** will do the news on the Saturday and Sunday "Today" show, along with his chores for "Nightly."

Tom Shales, the usually well-regarded tv critic of the Washington Post got NBC's dander up after he gave a sour review to the new Sunday version of the mid-



Arthur Kent

week "Dateline" show. Shales called it "junky, gimmicky, and riddled with promos and teasers." Well, that would be normal for most of the stuff we see on the nets, but someone at NBC was angry. Real angry. NBC

(Continued on next page)

took a quarter page ad in the Washington Post to reply and listed Shales' comments about other tv shows - to wit, ABC Nightline - "non-news, a sugary substitute," "20/20" - "tawdry," CBS' "48 Hours" - "just doesn't work." NBC went on to say they were happy to be in such good company. Well, it just may be that a lot of people think Shales has described those programs accurately and maybe that's not good company for "Dateline." He's a critic, maybe his standards are too high. On the other hand, those shows have remained on the air for quite a while so someone is watching. Watching or not, that does not mean they are great pieces of television. It merely means some folks are watching. Hey, if we all demanded quality old time radio might be stronger than ever. Let's hear it for Lum and Abner and Fibber MaGee.

Sy Pearlman, the Today show writer, is still on the job but his stories about adventures away from 30 Rock seem to be more interesting than the day to day excitement of being part of an important tv production.

With some 30 years at NBC he enjoys a long vacation and generally spends his time along with his spouse in Europe. That's not too unusual. But Sy tours Europe in an old Mercedes, which he garages there while he's here. One time his adventures were going to end in Finland, so he checked with retired NBC newsman **Henrik Krogius**, a Finn, who I believe is now editing a paper in Brooklyn. Sy asked, "Where can I park my car?" Krogius has a cousin living just outside Helsinki on a farm, so that

year Sy parked it there in a barn. Currently, it is somewhere in Paris, awaiting the Pearlman's return.

We had no room to comment on the following in our last issue, and since it is undated! we put it here. Attending **Tom Pettit's** memorial service in 8H in January, we were struck by a huge room full of aging NBC veterans, including ourselves. It has been 41 years since we switched from the Daily News and WPIX at the invitation of Today show producer **Jerry Green**, so we've met and worked with a lot of tv people in the following 4 decades. Add WPIX and its 5 decades.

Yes, that day in January we were all grayer, whiter, or balding. Stooped, shrunken, perhaps a bit saddened. But it was a warm feeling. We saw familiar faces, but could not utter their names. Maybe a first name, maybe a last name, maybe no name. But we knew the faces well. I was busy snapping photos, so you've seen some of them in the pages of the Winter '96 PN newsletter.

Among those names we recall at the memorial — a fraction of the total 250 — were: **Shad Northshield, Scotty Williston, Gordon Manning, Ken Donohue, Harry Griggs, Walter Millis, Joe Dicso, Joel Spector, Tim Russett, Christy Basham, Bob Mullen, Norman Cook, Howard Reig, Al Robbins, Gene and Judy Farinet, Tom Wolzein, Avrom Zaritzky, Ed Bowers, Beryl Pfizer, Robert Buzzell, Rick Davis, Bill Wheatley, Lucy Jarvis, Joan Gifford, Tom Brokaw, John Chancellor, Dave Schmerler, Ken Bauer, Bernie Braun, Gabe Pressman, Sy Pearlman, Bill**

Theodore, Joe DeCola, Charlie Kistner, Otto Pfeiffer, Connie Chung, Gloria Clyne, and Bambi Tascarella, who arranged the event.

Bryant Gumble's announced departure from Today becomes more and more apparent when you read the HBO ads for his current 10pm sports show. He won't return to full-time play-by-play sports broadcasting, but presumably will do the feature style sports show.

Fifty-six year old **Tom Brokaw**, who quietly marked his 30th year with NBC in April, has signed a book deal with Random House to write about America as it enters the 21st century.

His NBC contract is up in August. Any idea of retiring? Tom said if he quit the news business he'd "raise a ponytail, get a big bike, and head out to Montana." Home, of course, is Minot, North Dakota.

As we've written once before, the 21st century really really, will begin — not in 2000 - but five years from now, January 1st in the year 2001. We have that on the authority of **Ed Newman** and our own encyclopedia. Please, please, research this and let us know if we're wrong.

We're happy to be on the sidelines nowadays when tv union and management get into negotiations at contract time. But we were surprised to see that **Mona Mangan** the executive director of the Writers Guild of America was drawing a pay check of \$280,000. Peanuts to GE and other corporate biggies (we understand **Jack Welsh** got 20 million last year. Among

others, she represents the 350 CBS News employees on both coasts. CBS sent out a news release on that fact, possibly hoping to incite the scribes and techs she represents in some tough posturing by Westinghouse and News Veep **Jerry Nachman** (once of NBC, among many other news operations he's headed). Nachman reminded the union members — writers, graphic artists, others — what Reagan did to the striking air traffic controllers back in the 1980s. (A dastardly act.) One major issue, CBS wanted non-union people to do traditional union chores. Happily, agreement has been reached with pay hikes about the same as the cost of living rise — 3.5 percent.

Asa Aarons, WNBC's consumer reporter got a big personal spread in the Sunday Times in March. Very complimentary. But I wondered as I watched News 4 on February 16th, with 6 inches of snow falling and the temperature in the 20s, why he was giving a report on contaminated iced tea!

Big brother is really watching! News 4 has added **Skycam** to its system of remote controlled tv cameras strategically placed around the city and suburbs — 22 cameras in the tri-state area at airports, tunnels, and bridges. It is a joint project with Shadow Traffic to provide the station with traffic updates. Actually, it is not a new idea since I have heard the traffic reporters on WINS radio talking about their Sony cameras on bridges and such for many months. But I guess their public relations department ain't doin' the job.

Big brother is talking too. Very often the complaint at the office is that there is no communication. Only a few know what's going on. WNBC seems to avoid that with its State of the Station discussions — updates on ratings and other projects. The one hour meetings require mandatory attendance. Not so hard to take is the free food and drink. And at the last meeting, in April, everyone got a gift from the company store.

Somewhere in the distant past someone gave me a copy of the 1968 NABET New York Engineering seniority list and I like to pull out a few names to see who remembers these old-timers, who are not necessarily familiar to me. In brackets is the year they joined NBC: **Theodore Krause** (1935), **Mel Lewis** (1937), **Al McClellan** (1937) **Victor Bary** (1941), **Lewis West** (1941), **George Vose** (1941) and **Herman Folkerts** (1941). Maybe they'll jog some memories.

Here's a happy note for journalists. The Committee to Protect Journalists reports that while the number of newsmen imprisoned around the world last year hit a record high of 182, the number killed in line of duty (wars, etc.) dropped from 72 in 1994 to 51 in 1995.

Turkey and Algeria were the places to avoid. Turkey jailed 53 newsmen, and 24 were killed in Algeria where Islamic militants have been battling the government.

In the Ivory Coast, 2 reporters were jailed for 2 years for suggesting that President Bedie's attendance at a championship soccer game had brought the home team bad luck! Poor form boys,

poor form.

We ran into former net news prexy **Larry Grossman** at a seminar of the Center for Communications. He was looking trimmer and walking behind a dark mustache. He is involved in a soon-to-be introduced new cable network, something like C-Span. He recently authored an article in the Columbia Journalism Review on "60 Minutes" and that tobacco researcher who told all.

Jack Welch, chairman of GE, told his shareholders the company will remain intact, no plans to spin off divisions. He said, "Breaking up is the right answer for some companies but not for GE." While GE set records for earnings and revenue it did not achieve two of its so-called "stretch" performance targets. Operating margin was 14.4 percent. The goal was 15. Tsk, tsk.

Back in 1900, the Dow Jones index included GE and 11 other companies. Today, GE is the only company still on that D-J index.

One reason for NBC being in the black could be those Super Bowl time sales. NBC sold out all 58 thirty second spots at one million dollars each, or higher. Whoever said "Talk is cheap"?

The International Olympic Committee has sold the European tv rights to each of the Olympics from the year 2000 to 2008 for \$1.442-billion. The committee snubbed **Rupert Murdoch** who had offered more. The objection: Rupert's Fox net might try to put some of the games on pay tv. For comparison, Dick Ebersol bought the U.S. rights

(Continued on next page.)

to the games in 2004, 2006 and 2008 for \$2.3-billion. NBC bought the rights to the 2000 games in Sydney and 2002 in Salt Lake City for \$1.25-billion.

As part of its deal with the Olympics, NBC Sports promised to promote the games for the next 8 years, until 2002 WNBC will be part of that promise since it will broadcast Live at Five from Atlanta during the games and weatherman **Joe Witte** will be among those carrying the Olympic torch when it passes through New York June 17th. Also to be in Atlanta, **Sue Simmons, Matt Lauer, Al Roker** and **Len Berman**. "Today," also will originate there.

Not many will recall that **Denny Swanson**, the president of ABC Sports for the past 10 years, who bowed out of that network recently after Disney bought it, was once a lowly staffer at NBC's Chicago station. Among other jobs, Denny was the sports editor for News Program Service, NPS, and a very good one. When I write "lowly," I merely mean he wasn't with one of the glamour shows. We who worked NPS thought it was good, or better, than any other syndication operation.

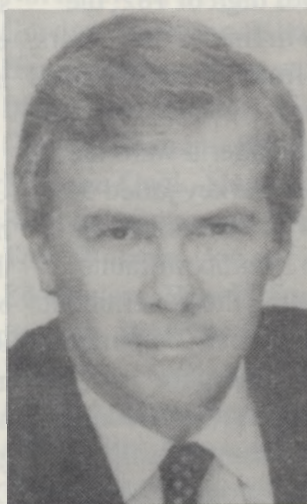
Bruno Cohen, formerly the WNBC News Director, is now in charge of programming for NBC's cable channel, CNBC. New title, too — senior vice president. He had worked closely with WNBC president and GM **Bill Bolster** so he was a likely choice. Replacing Cohen is **Paula Walker**, who had been Cohen's assistant since 1989. She's the first black woman to be a news director at a local tv station in



Paula Walker

New York. She told the NYPost, "I'm happy to be selected based on my credentials." She has held similar titles in Houston and Tulsa. Prior to tv, Paula was newswoman at the Syracuse Herald-Journal, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram and the Dallas Times Herald. To bolster the new cable operation, MSNBC, which incidentally also is run by **Bill Bolster**, some of the regular tv heavy hitters will be rotating hosts on news and talk programs - including, **Tom Brokaw, Katie Couric** and **Bill Moyers**.

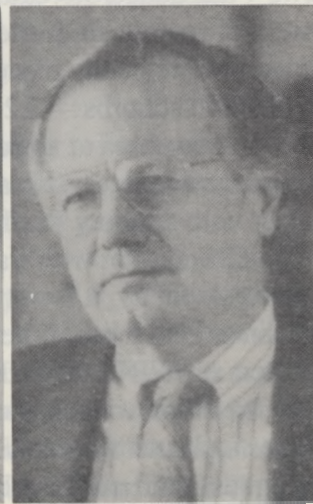
With 71 congressman clamoring for one hour a night of



Tom



Katie



Bill

good clean family tv fare, the nation's tv execs have pledged to design a rating scale so that parents can control the amount of sex and violence coming into the home. The networks will self-rate the shows. Now, doesn't that sound like putting the wolf on patrol at the chicken coop?

A new law requires future tv sets to be fitted with a chip to enable parents to electronically block programs that are encoded with a rating.

Bob Wright raised his voice when Senator Dole suggested that the government auction off pieces of the broadcast spectrum that is being re-jiggered so that more stations can transmit programs in the same section of the airwaves now used. It will be done by digital compression. Dole figures the auction could bring in \$70-billion in revenue. Since the broadcast stations have been licensed for free for the past 70-odd years, Wright considers that onerous. But don't we all recall that expression — "Owning a broadcast license is like having a printing press for money."

Jessica Savitch's life and

career, as depicted in the book "Golden Girl," were a tiny part of the inspiration for the new Michelle Pfeiffer-Robert Redford movie "Up Close and Personal." NY Times critic Janet Maslin described the movie as "mostly toothless." She said Pfeiffer's character never "succumbs to uncontrollable ambition or falls apart on the air as Savitch did."

Look for a new look at 30 Rock. Not in broadcast. In shopping. The new owners of perhaps the finest piece of real estate in New York, or maybe even the USA, hope to turn the place into a very upscale shopping area so it can generate higher office and retail rents — maybe even getting a percentage of the sales receipts.

Most of the space around the

skating rink, which is the attraction, are a staid mix of banks, tourist services, Herman's sporting goods and even the Japan Credit Bureau. The strategy would move them out and move in the likes of Ferragamo, Versace, Gucci, and maybe a Warner Bros. store like the one on 57th street.

Current store rents on Fifth avenue are \$210 a square foot. Plaza space is higher.

The new owners — **David Rockefeller, Goldman Sachs** among them — know how to make a buck. However, they will be \$800-million in debt after the sale, with some \$35-million a year in interest payments. NBC, we recall, had a 50 year lease when they first moved into 30 Rock around 1930. (See page 39 for NBC's buying into 30 Rock.)

Comedienne **Rosanne Arnold**, on the Fox network with a show called "Saturday Night Special," boldly announced, "NBC's Saturday Night Live has been on for 75 years already. Its time for them to move on." Well, maybe not yet. When they met face to face, time slot to time slot, SNL scored a 6.4/16 Nielson while Rosanne's effort averaged 3.6/9; Shall we now lick those wounds?

As usual we are grateful to Roy J. Silver the squire of Mohegan Lake, for operating as our clipping bureau and supplying us with tons of grist for the mill. □

Dan and wife Pat live in Scarsdale, NY.

PNer recalls showlike end to WW II

The noise of battle could be heard at the front on northern Luzon a couple of miles away, but the late Kay Kyser's band played on for the troops. It was Aug. 10, 1945. The troops were "doing a mopping up job," said Savannahian Lee Jones, who was a lieutenant with Gen. MacArthur's radio staff in Manila.

On that sultry night, Jones had his share of troubles trying to get the public address system working for Kyser. Electricity was out, but Jones got the Signal Corps to hook up a generator. Because of these problems, Jones and Kyser had decided not to do recordings that night.

About 8 pm a message arrived. Kyser was to make an announcement: *The Japanese were willing to surrender!* The war would be over in days. "I showed the message to Kay," the 87-year-old Jones said. "I suggested that he continue the show until I could get things ready to make a recording of this historic announcement.

At the end of the show, Kyser

stepped up to the microphone, "I have something here which I am sure you would like to hear. We're going to record this for all posterity. News has been officially announced that the Japanese government is willing to accept the ultimatum given to them."

Thousands of GIs let loose. "I'm sure the yelling and screaming could be heard by the Japanese two miles away," Jones said. "The orchestra ad-libbed a song and the girl singers were dancing. Kay was waving the message paper." Kay vowed to "keep this piece of paper" the rest of his life.

Four days later, Japan officially surrendered, Sept. 2, 1945. MacArthur sent Jones a tape of the USS Missouri surrender ceremonies and asked him to take it to his home in Manila and play it for Mrs. MacArthur.

Jones, grew up at Bethesda Home for Boys and returned to Savannah after working 36 years for NBC radio in NY.

About four years ago Lee gave the Smithsonian a copy of his historic recording. The recording is scratchy and hard to understand. Gunfire can be heard in the background. □



Carl Elmer/Savannah News-Press.

WAR MEMENTO: Savannahian and PN-er Lee Jones holds his copy of a recording made of the announcement in the Philippines of the Japanese surrender.

Condensed from the Savannah Morning News, August 14, 1995



George Burns, straightman. dead at 100 in March after a phenomenal career with wife Gracie Allen.

George and Gracie debuted their radio careers on NBC in 1932 which had a good run until 1950. In the 30s they had an audience estimated at 40-million, and NBC paid them \$10,000 a week, 5 times more than America paid its president. They broke into tv in 1950, switching to CBS. Later they starred in a score of movies.

At age 7 George was performing in Manhattan saloons as part of the Pee-Wee Quartet. He teamed with Gracie when she was 16 in 1922.

In 1976 George won an Oscar for his role in "The Sunshine Boys." Burns wrote, or co-wrote 10 books, including "All My Best Friends," which made the best-seller list in 1989. "Ten books," said Burns -- "pretty good for a guy who has read only two." (DG)

Steve Madrick, 85, in Sanford, Maine. Steve came to NBC in 1951 and is well remembered as the audio engineer on the Today Show from the 50s to the early 70s.

Not so well known was his music career as a lead saxophonist who toured the country with the Glenn Miller and Les Brown orchestras. He accompanied such stars as Doris Day, Frank Sinatra

and Margaret Whiting. Steve appeared in the movie "Seven Days' Leave" with Les Brown.

After his retirement in 1973 he made his home in Alfred, Maine. He is survived by his wife Zelda.



Harry Coyle, 74, of Marshalltown, Iowa, on February 19, of a heart attack following a stroke. He was born in Ridgewood, NJ, and grew up in Paterson. After service with the 8th Air Force in World War II he worked for DuMont Television. He came to NBC in 1955. In a span of 37 years he directed 36 World Series, 27 All-Star Games, 27 Rose Bowls, and 12 U.S. Open golf championships. Following retirement in 1989 he and his wife, Ramona, moved to Iowa. (See page 12.)



James Gibbings, Engineering, died March 30 after a long illness. Jim was born in Wimbeldon, England. He is survived by his wife, Charmayne, and a son.



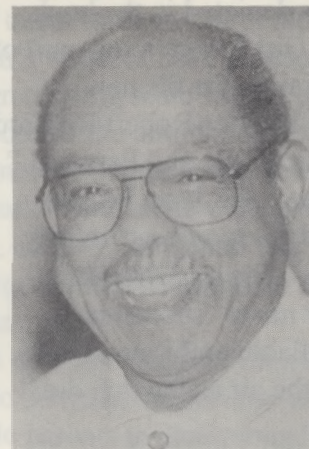
Everett Geiger, died May 6th. Ev spent most of his NBC career in Electronic Maintenance. He was an avid Ham radio operator living in Park Ridge, NJ.



Ogden Bowman was one of the early NBC radio engineers before transferring to the television side of the house. He worked for many years in Television Field as a Technical Director covering such shows as Frontiers of Faith and the Eleanor Roosevelt show from the Sheraton Hotel. Oggie finished out his NBC days in the Technical Operations office (TOPS).



Carl Stokes, 68, on April 3, WNBC

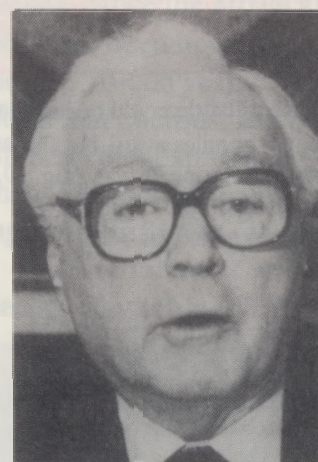


Associated Press

anchor. Stokes, who became the first black mayor of a major American City (Cleveland) in 1967, was also the first black anchorman of a tv news show in New York. He joined WNBC in 1972 after serving 2 terms as Cleveland's mayor.



Ronald Korda, program exec. Korda died at age 47 in March. He was a programming executive with the network and lived in Scarsdale.



Bill Swersey, 1990

Jack McCarthy, 81, TV's 'Mr. St. Partick's Day' died in May. He spent most of his career at WPIX, but he began as a page at NBC in 1933. In 1939, at age 24, he became the youngest staff announcer hired at NBC to that date. After a few years in film work he joined ABC and in 1948 he was hired by WPIX where he toiled for 4 decades.





1967

Sandy Becker, show host. Becker, who started his broadcast career as an announcer of CBS soap operas in the 1940s died at age 74 of a heart attack at his Long Island home. In the early days of tv, Becker joined NBC as the announcer for "Ask the Camera," with Barbara Walters. He broke into starring roles with his own 6-hour kids' show "Wonderama," on DuMont tv in 1955. (DG)

Jim Gaines, Director. Started in Guest Relations and for many years was associated with and directed

the Today show. Jim was a soft spoken gentleman.



UPI, 1986

Don McNeill, 88. "Good morning Breakfast Clubbers, hello, hello, from Chicago." Don broadcast his "Breakfast Club" five days a week from 1933 to 1968, first on NBC, Chicago, then on ABC. Corny humor, prayers for peace and daily marches around the listeners' breakfast table were staples of his show. The show ran for several years on tv in the 50s.

B. Lowell (Jake) Jacobson, died Sept. 9, 1995 of a brain tumor. Jake started with RCA in Bloomington, Indiana, in 1948 in charge of personnel. He was transferred to Indianapolis, then to Camden, NJ. He came to NBC as VP in charge of personnel and labor relations in early 50s. He is survived by his wife Eunice and 2 sons.

Reed Hilty - Reed started his career at NBC as a page in the mid 30's. He finished his service in the Engineering Department.

Sam Kirshman, stage manager, in February.

Regretfully we add:

Humbert Rodomister
Sig Bajak

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



THE PATRON SAINTS OF SENIOR GOLFERS

(With a tip of the hat to Ogden Nash)

By PN'er Bruce Berquist



A golden-aged duffer should not have to suffer,
His pastime should always be funnigan,
The life that he leads has some spiritual needs,
But his savior is not old *Saint Lunnigan*.

You're on a par three, but your ball hits a tree,
And you're still 80 yards from the pinnigan,
Regretfully, brother, you can't drive another,
According to fusty *Saint Finnigan*.

Your drive on the eighth could discourage your faith,
A grounder that scared a young squirreligan,
Add one to your score, and whack it once more,
The rules by the book of *Saint Burligan*.

And sometimes your ball, for no reason at all,
Will wildly fly hither and yonnigan,
I know it sounds tough, but start combing the rough,
Conditions set down by *Saint Donnigan*.

The worse case of all is a mean slicing ball,
That ends up in the club swimming pooligan,
Just swear at your driver and hire a diver,
You'll get no reprieve from *Saint Houligan*.

But hark, dear old dad, don't get sullen or sad,
When your drive finds a pond or a gullygan,
Tee up a new ball, and give it your all,
And sing praise to our saint, good *Saint Mulligan*.

I read that Harry Coyle died in Iowa of a heart attack. Harry spent more than half of his 74 years as a sports director and is credited with developing TV baseball coverage as we know it today. I have spent more Saturday afternoons working with Harry on the Game of the Week than I'd like to admit, and his death has triggered a lot of recollections of TV baseball.

Harry came to NBC in the fall of 1955 from the DuMont Network as a sports director. He worked most of the college football we covered that year - in black & white. NBC had just built the first color TV mobile unit that was not able to be as mobile as units are today, but we did televise four college football games, the World Series and the Rose Bowl in color.



Before our first game with Harry at Georgia Tech in Atlanta, the crew had an introductory session with him, where he told us how he was going to do things and of some of the things that he hoped to accomplish. We didn't know exactly how to take him at the time, but we all agreed on one thing — "Harry will never last out the season in high pressure network sports!"

In a way, he was rather a strange guy. As Mike Weisman, former executive producer of NBC



AN ENGINEER'S REFLECTIONS

By Jim Sunder

Sports, said, "He was far from the stereotype of a TV director. When we were on the road, he'd eat at McDonald's, wearing polyester slacks, a golf shirt and a windbreaker." He was always likable, but almost a loner, didn't mix much with the crew, and never had the glitz and pizzazz that went with big time TV Sports, the pre-game parties, and other activities that most directors reveled in.

He had a lot of ideas that we didn't always like or didn't understand at the time. In spite of his success, there were times when we weren't sure that he even had the confidence in himself that he was worthy of. Still, baseball coverage got better and better. In the late 80s when we worked with Garagiola, Scully, Kubeck and Costas, I think TV baseball was as good as it ever will be.

Part of his success at the start was because NBC gave him their best cameramen and technicians. He worked with them very well. He seldom became rattled and developed a system to cover

almost any emergency, from losing his No. 1 home plate camera to having his broadcaster choke up and say the wrong thing or nothing at all. In the early days he often had to work the smaller markets such as Cleveland or Houston, where the local station could only furnish part time cameramen whose regular job was secretary or stock clerk. His system of coverage was almost failsafe and I can still hear him calling, "Procedure, gentlemen, procedure!" when the going got rough.

It is a long time since 1955. NBC has gone from the top of the heap to the bottom and back up again. Dolly pushers have become technical directors and executives. Vice presidents and even presidents of the company have come and gone. NBC now is a small part of General Electric.



I sometimes think Harry got the last laugh on all of us. While all these changes had been taking place, and contrary to the Peter Principle, where a worker finally moves up the ladder to a job he can't handle, Harry just kept showing up at the mobile unit on Saturday afternoons for 40 years giving us great baseball. □

Jim Sunder was a pioneer color videoman from the start of NBC's colorcasts in studio and with the mobile units in the field. Jim is retired and lives with his wife, Florence, in New York City.

KEN'S

O
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by
Ken Arber

Steve Allen recently appeared for one day at the South Florida Fair, about seven miles outside of West Palm Beach. He did one show at 11:30 AM and another at 7:30 PM. Admission was five dollars for regular admission, and three dollars for senior citizens and children. I am sure that, at that price, everybody enjoyed the "Steve Allen Show." The show was performed on the "General Motors Truck Stage"

I did not go to the fair since I had done two or three years, as TD, of his local show at NBC's 67th street studios and was familiar with his work.

Speaking of Steve Allen, brings me back to my first meeting with Steve in the early 50s up at our 67th street studios with Dwight Hemion as director of the show.

Dwight was thrilled having Steve as the star of a 90 minute show each evening at 11:15. Prior to this, I had never seen Steve Allen except for a time I was down in Cortland Street buying parts to make a TV set, similar to the famous TS 630 TV made by RCA. On the "Demo" tv set in the store window I saw Steve for

the first time, broadcasting on CBS.

Now we were waiting to meet him in Studio "B" at 67th street. Dwight was excited to be working with Steve, and asked all the engineers and studio personnel to gather together and wait for Steve's arrival.

We gathered together in a line, resembling the employees of a "Castle" in olden times, waiting for the "Lord Master" to arrive. We were all sure Steve would arrive from the front door, but lo and behold, he came from the "Scene Dock" at the back of the studio, and surprised even Dwight, when he saw Steve come in through the "Elephant Doors." Dwight tried to bring Steve over to meet the "crew," but Steve was more interested in pointing out the many things that did not conform to the way he had understood from his earlier meeting with Dwight. Such as the ladder going up to the balcony was placed in the wrong position, the desk was turned facing the wrong way, and his key light at the desk was so bright that Steve commented it looked like the 20th Century Limited

was bearing down on him." (The 20th Century was the fast train on the New York Central system between New York and Chicago.)

The whole crew was so disappointed with this meeting, we all left the studio and filed into the control room without having had the opportunity of meeting Steve Allen. TD Noel Warwick did the show only one week, and then I replaced him, as he wanted to go to the 106th Street Studios where he would do a musical show. I told



Following Steve Allen's local show and the demise of Broadway Open House, Steve began the Tonight Show in 1954. Here Steve interviews Dina Shore while George Montgomery looks on.

Noel that I was looking forward to doing the Allen Show, and he said you don't know what problems there are with that show. He was so right. In short order I learned what he was referring to Steve. Steve constantly complained about the public address

Continued on next page..

system not being loud enough. The PA engineer was the late Mort Eaton who was so thrilled being the PA operator, that he had the make-up artist make him up so he would look good when Steve stood next to him in the Balcony. I should point out that the set up of this studio had no audience on the same floor as Steve's desk, as all that floor space was used for other shows during the day, such as "Josie's Kitchen," so, from Steve's desk, he could not hear how loud the PA was up in the balcony.

Steve would use a Goo-Goo doll hidden behind his desk, and the engineer's union complained that a sound effects engineer should do that Goo-Goo noise effect, Steve objected. Then Steve would come on stage making believe he had a "Machine Gun" and the drummer, Bobby Rosengarten, would make rim shots to make it sound like a gun. Once again the union objected, and when I asked Rosengarten not to make the rim shots, he told me that he was told by Steve what he should do. As you can see, Noel knew what he was talking about. These problems continued to go on when the show moved to the Hudson Theater.

Dwight asked me to come with him, and I told him the crew asked that Dwight not ask for them, so I decided to stay in Local. Two TDs were available at Radio City for the local show, which was nightly, and a weekend show. Carl Cabison for the the local show and Hank Folkerts for the weekend Network show. Hank had the good fortune to do a Steve Allen show from Puerto Rico, which was a good deal.

Steve Allen was an immensely capable talent, in that he has written dozens of books, written many songs, and is a great story teller and entertainer, on radio, television and stage, as well as an actor in the movies, where he played the part of Benny Goodman, and did a superb job.

When the Steve Allen show started at 67th street, the original female vocalist was Helene Dixon, and after a few weeks she was replaced by Eydie Gorme. I remember the time when Steve Lawrence started on the show, a few weeks after Eydie. He came on running from stage right, wearing a white sailor's uniform and a sailor's hat. We all enjoyed his style of singing, and he became well liked by all the crew.

Recently I read in "Birthday" that Steve is 74, and that Eydie Gorme is 63, and her husband Steve Lawrence is 60, or as my father would tell my mother, "You robbed the cradle," since my mother was older by one year than my father.

This about wraps up all the info on the "Steve Allen" show.

I read an "The Associated Press" article in the paper that mentioned Steve Allen's name.

"WHISPER HEARING DEVICE ADS Challenged."

Marketers of a device said to bring users "Super" hearing, face charges of deceptive trade practices Attorney General Bob Butterworth said Monday in Tallahassee, Florida. Telebrands Corp., which markets the Whisper XL, in television commercials and print advertisements, and features Television Star Steve Allen, is also charged with violating a Florida law barring the sale of hearing aids by mail. Telebrands cannot substantiate claims that include the ability to hear a pin drop from 50 feet away, or a whisper from 100 feet away, said Butterworth, whose office filed a civil complaint in Broward County Circuit Court. He said the company also failed to disclose that continuous use of the device could damage a person's hearing.

The New York law firm of Bass and Ullman representing Telebrands, has not received the law suit and would not comment, said attorney John Desiderio.

Floridians have bought \$713,000 worth of these hearing devices, Butterworth said. Florida is one of 11 states filing complaints against TELEBRANDS.

Other news from Radio City:

While watching the "TODAY SHOW" recently, I was saddened to learn that one of our fellow workers, Jim Gaines had passed away. Willard Scott made the announcement on his weather broadcast from Washington D.C. I had worked many Today Shows with Jim where he was the director, and I knew him from his prior job in Guest Relations where he was in charge of tickets for the NBC studio tours and radio shows. We shall all miss Jim. He was a great guy to work with and a real good friend □

Ken and Jaye Arber live in Boca Raton, Florida.

Television? The word is half Latin and half Greek. No good can come of it.

Attributed to C.P. Scott (1846-1932)

PNer Ray Lafferty Remembers

In the summer of 1954, or perhaps 1955, I had what I believe to be a unique experience. O.B. Hanson was Vice President of Engineering at NBC, and had been for many years, dating back to the early 30s, and possibly the late 20s. He was a bachelor, and lived in a fine home in Westport, Conn. with a manservant, who was known only as Teddy.

That was a time that saw much improvement in audio equipment; low distortion power amplifiers, multiple input preamplifiers, and good woofers and tweeters. O.B. had an out-dated audio system that used a pair of 45 tubes in the output stage. Apparently he dropped a hint about the dubious quality of his system, and the fact that he frequently entertained at his home. The music he offered his guests was no credit to NBC.

George Nixon, Supervisor of Development Engineering, was given the task of correcting this condition. He called me into his office and asked if I thought O.B.'s present system could be improved. I remember saying to George that this man was V.P. of Engineering at NBC, and he has a Mickey-Mouse audio system. George smiled and told me to buy some decent equipment and have it installed in O.B.'s home.

I went down to see Harvey Samson of Harvey's Radio on 47th St. and purchased a 50 watt MacIntosh power amplifier, a Patrician speaker system, consisting of a 16-inch woofer and several tweeters, housed in an enclosure that stood about 5 feet high, and a Marantz preamplifier. O.B. had an RCA broadcast quality transcription turntable and magnetic cartridge, and we couldn't improve on that. I had the components shipped to O.B.'s home in Westport, and I went to see Arnold Bacon who headed the Service Department for V.P.'s home installations. We set a date for the following week and on the agreed day we arrived mid-morning at Westport to install the new system. The speaker was located on a balcony at one end of a large room with a cathedral ceiling. We had it functional by about 4 p.m., and I can tell you the sound was impressive. We

knew that O.B. would be home early so that we could discuss and demonstrate the system.

Teddy had told us that O.B. usually had a cocktail when he came in. Teddy was asked to prepare three drinks, but with a little more authority than normal. O.B. arrived about 5, and with drinks in hand we were soon telling O.B. about the equipment. He listened politely, but it was obvious he wanted to hear it. Arnold and I, however, wanted him to finish most of his cocktail, so we stalled a bit. Finally he selected a transcription with military music, put it on the turntable and lowered the stylus. From the expression on his face it was immediately evident that we had a winner. He came back to sit down, but he couldn't contain himself. Within a few seconds he jumped to his feet, looked at us, and yelled, "Come on fellows, let's go." For the next few minutes we were marching, single file, around and around the room. It was a great moment, and later on the way home, Arnold and I agreed that we had witnessed a leader of early radio and television thoroughly enjoying himself. □

Ray Lafferty worked in the NBC Lab as a specialist in audio equipment and radio microphones. He left NBC in the 1957 to work for Daven Company. Ray has come back to his roots as a PN member. He lives with his wife Marge in Morris Plains, NJ.

PNers on the Internet

E-Mail Addresses

Jeff Kulliver	-	jkulliver@aol.com
Herb Straub	-	hstraub@olympic1.nbc.ge.com
Vince Vacca	-	vaccav@nantucket.net
Ray Weiss	-	vtxs47a@Prodigy.com
Peter Peterson	-	peterp5579@aol.com

Ray Weiss sent us these E-Mail addresses. Do you have an address? Want to hear from old friends? Send it in and we'll publish it.

"While theoretically and technically television may be feasible, commercially and financially I consider it an impossibility, a development of which we need waste little time dreaming."

Lee De Forest, US. inventor,
"Father of the Radio," 1926



Well, it's spring, finally. This is the first year that I've gotten sick of winter. Love the changing seasons, but digging myself out over 20 times, only enforced my thoughts of spending winters in Bora Bora. Oh well, grump, grump.... It's May now and spring blossomed out with all sorts of flowering trees and bushes and daffodils, that I suppose I'll stick around here a while....

I was roaming through the NY Times one Sunday afternoon, and there was this gentleman pictured below.... You know, we really had a great job! How delightful to "work" around this soft spoken, cheerful conductor and piano virtuoso during the Today Show, Tonight Show, as well as many others.

The article says the Music may be easygoing, but the Maestro, decidedly is not. The 77 year old genius says he "lives in a true state of panic - never stops worrying". - from Fritz Reiner, he "learned to get along with the orchestra. I think that's one of the most difficult things," says Skitch, - "When you

have the gall to step in front of those troops who are equally or better prepared than you, you better have your act together."

There is probably no great artist in the world that Skitch hasn't accompanied. He conducted Arturo Toscanini's NBC Symphony during two of Toscy's vacations, became Music Director of NBC; he was a fighter pilot in the Royal Air Force during WW II... I think all pilots have that certain "Je ne sais quoi".

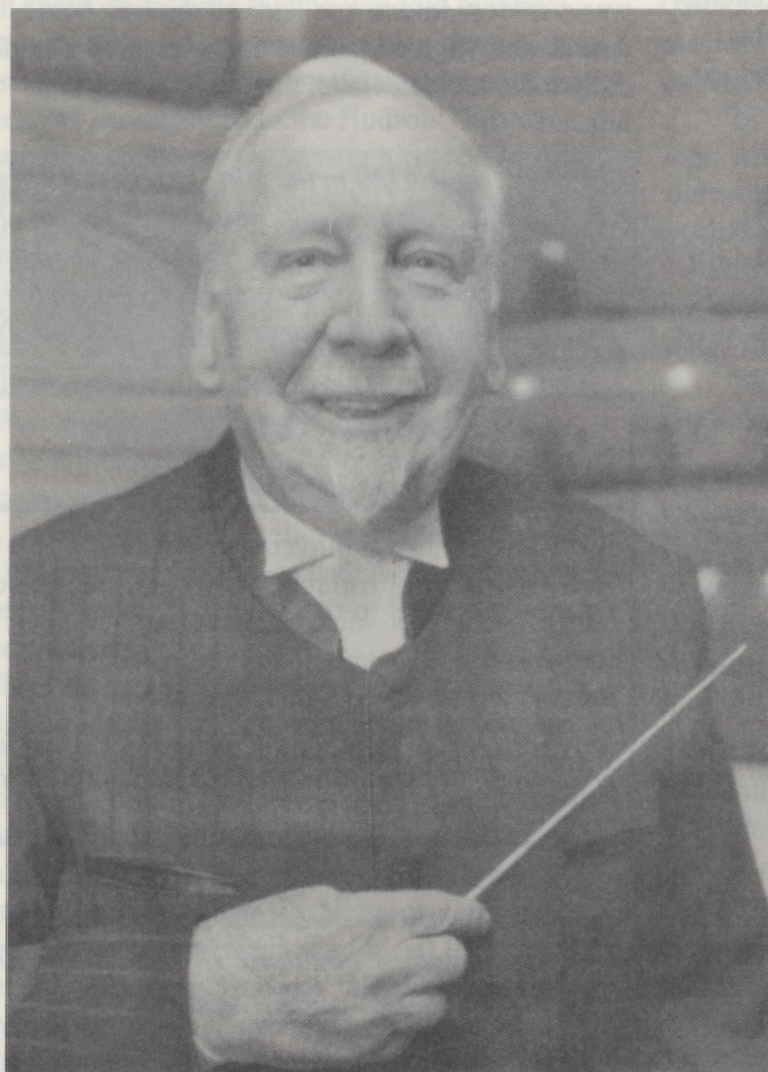
He was born Lyle Russell Cedric Henderson. While working with Sinatra and Bing Crosby, Bing persuaded him to replace "Cedric" with the now famous moniker of "Skitch".

There isn't room for all his accomplishments here, but go buy a few tix and attend his New York Pops orchestra in concert, and watch and listen to the maestro at work, at Carnegie Hall....

My thanks to **Garry Simpson**, director par excellence, writing from Vergennes, Vt, for all the nice things he said about me. Gary directed many shows in the late forties and I was his TD. He was very meticulous, well prepared, had definite ways of getting his story across with dramatic use of the tv pictures etc. I thoroughly enjoyed being a part of his programs. Always a gentleman....

Gary included a column from the Brattleboro Free Press about **Ernest Kinoy** of Williamsville, Vt. who wrote some 60 works for TV and film, and probably best known for his Emmy Award adaptation of Alex Haley's "Roots". In March he received The Writers Guild of America East lifetime achievement award, presented by Sam Waterson.

Kinoy, born in 1925, began in radio and soon moved to TV, with



Maestro Skitch Henderson,
conductor of the New York Pops.

shows for "Studio One," and "Playhouse 90" from 8G, where you might have bumped into him. Then to series such as "Naked City" and "The Defenders." He won an Emmy for an episode of "The Defenders," about the blacklisted people in the entertainment industry... and a second Emmy for the hugely popular "Roots" miniseries. Kinoy also wrote much of its sequel, "Roots: The Next Generation".

Kinoy bought a house in Williamsville, Vt. 40 years ago, and lives there full time since 1989. As a free-lance writer, he's been able to work at home. *"I used to live on a farm in New Hampshire. In summer, pop gave all the brothers a crew cut, no one wore shoes. I helped mom cart a rainbarrel of well water 1000 ft to the house, went to school 20 plus miles each day, milked 16 cows and had space. And I loved it."* No wonder Kinoy wanted to live in Vermont.

Jerry Cudlipp sends word that he and wife Nancy will be driving to Pittsburgh and on to Indianapolis to visit a son and daughter-in-law.

"Hope to see some of the Indy 500 qualifying trials." (Hope you missed Brayton's fatal crash.) "Then on to Louisville, Ky where our daughter, new grandchild and son-in-law are visting his parents. They were there to see the Kentucky Derby and had some real 'ins' with the horsey set." ...*"see you all at La Mag."*

Hank Folkerts informs us that **Sal Salanitro** is now a permanent resident of Florida. His address for all you correspondents, is:

1768 Heatherwood Dr.

Jacksonville, Fl. 32259.

Hank wonders why did he move to Jacksonville?; he calls that South Georgia. **Jim Smart**, would you set us all straight! Sal is also a "Ham"

radio operator, with the call W2JKO.

Joan Gifford exclaims "What a Great Newsletter." She took off a few days and read it from cover to cover, saddened by more dear friends in Silent Mikes. But the good news is that she met a few former NBCers at a reception. (Princess Diana's recent NYC visit?) - And they were interested in **PN** So **Arlene Coulter**, from East Hampton, **Marilyn Grey Longden** from Fairfield, Conn. and **Dick McBride** from Sag Harbor received a complimentary copy of the News letter from Pete. Keep recruiting Joanie. (See you at La Mag.)

Jack Marshall exclaims,

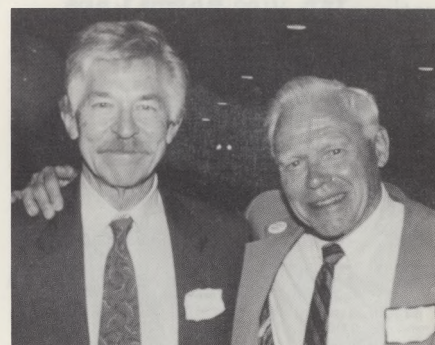
At La Mag-nificent, June 2, 1996



Clockwise: Lee Pliskin, Jim Sunder, Howie Atlas (standing), Bob and Diane Juncosa, Dorothea and Bill deLannoy, Tony and Nancy Nelle, Florence Sunder, and Irene Pliskin.

REUNION

Two Rippes - Bob Rippen and me (Heino). Many years ago we did the Howdy Doody show together. Bob directed and I was the TD.



"Once again you and your crew have done it. This Winter 1996 edition of the Peacock newsletter is just great. Few people realize the work that goes into the production of such a venture. Having worked for three papers, I know the sweat, tears, smiles and pride associated with this creative effort. I can't say enough in the way of praise for everybody on the staff. Thanks again."

Jerry and Phyllis Hochman pens this: He's working on lots of remotes. Son **Peter** is graduating SUNY Cortland with a B.S. (Perfect timing - on Mother's Day) daughter **Stefanie** graduated from Pennsylvania

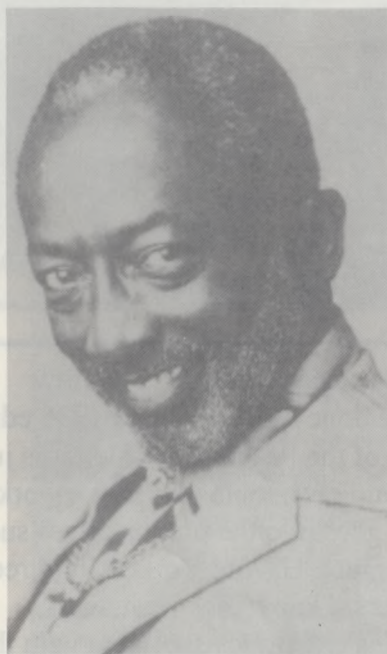
(Continued on next page)

nia College of Podiatric Medicine in Philly, June 1st, and has been accepted for her residency at University of Pa. Health Systems at Presbyterian Medical Center. (Guess the kiddies grow up fast eh Jerr? Hope you managed to see a few old timers at the Fla. March reunion.)

For you older Sat Nite Live enthusiasts, Pete sent me an article from the Star Ledger, headlined:

Actor Garrett Morris Still Learning To Cope a Year-and-a-Half After Near-Fatal Shooting

A year and a half ago, Garret Morris (of SNL fame) was accosted and shot on South Central L.A. The bullet tore through his left forearm and abdomen to eventually lodge in his spine, necessitating about 10 major operations. Garrett says he still has



Garrett Morris

some little motor problems, and still has to deal with training himself how to "rewalk" on his right side. (As of October 95, he was back on tv, playing Will Cleghorne's father on WB Network's Cleghorne series.

Garrett says, " — I realize I've been blessed and lucky to be here."



L. to R. in Pasadena, at Prime Time Emmy Awards Program

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Carl Eckett - camera | 5. John Pinto - camera |
| 2. Bill Vaccaro -Senior Video | 6. Steve Cimino - Tech Dir. |
| 3. Mike Bennett - camera | 7. Bob Reese - Camera |
| 4. Jan Kasoff - camera | 8. Greg Aull - video |

Jan Kasoff sent this photo of the SNL TD, Cameramen and Videoman. We congratulated them last year upon winning an Emmy in the category "OUTSTANDING TECHNICAL DIRECTION/CAMERA/VIDEO FOR A SERIES"

And now for the second time, this year they did it again

Congratulations to all of you !

Herb Greeley writes from Melbourne, Fla. that he has kept every copy of PN North Newsletter. He finds himself going back and re-reading the issues 'cause there are so many memories there and some of the articles hit home for him.

Quoting Herb: "Take **Frank Vierling**, for instance. - Is there a better story teller of the early days in the TV Field Group than Frank? He always had a sense of humor that I loved - very dry, sneaky - fast punch lines delivered with that wry smile! Please tell this to Frank - I do think he knows that I am a real fan of his and hope that his articles will be a regular part of each Peacock North issue."

Herb and Ruth still feel like they're in retirement heaven - "sure

it hit freezing, but only for a couple of nights - and NO SNOW ! Do miss the Picolissimo and the other reunions."

David Handler, like many readers, reads PN from cover to cover in one sitting. Remarks it's so great to read all the news — and so sad to read the "Silent Microphones"...

David also offers himself and wife Cynthia to proof read our many pages.

[As the ex publisher, I thought of that for myself in the past, for I had many typos, but the irregular times, length of times and the hours these things are done would mean that you would have to be a very close neighbor or move in with Frank for a few months. H.R.]

William and Opal Howard

(Engineering Development Group) Have sold their retirement home in Western Oaks in Southwest Austin, Texas and moved to Westminster Manor, Austin, TX 78731. Tel 512-454-4711. Give them a call! Bill now has been elected President of Westminster Manor, and they are quite active in Hyde Park Baptist Church. They have travelled extensively and are able to share their trips with others through their slide show programs. Bill retired in 1979. [See page 29 for article by Bill — "NBC Engineering - a 50 Year History."]

Peter Flynn got a big bang out of last issue's "Monitor" article. — Wonders if **Jim Bolton** still paints as well as he writes? Re: The **MONITOR** photo on pg. 27 of Winter issue, Peter suggests that:

- (a.) The fellow who looks like **Steve Allen** is NOT Steve.
- (b.) **Clifton Fadiman** doesn't spell his name the way we did.
- (c.) Next man is NOT **Oscar Levant**. (Around **MONITOR** era **Oscar Levant** was on the *Tonight Show* with **Jack Paar**. Radio and TV people work day and night, and have no windows to the outside world, so it's difficult to distinguish who is on where! So O.K. you're right, it is **Walter Kiernan**).
- (d) **Morgan Beatty**? (Looks like **Beatty's** hair, but ear? You might have been closer to him than we but don't most radio people cup their left ear when they're working {if they're right handed} so I would say that is a toss up.)
- (e.) **Garroway**, hooray, we got one correct, but the photo was taken in the 50's, and that was about 45 years ago, and we all are having memory lapses, so how can one be

sure it's Dave ??

As to the center photo, I like our caption as is. It's more fun.

But keep those letters coming in folks, we do like to hear from you.

Flynn still hears from Monitor producer **Bud Drake** as well as the fellow who was the first reporter at the UN when it was founded (he thinks), later became a **MONITOR** writer, **Gordon Fraser**. (Not only a gentleman, but I liked his voice & style when reporting. By the way, Peter, for your info, read about **Clem Walter** on Page 10 of our last issue. Clem was, I feel, one of the nicest NBC management men ever). (Please do send us your photos of the 1968 Republican Convention. Pictures help make this Newsletter what it is. - H.)

Dick Doherty from West End Ave in NYC is now retired and felt he should join the rest of us in **PN**. Dick worked in Tech Ops with us for many years - was a great worker and is a great person. Welcome Dick.

Jack Van Buskirk writes a complimentary note to us all here, which we all appreciate, and even more, we appreciate Jack's presence and past help on **PN**. Always a pleasure Jack.

Director **Mr. Martin Hoade** sends a wee note:

"Many thanks for your work in keeping us together.

With affection and respect,"

M.

Thanks, M.,

H., J., R., D., R.

and the rest of us...

Bobo - **Robert Bartnik** writes

from Tuscon, Arizona:

Friends,

I was going through my memory book. Then I called Lois Ackerson - Clay's better half. I said, "Mrs Ackerman - Ackersum - Lady how do you pronounce your name?" Lois said, "BOBO"!

We had a nice talk - she's active but misses that "Big Dutchman". I told her, "He's waiting for you - pointing that finger (upward)."

She would like to hear from Jerry Caruso, but where is he ?? Who knows? Lois' address is 11 Hutchinson Rd, Southern Pines, N.C. 28387. Tel 910: 695-1993.

— Bobo —

Joe Linden saw **Art Poppele** at the Fla Bash. Art sent Joe a PN application. Joe's a new member of **PN**. Welcome Joe and Hello Art Poppele. (I remember way back during a lull in 3H, [cerca 1944?] - we played "tossing quarters toward the wall". [While listening to transcriptions that Cort Snell had made of the Big Bands playing at the Meadowbrook, like The Dipsey Doodle.] Art tossed his coin and it stood against the wall and on its end. He won. Fun days, those. H.)

Barbara Cline writes from Wilmington, North Carolina, **Dick** and I always enjoy and appreciate your efforts. What is this "Phone Book"? (L.I.M. Lost In Mail. Pete sent another, trust you received it by now. So start making those phone calls! (Bet you'll find that Pam & Roger Tuttle are neighbors - have a home in Wilmington, N.C.)

Let's each call 6 people you haven't talked to for a while, and say "Hi"!

(Continued on next page.)

Frank McGuinness (and Joyce) have left N.J. on their dog sled in December ('95) and have relocated on beautiful Lake Gaston on the VA/NC state line. They have built a beautiful new home there on the lake and are really enjoying the rural life. *(You have found a gorgeous lake and "space" and hopefully a few weeks more of summer than in NJ. Enjoy it all. Wish I could do the same! H.)*

Vic Roby enclosed a note along with a check for "La Magnifixcent" luncheon. Vic feels that the luncheon and the receipt of the PN Newsletter rank along with Christmas as highlights of the year - any year! "Thanks again for the mammoth amount of time which Pete and a few others spend in making sure that we "Peafowls" feel like one big happy family. *(Vic learned "Peafowls" from the announcer classes.)*

Millie Aronoff sent us this note:
Thank you very much for forwarding extra copies of Peacock North.

Morty was very enthusiastic about Peacock North. He loved to get together with his friends and colleagues from NBC. He went to all the functions he possibly could. Thanks for your kind thoughts.

Millie Aronoff

Joe Milroy received an "oops-dues" post card from Pete. Joe replies: Your records should show that I reached 80 in 1994 and that I received my first "freebie" issues in 1995. As I am still an octogenarian, I am hoping your policy is still in effect as I look forward to each issue and admire the growth achieved by "H" and all the others who have nurtured the newsletters. *(When one reads Frank Vierling's*

treatise on Pge34 on computers in the last issue, you will get a feeling that computers don't think our way, so things happen un-announced, giving my friend Joe an "oops postcard" in error. We sincerely regret the oversight. (Who said windows 95 was ready?) A thousand pardons. We hope we can continue the "80 and over policy". You deserve the freebie. Soon, though, we better start recruiting new members, we're all racing towards the 80 mark H.)

Cathy Vuokovich mailed us a note on a phone pad and a check from *The Oberoi Towers*, in Bombay, India. She didn't want to miss La Mag-nifixcent. Thanks Cathy.

Each year **Ann Kramer** reads the "Post Luncheon" PN. She resolves to be there "next year". Quoting Ann, "Well I hope this will be the year. At any rate here's my reservation.".....

We received a note from Colonia, N.J. as follows:

Word has come to me that Old Timers are being accepted by Peacock North. I certainly am an "Old Timer!" If I pass the muster, I've enclosed my check for the membership and the June 2nd luncheon.

P.S. The next time you talk to Ripp, he will probably pretend that he can't remember me or Howdy Doody! !

Cordially, **Bob Rippen**
(Tell Rip it wouldn't be pretending, I can't remember what I did yesterday, leave alone 1947.)

Marge McGlynn informs us she wouldn't be at La Mag. because she'll be touring Alaska. *(Florida was getting too warm I guess.)*

Walter Ryan writes from Medford, N.Y. lamenting that he's been working too many 6th days - no life! *(Some things just never change.)*

Gene Martin and **Janice** finally spent a few weeks tasting major sites in Italy at the end of May. Saltimboca a la Romana in Rome, Pasta e Fagiola in Venice, Vitella Parmigiana in the shadow of the Tower of Pisa - - - etc.. Had postponed the trip due to his recent operation. Said they had a first class trip in every way!

Ed and Linda Rossi were pleased to see La Mag's date postponed till June 2. She had a commitment with the Miss Universe Pageant in Las Vegas... They've both gone from show biz to the medical biz, working with the residents with mind fitness programs. Ed Rossi, grandpa of triplets, and now the gerentologist too.

The **Perry Massey's** plan to travel a bit. In May off to Hawaii and in August to Bonnie Scotland. He had an MRI for a back problem. *(Hawaii and Scotland are famous for their athletics, Perry in kilts? - You never know.) - -*

Got a letter from **Frank Vierling** on his fancy "Borough of Oradell" Historian stationery with Centennial logo etc. Classier than Pres Clinton's yet.... While visiting granddaughter in Arizona, Frank stopped at **Aaron and Joyce Traiger's** - seems they had just recovered from a flood. In the desert? Aaron and Joyce came home from a shopping trip to find water flowing out the front door. No, no desert miracle, just a broken hose under the sink. (Traiger's foto is still in Frank's camera. See next issue.) Here is a pix he did manage

to develop, that he took while visiting **Marty and Shirley Dennis**, in Tuscon, Az...Frank also spoke to **Stu Rudick**, who has given up his trolley conductor volunteer job and now is working at the Desert Museum, a combo zoo and Botanical Garden. Wife Donna doing well after a complicated hand operation.

Bob Juncosa writes: After several Florida Retirees luncheons, looks like we will make our first Peacock North Bash. Bob asks, "How about getting on the Billboard or 20 meters guys??" (Yes the NBC Net on 20 mtrs. - I always seem to have to be somewhere else at sked time. Propagation has been stinko. But we really should keep the net alive. At right is a photo of Bud Shadel (left) and Heino (right), atop Ken Arber's roof. We took down the huge antenna, dismantled it, drove it home, cleaned and polished it and put it on my roof on a rotator and once again W2IDE was on the air with a respectable Kilowatt. Then my first "ham" contact was much to my delight, an Estonian. Even got to schmooze in the language... Thanks again Ken for the gift.

Robert Asman, currently Exec Producer for the "Commission On Presedential Debates" is impressed with the slick new stock on which Peacock North is published. Congrats to all. It's a tie to a wonderful past.

The Commission has picked four debate locations:

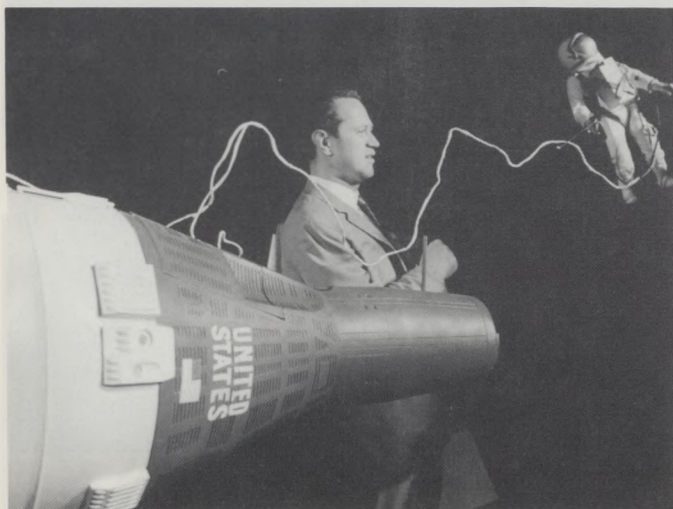
1. Sept 25, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.
2. Oct 2nd, for the VP's, Civic Center, Hartford, Ct.
3. Oct, 9th, Bayfront Center, St Petersburg, Florida
4. Oct. 16, University of San Diego, Ca.



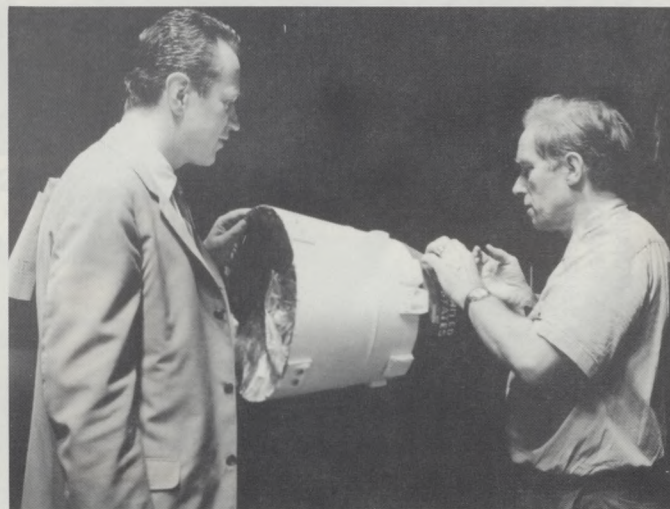
Marty and Shirley Dennis



Buddy and Heino. New Idea - Using H. as a rotator.



Bob Asman watching Bill Baird's demo in Studio 8H, simulating astronauts weightless state in outer space, since there was no video from the spacecraft.



Asman with Baird adjusting the scale model spacecraft Bill designed and operated.

Photos courtesy of Bob Asman

(Continued on next page)

June, 1965 - 8H

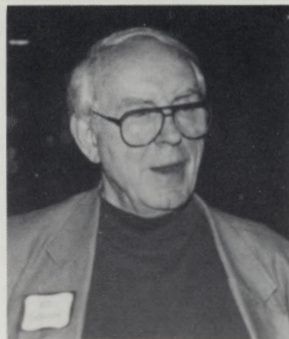


This picture was taken in 8H, at the end of Apollo 10 - May 1969. Send in the names you remember, with some marker to position them. I'll add them to mine and publish the photo again, for it really is "some talent". Exec Producer Jim Kitchell is bottom center next to Frank Magee. Bob Asman sent in this photo and notes the late Peter Hackes in the LEM window.

Thanks for the photos, Bob. There must be hundred out there. How about it Pners - send in those pix to be published in your magazine. All pictures are returned. And send in your anacdotes. Everyone must have a favorite story of what went right or went wrong with an NBC event. Literary prowess is not required, our scribes can whip the barest essentials into an award winner. Try us. *FV*



Marilyn Alexander - Peg Peterson - Lois Vierling



Ed Gough

REUNION

Miles of Smiles!



Joe and Edythe Boss - Jerry Cudlipp (more smiles!)



*Clockwise: Jane and John Lough - Carl Rohrer (standing)
Fred Wagner - Michael and Madalyn Gilligan - Paul Roeder
Vince Genzardi - Bob Higgins - John Rice.*



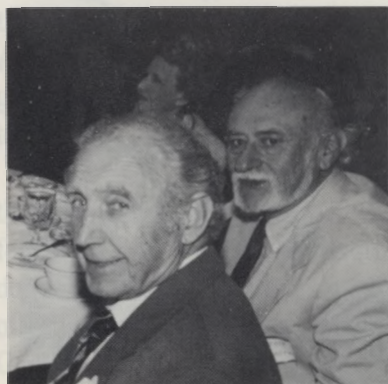
Jim Sunder - Howie Atlas - Bob Juncosa



Marjorie Shields



Herb and Renee Oxman - Dom Salviola



*Gene Martin - Scotty Schachter,
and that's Ariane Mautner BG.*



Nancy Nelle



Florence Sunder - Irene Pliskin



After World

War II, a great collection of important art works disappeared. The paintings, stolen by the Nazis from their owners, were "confiscated" by the Russians. Oils by Monet, Renoir, Van Gogh, Cezanne, Degas, Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec and many others were thought to have been lost or destroyed. In 1995, fifty years after they disappeared, a

closely guarded state secret was revealed - the paintings had been hidden in the Hermitage - the great museum in St. Petersburg.

The way they came to light is part of the incredible changes that have swept Russia since the end of the Communist era. Whatever the reasons, the world was thrilled when it was announced that the pictures were to be put on exhibit in a special display of these *"Lost Treasures."* It was a showing that my wife, Sandy, and I desperately wanted to see. Last September, we headed for St. Petersburg and checked in at the Grand Hotel Europe. One of the things that is grand about the hotel is the cost. Room rates are high and a buffet breakfast costs \$20 per person. That's U.S. dollars - not rubles! Our guide, Svetlana, who spoke perfect English, took us to the Hermitage to see the collection of seventy four Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings. Going up a beautiful double marble staircase, we came to a landing and then entered a large room that had been especially divided into rows containing the lost paintings. Eagerly starting in the first row, we could hardly believe we were here. Renoirs, Cezannes, masterpieces by many of the greatest artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were all on display for the first time in over five decades!

We particularly enjoyed Degas's "Place de la Concorde", a painting most people thought had been destroyed. Another exceptional Degas was his "The

Danseuse" (1874). A painting that attracted attention was "Dans le Jardin" (1885) by Renoir. Renoir used his girlfriend (later his wife) as the subject. The young man in the picture was another artist, Henri Laurent. The painting's sensitivity kept us staring at it for some time. The colors were as warm as a lover's smile. Van



Renoir's "Dans le Jardin" (Detail)

Gogh's remarkable "White House at Night" (1890) was done six weeks before his death. This painting shows the same kind of unique nocturnal sky seen in the well-known "Starry Night."

A Picasso labeled "Absinthe (Girl in a Cafe)" was painted in 1901 in a uniquely different style. Aggressive, compelling, the lines had great movement. We spent four hours moving up and down the rows of pictures. It was only an hors d'oeuvre. We returned the next day to savor it all again.

Unfortunately, the lighting in the room was not of true museum quality. Lights were harsh, in insufficient numbers and poorly placed, but, the overall reaction to seeing so many unusual paintings by such masterful artists was one of awe and delight. How unfortunate it was for those people who never had a chance to see them as they languished in a dark cellar of the State Hermitage Museum.

Not far from the hotel, we watched an artist painting a picture of a beautiful church called



Artist at work

Khram Spasa na Krovi, (Church of the Savior of the Spilled Blood.) The onion-shaped spires, which we were to see in other places, were charmingly Russian. We toured the Catherine Palace, 985 feet long, a superb example of Russian Baroque. Each room seemed larger and more opulent than the last. Standing in the Great Hall felt like standing in the center of Lincoln Center bound by walls heavily gilded in gold. The skylike ceiling was covered with paintings of Russian military victories.

From St. Petersburg we flew Aeroflot to Moscow. The trip by taxi to the airport was unnerving. I glanced at the gas gauge and it was on empty. The airport was an hour away. I pointed it out to the driver. He just shrugged. I held my breath. Then it happened - the driver suddenly pulled over. "Flat tire!" are two words you don't want to hear in any language when you're on the way to catch an airplane. Especially since we knew that at some airports in Russia they stop taking luggage forty five minutes before the plane leaves. Fortunately, with my mania for time, I had allowed for earthquakes, floods, accidents and yes, flat tires. We still got to the airport in time. Thank heavens he had a spare. And, I hope he gets his gas gauge fixed before other tourists suffer more angst. The plane was large and sparsely filled. The seats were stiff and uncomfortable and the aircraft seemed old. We were happy when it landed safely. What surprised us was the way people stood up to get their belongings from the overhead bins while the plane was still taxiing to it's position near the terminal. We departed from an unusually large exit that came down from the rear center of the plane. After giving appropriate thanks to whatever Gods govern flying, we boarded a bus to take us to the terminal.

Our hotel in Moscow was the Metropole. If we thought prices were high in St. Petersburg, we were in for a surprise — a breakfast buffet here was \$28 U.S. dollars. Compare that to an average Russian pension of \$30 a month! We quickly found other places to eat. Our guide in Moscow was not as friendly as the one in St. Petersburg. Natasha didn't like the United States and what the U.S. was doing to the Serbs. She felt that



Each room of the Catherine Palace seemed larger than the last.

the Russians and Serbs had much in common, including the cyrillic language. Moscow, to us, felt cold and unfriendly. There was a great deal of construction in the main section and it was difficult getting around.

We did tour Red Square and the Kremlin. "Kreml" means citadel or fortress. There are many Kremains. But the one in Moscow has come to symbolize the mystery and power of Russia.

The Borovitsky Tower is one of three gates to the Kremlin and is 150 feet high. Once inside, Red Square was large and imposing. Massive, low buildings give it its shape. Our mind's eye focused on TV correspondents



The Borovitsky Tower.

(Continued on next page)

standing in front of St. Basil giving their nightly reports. We pictured sullen Kremlin chiefs standing in a fur-coated row atop one of the square's buildings, reviewing booted troops, gear-grinding tanks and portable pointed missiles.

The colorful onion-shaped domes of St. Basil were exciting and even more so at night when the lights heightened their shapes. St. Basil was commissioned by Ivan the Terrible to celebrate a military victory in 1552. The central chapel rises 107 feet and is surrounded by eight tower-like chapels. Each chapel is topped by an onion dome carved with its own distinct pattern. Legend has it that the Czar blinded the architect when the cathedral was finished to ensure he would never create such a masterpiece again.

We paid extra to see the display of crown jewels of Russia at the Diamond Treasury. Impressive. The value of the crowns, used only once for the coronation ceremonies, could balance their budget and ours. Incidentally, one thousand rubles is worth about twenty five cents in U.S. money. When we had visited Russia about six years ago, the exchange rate was



Don and Sandy in front of St. Basil in Red Square

eight rubles to the dollar. Now, it was over four thousand rubles to the dollar.

The Czar Bell was fun to see. The bell weighs more than 200 tons and is 20 feet high. Damaged when it was cast, it has never been rung. In a funny way, it seemed to symbolize a Russia that might have been. The bell stands in front of the Arsenal, which is the largest building in the Kremlin. Built in 1701 by Peter the Great, it now houses government offices.

Our dream to see the Bolshoi Ballet came true. The theater reminded us of the La Scala theater in Milan in size and design. We had box seats, which cost Muscovites about fifteen U.S. dollars. We had to purchase ours from the tour company for thirty five dollars. Other tourists in our box had paid scalpers fifty five dollars. Whatever the price, the performance was well worth it. The ballet was "Bayadere." An English libretto helped



The Czar Bell

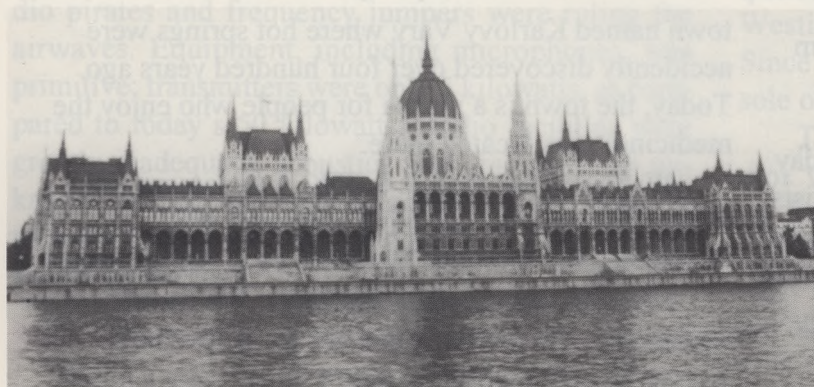


The Matthias Church in Buda.

us understand the action. The audience was well dressed and most appreciative of the performers. Each solo was greeted with applause and cheers that stretched the time of the ballet to well over three hours.

Leaving Moscow was physically difficult. Long lines at the airport to have our visa and papers checked seemed to take forever. In danger of missing our flight to Budapest, I maneuvered Sandy and our luggage to a VIP area and talked our way through in time.

Our next stop was Budapest. The city, divided into Buda and Pest by the Danube, was a joy to visit. The people were friendly and the food was much better and less expensive than in Russia. We toured the city on our own. The Elizabeth Bridge connected Buda and Pest and it was easy to walk back and forth between the two areas.



The Parliament Building in Pest.

Old World architecture abounded and could be seen in the Royal Palace on Castle Hill in Buda and in the Parliament Building in Pest. Another example of this kind of architecture is the Matthias Church in Buda. Founded in 1250, Hapsburg rulers Fran Joseph I and Charles IV were crowned here. The importance of church life and activity was obvious in the opulence and detail of the interior. After spending a few days in Budapest, we flew on to Praha (Prague) in Czechoslovakia. Of all the cities in this trip, this is the one we would want to see again. The old town square with a 15th century Astronomical clock was a magnet for crowds. At each hour a skeleton tipped over an hour-glass. Doors opened, and the 12 apostles paraded across the clock. Then, a cock flapped its wings and crowed. It beats the hell out of a wake-up call.

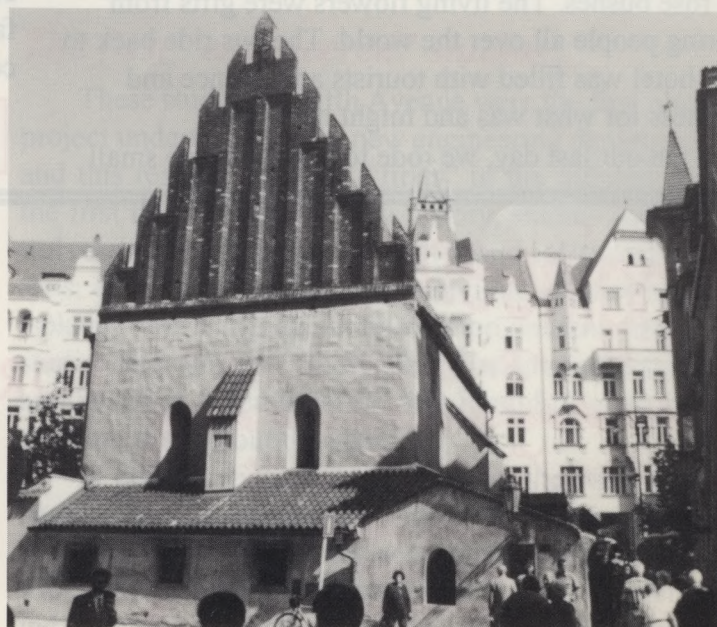
Our stops included the Prague Castle and Wenceslas Square. At the top of the square is the Czech National Museum. In 1969, a student set



The Old Town Square in Prague

himself on fire here to protest the Russian invasion of his country. What fascinated us most of all was the

Jewish Quarter in Prague, located only a few blocks away from the Hotel Intercontinental. The ghetto is extremely well preserved. The Old Synagogue, built in the 13th century, has a main hall which is the only existing medieval-type hall of its kind. The museum in the quarter is rich in artifacts because Hitler kept thousands of items intending to maintain a museum of "a race that no longer exists." His "thousand year Reich" never lasted as long as any of the artifacts. Originally there were about thirty-five thousand Jews living here.

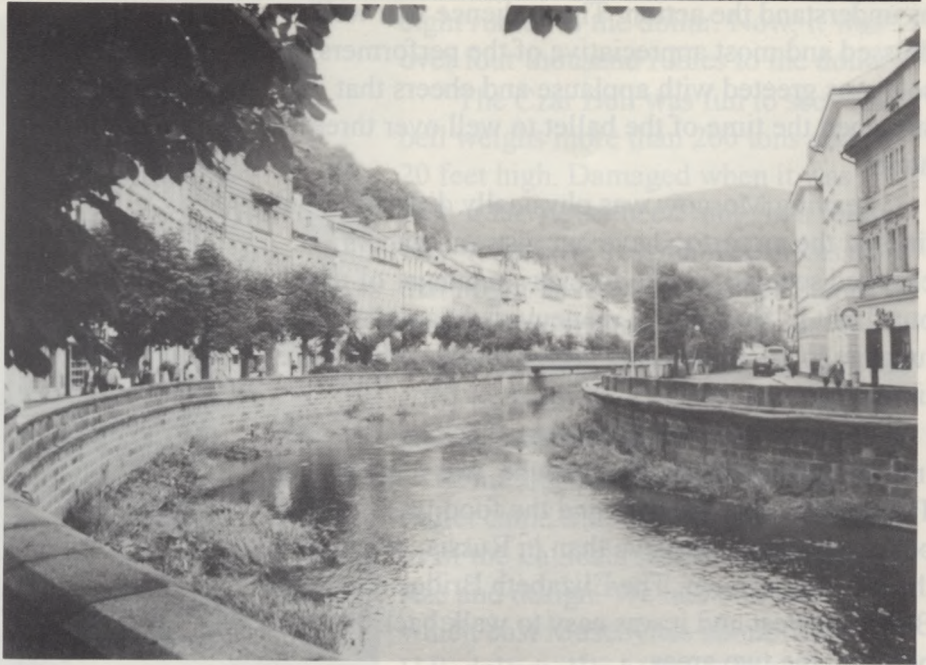


The 13th Century Synagogue.

(Continued on next page)

After the Holocaust, only twelve hundred Jews returned. The Pinkas Synagogue, built in 1479, is now a memorial to the thousands of Jews murdered during the Holocaust. Visitors silently marched through the various rooms. Each room was empty of everything except the names of victims alphabetically inscribed on the walls. The names filled the walls from floor to ceiling. Like the names on the Vietnam Wall, they were reminders of those who had lived before and live again because of their legacy in stone. We paused at the names under the letter "L." I was shocked. I stared, unbelieving at the inscriptions. There, bursting forth to my eyes, stabbing at my stomach, were the names of four members of the Luftig family, my family! My grandparents had come to America from Czechoslovakia and these names were most likely relatives who died because one man made hate a deadly way of life. That hate followed us the next day to the small town of Lidice. The town no longer exists. The Nazis destroyed it in 1942 razing every building to the ground, killing every one of the four thousand men, women and children who lived there. It was in retribution for the death of a single German officer killed by a youth from Lidice. All that remains is a museum with pictures and mementoes next to a field of rose bushes. The living flowers were gifts from caring people all over the world. The bus ride back to our hotel was filled with tourists and silence and sadness for what was and might have been.

On our last day, we rode to a picturesque small



Karlovy Vary.

town named Karlovy Vary where hot springs were accidentally discovered over four hundred years ago. Today, the town is a mecca for people who enjoy the medicinal spas located there.

We flew from Prague to JFK. Our camera was filled with pictures, our mind crammed with memories, our emotions disturbed by a wall of names.

My wife, Sandy, and I are lucky. We travel extensively. No matter where we go, it still feels wonderful and exciting to return home to the United States. We love to move quickly through immigration sections that say "U.S. Citizens Here." America has its faults but it also has the best of everything a free country can give you. □

Don Luftig, former TV writer, producer, director for WNBC-TV in New York. He and Sandy live in North Caldwell, NJ.

"Engineering,"

"Break for lunch."

Our Luncheon Speciality

Salisbury Steak

Onion Sauce

Whipped Potatoes

1.45

FOR GOODNESS



Sager's....

Sager's last menu,
Nov. 30, 1967

Sent in by PN'er Don Gogarty

NBC Engineering -- a fifty-year history (1927-1977)

Part One — by W. A. Howard

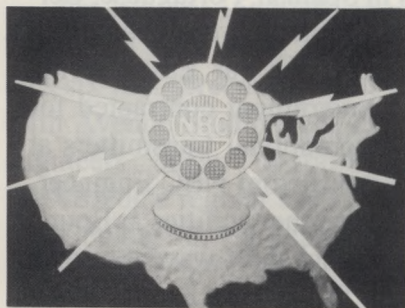
*Ed Note: Excerpts from the 1977 **RCA ENGINEER**. Bill Howard joined NBC Engineering Development in 1946. After working on the development of live and film television cameras, he became involved with the engineering and installation of the original television plant for NBC in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1948-49. He managed technical operations for NBC stations in Cleveland and Philadelphia until 1960, when he returned to the NBC Engineering Development group in New York, where he served as a Senior Engineer. Bill retired in 1979.*

When NBC was formed in September 1926, the young radio industry was in relative chaos — radio pirates and frequency jumpers were ruling the airwaves. Equipment, including microphones, was primitive; transmitters were only 5 kilowatts, as compared to today's 50 kilowatts; studio facilities were grossly inadequate; acoustics was practically an unknown science; technical standards had not been established; and there was practically no control over station allocations.

Radio — from novelty to network

Nonetheless, there was a tremendous increase in the number of radio stations, from 600 in 1922 to 1400 by 1924. Most were operated as promotional sidelines or hobbies by businesses such as Westinghouse, General Electric, Wanamaker's, Bamberger's, and the Telephone Company. KDKA, one of the first stations on the air in the United States, was typical — it operated from a cloakroom at the Westinghouse factory in Pittsburgh.

The young industry lived on the novelty factor, but as the novelty wore off, the mortality was high.



1926 Radio Network Logo

From 1924 to 1926, the year NBC was formed, the number of stations had declined from 1400 to 620. The improved programming that came with the network had a great

deal to do with keeping the entire radio industry from disappearing.

At the time NBC was formed, its ownership was divided among General Electric (50%), Westinghouse, (20%) and RCA (30%). The NBC Engineering Department began in September 1926, when it was formed of engineers from radio stations WEAf and WJZ, and the American Telephone and Telegraph Co. (AT&T). New York pioneer radio stations, WEAf and WJZ, were NBC's only properties. At that time, their engineers were the most experienced in the new technology of broadcasting.

On January 1, 1930 RCA acquired the General Electric and Westinghouse interests in NBC. Since that date, RCA has been the sole owner of NBC.

The NBC network's first studios were in the AT&T Building on lower Broadway, New York, that was the home of WEAf, originally owned by the Telephone Company. Inadequate for NBC's operation, the young network moved into new studios at 711 Fifth Avenue in late 1927. They were designed and constructed by the NBC Engineering Department.

The first "engineered" studios

These studios on Fifth Avenue were the first major project undertaken by the new engineering department, and this resulted in many "firsts" in the industry. For the first time in broadcasting history, studios and control rooms were constructed with sound-isolation materials; each studio had its own individual control room, isolated with a tripleglass observation window into the studio. The complete studio plant was airconditioned — another first — temperature and humidity were held constant throughout the year.

In designing these eight studios, the NBC engineers began to experiment with reverberation control in studio space. Many new acoustical treatments were tried; provisions for adjustment were made by including generous amounts of draping. These developments



Early Condenser Microphone

(Continued on next page)

in architectural design, sound isolation, acoustic treatment, air conditioning, and technical facilities became the basis for building all future NBC studios, and many became industry standards.

Rapid network expansion soon outmoded the Fifth Avenue studios. By 1930 the NBC Engineering Department started design and construction of a large broadcasting center in the Rockefeller Center Complex.

No effort or expense was spared to make this center the finest in the broadcasting world. Every new proposed feature was tried in model form before incorporating it into the plan. The "floating studio" concept was developed, where the inside walls of each studio were sound-isolated from the outside walls and from the main building structure. This would prevent microphones from picking up the rumble of subways and the heavy noise of street traffic. These studios had the best acoustics and sound-proofing in the world.

The first program from "Radio City" originated on November 13, 1933. There were 34 studios, a master control, and a transmission switching facility that could service two independent networks. This design has only recently been replaced with the modern solid-state switchers. The big horseshoe master control room was in constant use until 1963, a span of 30 years, and the transmission facility was used until 1973.

All the Radio City studios were two floors high, with observation rooms on the second floor for visitors, guided tours, and clients. The largest and most famous studio, 8H, could seat 1500 and became the home of the world renowned NBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Arturo Toscanini.



The horseshoe Radio Master Control room.

The Red and Blue networks

NBC established the first formal, full-fledged network organization. The first 1926 network program was carried by 21 independent stations, as far west as Kansas City. They soon became known as "affiliated stations."

The expansion was rapid, going from 19 stations in 1926 to 180 ten years later. NBC purchased additional stations including WTAM, Cleveland, in 1930, KPO, San Francisco, and WMAQ, Chicago, in 1931 and KOA, Denver, in 1941.

The demand for network service led immediately to the establishment of a second network on January 1, 1927. The two networks, the Red and Blue, derived their names from the colored maps showing their coverage. A special Pacific Coast Network of seven stations was also created in early 1927 to accommodate the time zone difference. By the end of 1941, NBC had 243 affiliated stations, including the six NBC-owned stations serviced by the two networks.

In 1941 the FCC decreed that no organization could control more than one broadcasting network. As a result, RCA segregated the assets and operation of the Blue Network. In 1943 this company was sold and became the American Broadcasting Company -- the third network.

International short-wave broadcasting

Another phase of NBC engineering efforts that had a tremendous influence on international relations and news coverage, especially during World War II, was research and experimentation in short-wave broadcasting.

From 1926 to 1929 NBC intermittently short-waved programs overseas with assistance from RCA Communications, Inc. By 1939, when Hitler invaded Poland, NBC had engineered and installed two powerful short-wave radio transmitters at Bound Brook, N.J. Programs and news in Spanish, Portuguese, German, French, Italian, and English were beamed to Latin America, Europe, and the Far East. During World War II, the U.S. government contracted for full-time use of NBC's international transmitters at Bound Brook. With assistance from NBC Engineering, the government expanded the facilities at Bound Brook and built three additional short-wave transmitters at Dixon, Calif. These facilities at Bound Brook and Dixon were operated and maintained under gov-

ernment contract by NBC engineers.

At the end of World War II, the State Department took over the licenses of the short-wave transmitters at Bound Brook and Dixon and subsequently transferred these facilities to the United States Information Agency for the Voice of America. NBC engineers continued operating these transmitters until 1963 in California and 1964 in New Jersey.

The birth of television

Even before NBC was formed in 1926, RCA was engaged in intensive television research. Immediately after NBC was established, the NBC Engineering Department joined RCA in a joint effort of developing and field-testing a television system for public broadcast.

In 1928, RCA and NBC engineers began operating the first experimental television station, W2XBS, in Van Cortland Park, New York City. The system produced a barely recognizable image on a screen about the size of a playing card, but it was television. The camera system was a 48-line mechanical scanning system using a rotating disc and four large photocells for light pickup. The image scanned was Felix the Cat, bathed in high-intensity light and rotating, on a windup turntable to provide a moving object. This mechanical system presented a number of severe problems. In order to see the image at the receiver, an identical rotating disc was necessary. Both had to rotate in precise synchronization.

On January 16, 1930, an audience in the Proctor Theatre in New York, watched a program projected on a six-foot screen; the program originated at NBC's Fifth Avenue Studios. On July 30 of that year, NBC engineers began operating experimental station W2XBS on a regular basis.

October 30, 1931 saw the establishment of a New York, and television, landmark. Atop the Empire State Building NBC engineers erected the transmitting antenna for W2XBS as a predecessor to WNBT,

America's first television station. The system was upped from 48-lines to 120-line mechanical scanning at the camera, with an all-electronic receiver.

In 1933 the invention of the iconoscope pick-up tube by Dr. V.K. Zworykin at the RCA Laboratories, eliminated mechanical scanning at the camera. The RCA television system now became all electronic. These two developments laid the groundwork for a television system that eventually surpassed all the expectations of the RCA and NBC engineers working at that time.

NBC began broadcasting programs using 240-line pictures from the Empire State Building transmitter on the new all-electronic system in 1933. By 1936 NBC began broadcasting programs with 343-line pictures; in 1937 this was increased to 441. By 1938 NBC and RCA engineers had determined that television could soon be offered to the public.

On April 30, 1939, NBC inaugurated America's first television program service to the public at the opening of the New York World's Fair. Among the participants in this historic telecast were President Roosevelt, the first Chief Executive ever to be televised, and David Sarnoff, RCA Chief Executive Officer. With the exception of brief interruptions necessitated by changes in frequency assignment and standards, NBC's New York station

has telecast regularly scheduled programs continuously since that date.

By 1940 it was evident that new standards were needed and the FCC, appointed the National Television Systems Committee (NTSC), to recommend new standards. NBC engineers took an active part in this committee and had members on many of its

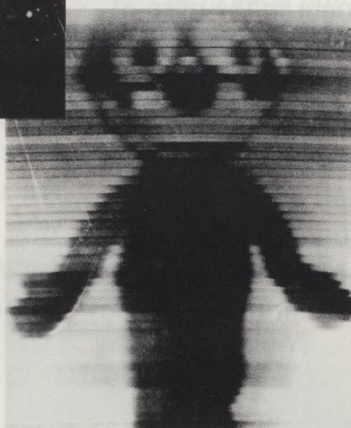
task forces. A majority of the field testing of the new standards was done in NBC's live studio 3H and film studio 3K in Radio City; the NBC transmitting facilities on the Empire State Building were also used. In 1941 the NTSC issued its report and the new standards were adopted for black-and-white television in the United States using 525 scanning lines. These standards, with minor modifications, are still in force today.

In June 1941, six months before Pearl Harbor,

(Continued on next page)



First TV Star, Felix the Cat.



NBC's television station in New York received the first commercial license in the United States and changed its call letters from W2XBS to WNBT. The first commercial television service was inaugurated on July 1st of that year with four advertising sponsors: Bulova Watch, Lever Brothers, Sun Oil, and Proctor and Gamble.

NBC Engineering and World War II

At the beginning of World War II, technical standards and radio development had been well established. NTSC standards for black-and-white television had recently been approved and commercial television was only six months old, but the war meant that technical development was drastically cut back. Few NBC engineers were seen in the industry for the next four years — many of them joined the Armed Services as communications experts. And some worked with research institutions, such as the Underwater Laboratories at Harvard University, developing highly specialized communication systems for the Armed Forces.

The New York NBC Engineering Department in cooperation with RCA, successfully developed and tested an airborne television system known as the "Block" Project for the Armed Forces. The system consisted of a small television camera in the nose of a military plane with receiving stations on the ground. Before the end of the war, NBC and RCA engineers scored another first by demonstrating a plane-to-plane tv system to the Armed Forces.

Members of the engineering staff assisted government agencies on many other wartime projects, most of which were secret. In all, NBC Engineering undertook more than 30 different research projects for the government during World War II.

Post-war television

NBC's confidence in television at the end of World War II was summed up by Niles Trammell, President of NBC, as he told the FCC in October 1945, "We are no longer required to predicate plans for television on the winning of the war: Victory has been won; peace is here; television is ready to go." Television now had the green light.

Many technical developments in television made by NBC and RCA engineers during the war were now available and could be shown for the first time. The most important of these was the super-sensitive image

orthicon camera tube developed in the RCA Laboratories for the Block Project. This pick-up tube was 100 times more light-sensitive than the iconoscope. The new tube was capable of producing excellent pictures with 250 to 300 foot-candles of light, while the iconoscope used in the now obsolete studio 3H cameras required as much as 2400 footcandles.

With the war over, NBC faced a new crisis in television. Because of the tight security on the new orthicon, no cameras were available for commercial television expansion using that new pick-up tube. NBC needed to expand its live and film studio facilities in New York, and the Washington station was scheduled to go on the air by mid-1947.

The Engineering Department was called upon to meet this urgent and immediate need. The observation room above the experimental television studio 3H was converted into a laboratory to develop and fabricate live cameras using the war developed image orthicon and fabricate new film cameras using the already proven iconoscope. On June 27, 1947, NBC's television station WNBW in Washington, DC went on the air using the film and live cameras developed by NBC engineers. The studios and transmitters, located in the Wardman Park Hotel, was the first television installation NBC had engineered and installed outside Radio City.

Studio 8G was converted to television early in 1948 and went on the air as a commercial studio using NBC engineered cameras. This was the first large radio studio converted to television. This demonstrated the excellent foresight of the original studio designers who made them two floors high. The high ceilings accommodated television lighting and scenery without major architectural changes. □

*(To be continued in the next issue of **PN**.)*



Microphone Logos from the 30s to the 60s

GLOBE-TROTTING

by Dan Grabel

with the Grabels

I had no intention of writing about the travels of my spouse Pat and myself until Peg and Pete Peterson were intrigued about a recent adventure in China and said I should put it to paper for PN. Fortunately my wife, who is also a writer already was at work on a slide show about our April trip and so I felt I could crib liberally and not tax my own memory too much.

A travel agent friend told us over diner that she was going on a "familiarization" trip, and asked would we like to come along. We had no intention of traveling to China since this winter we had already spent time in Barbados, Arizona, skiing New Hampshire, and had a Utah ski trip booked, too. Three weeks later we were enroute to Shanghai.

Before departing, we quickly got some shots: tetanus, polio, hepatitis A. Bought Imodium for stomach problems, toilet paper, a bottle of peanut butter, crackers, candies, extra camera batteries, plenty of film and video tape. Strangely, the Chinese won't permit 16mm movie cameras, but you can shoot anything with a camcorder!

Ugh, that's a long ride. Wisely, we stayed over in San Francisco in what would have been a 24 hour trip, door to door from Scarsdale.

There were 18 people on the trip, and about 3 days into the tour one fellow traveller said I looked familiar. I think we were in Suzhou or Wuxi. We went through the usual routine - work place, hometown, schools, and it turned out he was Tony Wong, who had once worked in NBC's BOC, and his wife Daisy was a travel agent on this trip! He's now with cable tv in Manhattan.

The trip started in Shanghai and then we went by train to Hangzhou, Suzhou, Wuxi, Nanjing and flew to Beijing. The Chinese government wants to expand the tourist

attractions and so some lesser cities were on this tour. Our advice: do Shanghai, Beijing, Xian (home of the terra cotta army), and Hong Kong.

The food, you'll love your local Chinese restaurant when you get home. Breakfasts in the western style hotels (all first rate if you stop at 4 or 5 star places) compares with the best grub anywhere. We had lunch and dinners in local restaurants, middle class or better, but we skipped the routine several times to ditch the tour dining and eat at our hotels so we could get a good meal.

The people are very friendly. No one demands a couple of yuan (the local dough) if you snap their picture. Instead, they'll smile and even emote. Of course, you don't wander off looking for trouble, but no one reported any criminal problems in our two weeks.

The country is massive. The population - five times that of the USA, most of them on bicycles. As a tourist, you're in the company of a well-trained guide. Don't expect to get any good answers if you bring up a human rights situation. The guide probably will say he was out of town the week of that riot! One guide stayed with us throughout the trip - he was from the main office in Beijing. Others, informed in local lore, joined us in each city. These people go to college for 3 years to learn English and then spend at least that much time additional training to be a guide. The pay - the same as most everyone else in China - about US\$75 a month. I repeat US\$75 a month. Rent is

(Continued on next page)



Dan and Pat at the Great Wall. No trip to China is complete unless you see this ancient wall of defence.

cheap, food is cheap, medical care is cheap. Being a guide is a good job, like a bell hop or chambermaid as you can expect good cash tips in foreign currency!

Quick thoughts: Shanghai. You must walk along the Bund. That's the wide, riverside street where all the European corporations had offices in the pre-World War two days and there were many embassies. Its still a popular promenade. You'll end up buying souvenirs, cloisonne-type porcelain, silk goods, toy gismos. All cheap. Yes, everyone haggles.

Train travel. Ever heard of soft seats and hard seats? They got 'em here. We did our traveling on soft seats. That means upholstered in the waiting rooms and on the trains. All along the tracks we travelled there were small farms being worked by women and children with hand tools. We saw few farm animals and few tractors. But lots of land under cultivation, and most farmers' homes near the plots seemed reasonably good.

In the cities, which really seemed to be spread out as it took hours for our buses to get from one tourist sight to the other, you find the modern 5 star hotels (joint adventures with foreigners) cheek to jowl with ancient slum-like buildings which one day will fall under the demolition ball. It is like having a one story hovel next door to the Waldorf.

Rainy days, and we had a lot of them, the locals still travel by bike, but they all wear the same type slickers designed for biking, all in bright colors so that the highway traffic looks like a rainbow.

Walk into a local food market street and its like a Hollywood scene... alive, colorful, noisy, vibrant, and you go crazy shooting pictures. The butcher shop, open air, what's with refrigeration, the side of beef, or whatever, is out there and they slice it up on demand. Want a chicken, or rabbit? They reach into the cage and you know it's fresh killed. Coffee - they're roasting it in a big wok. Spices. Teas. Condiments of all kinds in simple containers scooped out for you by the kilo. They grab up hot dumplings like we buy a hot dog. Sanitation is not job number one here, but the locals have been exposed to this sort of civilization so long that they must be immune.

Construction. Its everywhere. Huge cranes dot the cities as more and more sky scrapers go up, offices

and apartments. And the Chinese idea of space is ludicrous by western standards. For the average government-sponsored housing they figure 35 square feet is adequate for one person. That's 5 feet by 7 feet!!

But there must be substantial new money around because we saw many modern residential buildings. Didn't see any Mercedes Benz showrooms, or many modern cars on the road, but they must be out there somewhere.

What do the guides take you to see. Well, there isn't much art as we westerners know it for several reasons. One, they have their own kind of art such as brushwork calligraphy and drawings, a heck of lot of stuff was destroyed by the communists in the cultural revolution in the 1960s, and well before, in 1949, Chiang Kaishek and his fellow Koumingtung government, packed up the treasures in 20,000 wooden cases and shipped them off to Taiwan. They



The concrete barge built at the request of the Empress - It never leaves its mooring.

were put into the Palace Museum in 1965, (we toured it in 1977) and right now some of the best stuff is on display at the Metropolitan Museum on Fifth Avenue. We visited it recently and saw more treasures there in two hours than we saw in China in two weeks!

We went through several museums on our China visit, including the Ming tombs and the Forbidden City in Beijing, but saw little of impressive art. One reason, perhaps, as I am told by my wife, who is chief docent at the Katonah, New York Museum of Art, is that the Chinese consider their museums as repositories and not as places to display works of art.

Maybe so, but there ain't much left on the home turf.

Tiannamen Square, the world's largest piece of open real estate, is massive. On one end is Mao's tomb, where thousands of people line up by the hour to pass his bier. There's a body in there enclosed in glass. But we were told that the wax-like figure of the old Chairman Mao Zedong is indeed just that, a wax replica. Still they come. Hordes! One of our travel mates tucked his camera inside his raincoat when he got on line, and inched his way up for 15 minutes until he got to the door and was told, "No cameras!"

Also in Tiannamen Square we noticed a huge sign with blinking electric bulbs indicating the days and seconds until the moment in 1997 when the Chinese will take over Hong Kong. That will be a big day.

At the other end of this square is the entry to the Forbidden City - which is no longer forbidden since we and thousands of others tour it every day. About 500 years ago this was the residence of the emperor. It is massive, mostly concrete, all that traditional Chinese style architecture, pagoda, red tile roofs, lots of dragon motifs. As you walk through one complex with its Bhuddist temples and official structures you think you have seen it all. But you continue on, and there's more of the same. And more. I believe the emperor, his concubines, and some 10,000 of his best friends lived in the Forbidden City. The residences did not look like much. France's Louis the XIV would not book a night here on a trip out of town from Versailles! And Marco Polo? One story you hear in China is that old Marco Polo never made it to China. Yes, he got to somewhere in Asia maybe Persia and heard lots of stories about China, and like a good scribe, he recorded them and put them into his travel book. He just never got there. Its like Christopher Columbus discovering- America. He never got here. Hey, even Fodor doesn't claim to visit everyone of those places he publishes information about in his travel guides.

No trip to China is complete without a visit to the great wall. We made it. Its about an hour and a half bus ride from Beijing and the popular stop where

Nixon and Brinkley and everyone else visits is chock a block with souvenir stands, near the wall and along the wall. Originally it was built in several sections to keep out invaders and about a thousand years ago it was joined as one massive defense line. It was supposed to be wide enough for six horsemen, but its very steep in some places, and constructed with steps that no horse or chariot could navigate. I make it about 20 feet wide, and the wall is at least 20 feet high. There's no graffiti!

We brought along some stuff, hoping to swap with Chinese merchants. We had a nice pair of GAP stone-washed blue jeans, but we had a hard time selling them. The Chinese wanted Levis, and stone washed? Nah, they preferred the deeper blue color. We finally swapped them for a sweat shirt with the slogan, "I climbed the great wall!"

I used Marlboro cigarettes for tips and managed to trade two packs for skull caps with pigtails for our grand children. That and the silk kites we brought home were great successes.

We got a great taste of Chinese industry visiting factories that made silk thread, silk clothing, cloisonne-type porcelain, embroidery, hand-painted figures.

Prices. We bought hand-painted bottles, with the artist painting a scene *inside* the bottle with a tiny brush. Painstaking work that took a week's labor. We bought some for 35 yuan, about 4 dollars, and other pieces for 10 times that amount. We saw them on sale at a Salt Lake City museum for \$95 and \$235.

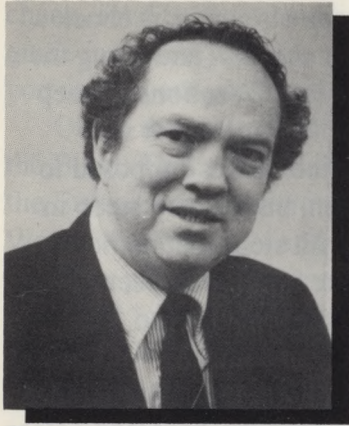
Impressive. The children's palaces. That's what they call the after school classes for gifted musicians and artists. We visited the classes and they all stopped the learning exercises and performed for the visitors. We saw classes in ballet, traditional instruments, also the violin, piano, and even Chinese chess.

One final note. Chinese music, with its own special scale is strange to western ears, but when you're in a restaurant or a theatre and they realize there are western visitors in the audience they all break out in a few familiar pieces - Jingle Bells, and Red River Valley, and when you depart, Auld Lang Syne. You have to applaud!

That's a brief view of the Grabel's visit to China. Want to get the full report? Go to one of my wife Pat's slide shows! □



A royal pose in pigtail hats.



Mort Hochstein

MEMORIES

The other day my wife caught me hugging a blonde. I couldn't help it. She'd seen me on a street corner and had run up arms wide open. The blonde, not my wife. "Mort," she exclaimed, "it's great to see you."

It was Liz Cheetham, a videotape editor I'd worked with for many years while at News Four. I caught her up on my happy retirement and when she left, I explained it all to Rollie.

"I can't help it," I mused, "I've got a memorable face."

She reluctantly agreed. "You're right. It happens all the time."

The last time it happened was in the local supermarket and again it was a woman, Imo Jones, also from local videotape. This time we caught up on our respective lives on the checkout line, but with no embracing.

It is one of the joys of life to meet old friends. Once we were standing outside a New York theater and along came Marvin Einhorn, who'd been our director when I worked on *Today*. Marvin and his wife talked with Rollie and me. We learned that he had become an actor in his best years and was appearing in regional theater and off-Broadway and had also done some movie work.

A few weeks later, we saw the Geena Davis movie, "A League of Their Own," about female baseball players during World War Two. Toward the end of the picture there was a scene featuring a bunch of male baseball owners. I nudged Rollie: "Gee, that guy looks a lot like Marvin Einhorn." She shushed me. Outside the theater we discussed it again and she said "Don't you remember? Marvin told you he was in a baseball movie."

I get caught up all the time by former fellow workers on airplanes and in theaters and supermarkets and often fumpf my way through the reunion until the old memory bank clicks in and coughs up the person's name. Sometimes it's hard to find a clue.

I'm dredging my memory for other instances, so let me divert to a story Al Morgan, my boss when he produced the *Today* show in the 1960's, told me about an even more memorable person. Al was at the theater in London and found himself sitting next to Gregory Peck, who'd been a guest on the *Today* show just a few months earlier. I quote:

"I didn't want to disturb his privacy, so I didn't say anything to him, although we had spent a lot of time together. At the intermission, however, Peck approached me and said: 'I really didn't want to bother you, Mr. Morgan, but I do want to ask you something.'"

"Go ahead," Al said, wondering what was to come. "There was a wonderful writer who worked with me when I was on the show," Peck said. "Tell me, please, how is Ben Kagan these days?"

Ben Kagan was one of the great characters on the *Today* Show staff. He'd worked on the \$64,000 Question and his greatest coup was discovering the Italian shoemaker who became famous for his knowledge of opera. They became good buddies and Ben went to Italy with the shoemaker.

That was Ben's distinction. He got very friendly with the talent he worked with. It was my experience that talent remembered you for about five minutes after they went on the air and you could bump into them on the street and they wouldn't know you. Not so with Ben Kagan.

And that was why Gregory Peck was so solicitous. Morgan and Kagan had done a remote at the Old Actors Home on the West Coast and Peck was host for the day. Before filming began, Peck said he'd have to leave at noon because he was taking his wife on a picnic. Morgan assured him they'd be finished well ahead of that time, since filming began at 7 a.m.

"Sure enough," Morgan recalled years later, "the camera broke down at about 10:30 and then again at 11:30."

"Peck asked if someone would phone his wife to say he'd be a little late and I asked Kagan to stick with Peck and keep him comfortable on the set--and they got along very well. That's where they got to know each other.

"But there's another side to the story," Morgan continued. "We finished at 12:45 and Peck asked us to call his wife to tell her he was on the way. As he was rushing off, one of the residents came over and said 'Mr. Peck, you may not remember me, but I was a technician on four of your pictures and my wife would think me remiss if I didn't invite you for tea in our cottage.'"

"Peck couldn't refuse. We phoned his wife again, while Peck and Ben Kagan sat with the couple talking over old times on each of the movies they'd worked on together, Peck secretly looking at his watch, and Kagan doing everything he could to get him going home. Finally at 1:45, the resident stood up and declared: 'Mr. Peck, I don't want to be rude, but I'm going to have to ask you to leave. The din-

ner bell is going to ring any minute and if we don't get there on time, we get shut out."

Of course Ben, last heard from as living in Texas, must have been sweating when they made the movie about Charles Van Doren and the quiz show scandals. He was part of the crew and his career suffered because of that involvement. Fortunately for Ben, he wasn't mentioned in the movie.

Morgan was the guy who rescued Kagan from the unemployment line when no one else would touch him, putting him on Today as a summer replacement writer. When September came around, Kagan was summoned to Morgan's office, expecting that his job was about to end. Instead, Morgan invited him to join the staff as a regular and Kagan broke into tears.

"Why are you crying?" Morgan asked. "I've got to tell you," Kagan answered, "First off, I've been through hell after being blacklisted because I worked on the \$64,000

Question and, secondly, people my age don't get hired to permanent positions. I'm very grateful."

"Morgan tells another Kagan story. "During the Goldwater presidential campaign, we were in Arizona and learned that his people had hired a plane to fly over the city trailing a banner with the Goldwater slogan "In your heart, you know he's right." Ben hired a plane--he almost got fired for it--to fly nearby and gave camera instructions to pan from the Goldwater plane to the one that followed it. This one also carried a banner which read: "We also take in washing, in case we lose."

"We've strayed here. We started off musing about a familiar face and shifted over to a distinctive, unforgettable personality. Ben Kagan was one of the more memorable people on the writing side at NBC in the sixties. All you have to do is ask Gregory Peck. □

Mort and Rolaine live in Tenaflly, NJ.



Herb Oxman
Hank Folkerts
Dorothy Iorio
Renee Oxman
Seated
Iris Folkerts
Doris & Walt Vetter

Renee Oxman,
Walt Vetter, Herb
Oxman, Dorothy
Iorio

Vinnie Gabriel
Art Poppele
Ed Stolzenberger

Our southern counterpart gathered together March 15th for their annual reunion at the West Palm Beach Comfort Inn. They had a tremendous turnout of 115, counting spouses.

Their latest newsletter reports 7 new members bringing their total to over 200.

Twelve years ago they started their group with sixteen members - they've come a long way. Good luck on another twelve years - and more!



David Brinkley on David Brinkley

by Dan Gabel

I was given a copy of David Brinkley's autobiography some months ago and I have to admit I did not rush to read it because of the press of other things to do and trips to take.

Well, in time for this issue of PN, I have read it all, enjoyed it all, and recommend it as a good helping of nostalgia for anyone who has put in a couple of decades at 30 Rock.

Brinkley writing, sounds like Brinkley reading. He regularly emphasizes a point with repetition and that, of course, has worked well for him for some 4 decades. The book was on the NYTimes best seller list for weeks and weeks and while you may not find *YOUR* name in it, you will find many you knew or worked with. David Brinkley does not suffer fools and he identifies many of them in this book. Fact is, I thought he was too honest when he wrote about the foibles of his kin. But, here, you get it all. Warts and worse.

I am going to quote or paraphrase liberally, (not enough for copyright infringement, I trust), but if you want to savor the real David Brinkley, buy a copy. Twenty-five bucks retail, but probably a lot less at Barnes & Noble.

He enjoyed growing up in Wilmington, North Carolina, and survived taunting when he got a job in nearby Georgia but was described as a "foreigner" when Governor Eugene Talmage asked Brinkley where he hailed from.

He was working in Charlotte, N.C. for the UP early in world war two, after getting a medical discharge from the army and was bored with the job so he asked a radio news director friend to arrange an interview in Washington with CBS. In the capital, the CBS guy refused to see him so he walked 4 blocks to the NBC News office, went in cold, and "was hired in 10 minutes and worked there for thirty-eight years." Yes, that's the way it *used* to be.

Brinkley on people: Eisenhower. Brinkley recalls that you could run an Ike news conference film though the Moviola a dozen times and not get a coherent sentence. How true. I worked the Today overnight

news shift in those days (Bob Sorenson and film editing crew over at 7th avenue and we news editors over at 30 Rock) and we had a similar struggle. Brinkley:

"Ike's ad-libbed sentences bounced around like a

Dodge car at a carnival --- with nobody quite sure what he said.

Robert E. Kintner, a news president, in the '60s. Brinkley: "He was short, stooped, no neck, slits for eyes, gravelly voice, half blind, bow ties and a taste for the bottle."

Brinkley also says Kintner built a news department that was as good or better than any in broadcasting at that time.

Bill Small, formerly a "third-string news executive who became president of NBC News" and tried to recreate it in the image of CBS. Said Brinkley, who had a run-in, with Small, at CBS one informant

had said "Small is small." We agree.

Gerald Ford "No genius, but a nice man, easy for all of us in the press." Ronald Reagan: "Funny and clever." That's the Brinkley description, but he knew him better than most of us. We don't agree.

Brinkley boldly described Tennessee Senator Estes Kefauver as a ladies man. Speaking on a presidential campaign he might spot an attractive woman in the audience and tell one of his staff to invite her to a private drink, or dinner, "or more." And adds Brinkley, "Of those I saw invited, many accepted."

LBJ was a great politician, but boorish. Brinkley recalls a quiet Sunday when he and his wife Susan were having a pleasant picnic on a friend's Maryland farm when a government helicopter hove into view and plunked down beside them. The picnickers were astonished when the pilot said the White House had tracked them down and Johnson wanted the Brinkleys to join him immediately at Camp David for diner and a movie show. The Brinkleys hesitated and then hopped aboard the copter. During the movie LBJ fell asleep several times, had the other guest, Jack Valenti, rewind the movie to the start so LBJ could follow the story!

Gulf Oil, as all must recall, was the sponsor of all



those instant specials NBC put on the air in the 50s and 60s. Brinkley tells a great story. A fastidious company, very aware of image, one of Gulf's inspectors once walked into the ladies room of a gas station and spotted a vending machine for condoms. The inspector demanded immediate removal, but the station manager refused! "Are you crazy, I get \$100 a month out of that machine and there's never a condom in it!" In the 1960s what woman would tell the manager she plunked 50 cents in the machine and never got her condom!

Brinkley's departure from NBC after nearly 4 decades was heart-wrenching. By 1981, the Huntley-Brinkley show was a memory, Bill Small was trying to tinker with NBC Magazine with David Brinkley, and I get the impression that Brinkley wasn't getting paid what he thought he was worth to the network. As requested he was released from his contract and quickly moved to ABC where Boone Arledge and Dick Wald (who had once been an NBC vice president, created This Week with David Brinkley.

Brinkley sums up the Brinkley career: "Credit it all to luck, modest talent and chancing to be in the right place at the right time to start modestly in a new and promising industry and grow with it." □



"We thought a rolltop desk looked good on the set. It did. Antiques shops sold out of them. I still use one."

NBC BUYS PIECE OF THE ROCK

By Dan Gabel

After 63 years as a tenant at 30 Rockefeller Plaza NBC purchased 51 percent of the space in the building in May, areas it is now occupying, for \$440-million and buyer and seller are both happy that the company's home will be right where it is forever. The deal includes space in two other Rock Center buildings but the Today show area will remain on a rental basis until the year 2022.

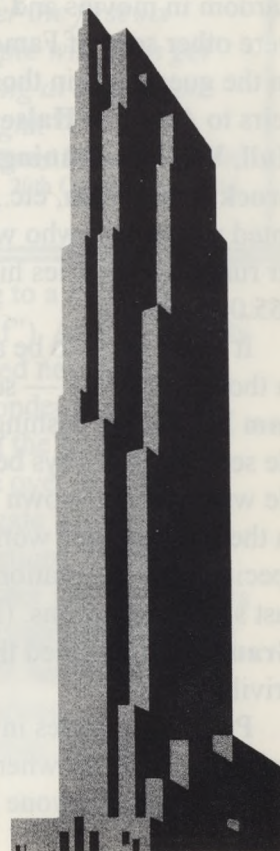
The purchase covers 1.6-million square feet on 28 floors. NBC moved into 30 Rock in 1933 when the building opened and had a 50 year lease, which it renewed in 1986. It was about to get a hefty increase next year, so the rationalization is that in the long run the company will be saving money.

In 1989 at the height of the real estate boom, the Rockefeller family sold an 80 percent stake in the Radio City operation to Mitsubishi Estate Group which apparently hoped that the economy would continue to improve and that rents might go to \$65 a square foot. But the recession of the 90's zapped that hope and Rock Center was getting half of that price. That deal involved 12 of the Center's 16 buildings.

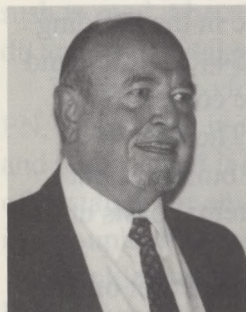
Last year Mitsubishi threw in the towel and filed for bankruptcy protection. A group of buyers, including David Rockefeller, Goldman Sachs and Tishman Speyer Properties, now own the properties for which they've paid \$1.151-billion.

In 1986 the Rockefellers sold the former Exxon Building, at a peak price before the '87 real estate crash for almost a billion to Mitsui Fudosan. The McGraw-Hill Building, has always been a co-ownership enterprise. Two other buildings in the center are privately owned.

Well this looks like the place for some personal comment - the Rockefellers sure know when to sell high and buy low. □



THE EAR BENDERS



By Dick Dudley

This Year we celebrate NBC's 70th Anniversary and I am happy to have spent 45 of those years in its warm embrace. So you can see why I have many pleasant moments that keep popping out of my memory.Joined the Page Staff in 1938 and being welcomed aboard by the other pages, one said, "I'm **Effram Zimbalist**." I thought he was kidding and I said I was Yasha Heifitz. He was E.Z., Jr. and went on to stardom in movies and TV.... There were other sons of Famous Fathers on the guest staff in those days; heirs to **Admiral Halsey**, **Henry Hull**, **William Jennings Bryan**, **Brock Pemberton**, etc., and talented youngsters who went to better rungs and salaries higher than \$65.00 a month.

It was a thrill to be at 30 Rock in those early days — seeing **Graham McNamee** dashing past you. He seemed to always be in a hurry. He was the best known announcer in the business and worked on a special level. No station breaks, just special programs. (**Ben Grauer** later attained that special privilege.)

Pages and guides in their smart uniforms could go wherever they wished without anyone saying,

"Can I help you.? — I loved to watch and listen to the Toscanini rehearsals, especially when the maestro went into a rage. One day he threw down his baton and yelled, in Italian, to the orchestra. In translation his diatribe was: "Someday I am going to open a brothel and none of you can get in."

It was on my birthday that I was selected by **Pat Kelly** to be a Junior Announcer, my salary grew to \$125.00 a month. Jr. announcers did everything that seniors did, except commercials.

The schedule was filled with 15 and 30 minute programs featuring bands and singers — **Ralph Blain**, **Clark Denis**, **Elaine Malbin**, **Paul Laval**, **H. Leopold Spitalny**, **Dick Liebert** from Radio City Music Hall or **Dr. Charles Courboin**, organist of St. Pats Cathedral. (There was a complete pipe organ in 3B and a Hammond in ever studio. They supplied the scores for all the soaps, played by **Rosa Rio**, **Ann Leaf** and **Paul Taubman**.)

There were few scripts for the music shows — announcers were given a music sheet with a list of many selections and announcements had to be ad-libbed — this led to many amusing slips. **Milton Cross** introducing the Pope: "Now from Rome, here is Pipe Peeus." Also in a Papal event, **Ben Grauer** announcing the entrance of the Holy Father in Yankee Stadium said: "The Pope is now rounding 3rd base and heading for home." The Pope was safe and said Mass for the thousands there. **Jack Costello**, in his Knight of Malta regalia, read the Epistle. Jack was the announcer of "The Catholic Hour", on which he became "John

Patrick Costello."

There were some scripts for programs and some of the cleverest were written by **Ernie Birnbaum** for "The Chamber Music Society of Lower Basin Street" and perfectly read by **Gene Hamilton**. (Dr. Gino.) He, Birnbaum, and I got together and created an 8AM jazz record show called "Jam With Your Breakfast." Little old ladies complained because I didn't play a morning hymn or have a march around the breakfast table. My hymn and march was "Satchmo" tooting "Oh Didn't He Ramble. I stuck to Ernie's script except for one morning when the company asked me to talk with a D.J. that they were going to pick up from Washington, DC — his name was **Arthur Godfrey**. He didn't last long at NBC — wonder what happened to him?

To be an announcer in those days, you had to be renaissance man and be ready for any kind of chore. **Ed Herlihy** had to be a comedian on "The Horn and Hardart Children's Hour" and a dignified commentator on "The Kraft Theater." I had to pronounce, frog in the throat, Hebrew word on "The Eternal Light" program and once had to cover the United Nations meeting when General Marshall spoke of some plan he had for European nations. The News Department was not large in those days.

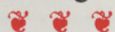
Pat Kelly was the head of announcers and staff was so large he was allowed to have two secretaries to help him schedule both the Red and Blue Networks. Pat was quite a character with a gift for description. One of his epithets I remember: "She has a face like a pan full of worms."

The staff had its own organiza-

tion called "The Feedback Club." Dues were collected each month and the savings paid for gifts and a party each year, which anyone who might be useful in a commercial way was invited. I remember one at the Warwick Hotel. I was acting as greeter with a guest book to sign. **General Sarnoff** arrived with **Robert** and signing, turned to Robert and asked, "What is this we are here for?" I'm sorry I didn't hear what his son told him.

When the government demanded that NBC rid itself of the Blue Net, half of the staff went with it and we lost **Milton Cross**, **Kevin Keech**, **George Ansbrough**, **Doug Brownings**, **Gene Hamilton** (who returned later), **Tommy O'Brien** and others I can't remember.

Today, after 70 years, The #1 National Broadcasting Co. has only three voices on its staff, **Don Pardo**, **Fred Facey** and **Howard Reig**, plus a lot of computers and recorded announcements. How's that for down-sizing?



Now some late news about old friends.....

Roger and Pat Tuttle have sold their Jersey ranch and have moved to North Carolina. They recently dropped in on me and we enjoyed a dinner with tasty memories as an entrée...**Rad Hall** is in Rockland County, confined to quarters because of inhaling too much nicotine...**Jack Marshall** called to tell me that **Sandy Becker**, a poker partner of ours, had passed away from a heart attack. Sorry to hear that his mike is silent — he was a smooth fellow...While working a Xword puzzle came across a definition: "Announcer of Sat. Nite Live." — I knew the answer: **Don Pardo**...**Thelma Howell**, who is planning to leave Florida to reside in upper NY, says she ran into the same easy definition...It amazes me that **Gloria Clyne** has been at NBC for 52 years and she is only 40 years old...**Mel and Jan Brandt** missed all the fun of being snowbound in the Poconos by hibernating in Florida all winter. Mel says he sends in political commercials via "Ma Bell"...A letter from **Bill McCord** states: "The beautiful writing and editing of the Peacock North

issues are most exciting and informative; the only trouble - too many old friends have passed away." He and **Olga** have spent a vacation on a cruise...Two surprise visits to my abode brought me pleasure — **Howie and Ruth Atlas** and **John and Alice Rice**. My guest room is always open — I'll turn the lights off for you...There was to be an ex-NBC-Announcers get together in February but it was cancelled by the blizzard — we'll try again next year. □

Dick Dudley, retired NBC announcer, lives in Willow Street, Pennsylvania. (Named for the Willow Street Pike which bisects the town.)

Dick sent in the quote on page 15 along this movie mogul's prediction:

"[Television] won't be able to hold onto any market it captures after the first six months. People will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night."

Darryl F. Zanuck, head of 20th Century-Fox, 1946



Conventions! We Love Them.



Every four years, like clock work, the two political parties get together, in redundancy, to select a candidate that has already been determined by the primary voters. No smoke filled back rooms anymore. The nets give them a lot of air time.

I covered a lot of these spectacles with the TV Field Group. During the 1952 Democratic Convention in Chicago we set up shop in the Conrad Hilton Hotel. We had miles of cable strung to every conceivable spot where there might be an encounter

with a VIP coming from or going to a meeting (preferably the candidate "his self"). And, new spots were discovered daily that required new cable runs.

At every opportunity correspondents grabbed their quarry for an interview with the hope of a big scoop on our network rivals. One over zealous announcer caught up with a delegate rushing for an elevator. He got a few flying questions in and followed the fellow into the elevator car! Two floors down the pictureless tv interview came to an abrupt halt when the mike, its cable slack having run its course, was summarily snatched away.

Another 1st for NBC, a two story, pictureless, moving elevator, tv interview.

Frank Vierling

A Message From

Pete Peterson



What a huge get together!
- the largest to date of our La Maganette reunions. Members from distant places, Arizona, Washington State, California, and New Hampshire, to aid and magnify the excitement of getting together again. It really was heartening to see that kind of effort.

The roster of "speakers" gave us entertaining and informative accounts of what they're doing now, mostly in retirement. Some fun filled stories were divulged, and the group responded with applause and laughter. We (Peg and I) enjoyed the luncheon, and so did everyone else.

We were joined by a host of relatively "new members" who, of course, are company "old timers," and it was a nice treat to see them there. Dan Grabel's cover story gives the details along with his "at 30 rock" and other contributions peppered throughout this edition. We are fortunate to have his reporting genius and his ability to assay the news. We are blessed, as well, by the reports in Heino Ripp's "PN People" column, and artful computerization by Frank Vierling in transcribing it all into magazine form.

There's a story in this edition about Lee Jones from Savannah, Ga., that I particularly found interesting. Lee was a radio producer at NBC in the forties, when I started out as a Radio Broadcast Engineer (before transferring to tv). There is a bit of history for me: One day Lee came into Radio Studio 5A with a gentleman who was to make a public appeal for the March of Dimes. I was thrilled to be sitting in the control room looking through the glass into the BIG BANJO EYES OF EDDIE CANTOR, just a few feet away. He was the first super celebrity that I had ever been in close contact with.

The story Ray Lafferty tells about O.B. Hanson will show "engineering types" the human side of one of the company's upper echelon officers. We have read many such stories in Ken's Korner. This edition has an interesting one by Ken about the early days of the Steve Allen Show.

The top of a menu from Sager's *last* menu will

remind us of the days when 34 or more restaurants were within a four block area around the Radio City. They were bee hives of eating activity as we hastily grabbed a bite in those early days of big "LIVE" tv shows.

Mort Hochstein gives us more of his "Memories," and Don Luftig, takes us along in excellent style on wife Sandy's and his travel to Russia, et al. (Peg and I went to Russia in 1976, and we're anxious to go again, thanks to revived interest generated by Don's article.) Don who attended his first LaMag bash enjoyed it so much he said, "I'll never miss another!"

Dan Grabel's review of David Brinkley's book is just a smattering of all that is to be said of David. A lot of us worked the HB News, and later there will be more to come. (HUNTLEY WAS A REALLY NICE GUY.)

As announcer Mel Brandt said, when he spoke, "We had the best of the best," and Producer Bob Asman added in his talk, "We were there at the right time and left at the right time." (Huge applause followed!)

Don't you just want to remember the "**GOOD OLD DAY'S**" at NBC? I still do!, and that's why it was so good to see those beautiful great faces of yesteryear at our gathering.

Regards,

Pete.

OUR NEW MEMBERS

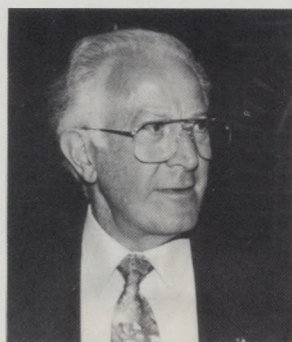
Patricia Astor	- New York, NY
Shirley Covey	- Los Angeles, CA
William Cronin	- Harrington Park, NJ
Richard Doherty	- New York, NY
Ray Fritzky	- Emerson, NJ
Lucy Jarvis	- New York, NY
Robert Kasulka	- Lindenhurst, NJ
Surendra Kumar	- Wayne, NJ
Joseph Linden	- Palm Harbor, FL
Mattie Navarro	- Jamaica, NY
Dan O'Connor	- Roxbury, CT
Myra Richman	- Scottsdale, AZ
Robert Rippen	- Colonia, NJ
Claire Rosenstein	- New York, NY
Diana Upton	- Punxsutawney, PA
William Vaccaro	- Massapequa, NY

26 REUNION

Francesca Peters
and
Peg Peterson
registered the
La Maganette guests.



Joan Gifford - Don Meaney



Carmine
Rocco

Harry
Fleetwood



Howard Atlas - Jack Winocur - Roz Bigelow
Dollie and Irv Messing - Arthur Kent

Peacock North Staff

Peter Peterson, C.E.O.
30 Ann Arbor Place
Closter, NJ 07624
201-768-1009 - Fax 201-768-8727
E Mail: peterp5579@aol.com

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Frank Vierling
494 Prospect Avenue
Oradell, NJ 07649
201-261-3669

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Dan Grabel
31 Cohawney Road
Scarsdale, NY 10583
914-723-8625

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Heino Ripp
12 Elizabeth Place
Lake Hopatcong, NJ 07849
201-663-2929 - Fax 201-663-4113

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Gloria Clyne Mort Hochstein
Jerry Cudlipp Tony Nelle
Dick Dudley Dolores Parylak
Roy Silver

◆

And a special thanks to
Peg Peterson and Lois Vierling

La Maganette Luncheon Photos by Donald Vierling

Peacock North

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Closter, NJ 07624

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At NBC from _____ 'til _____

Spouse
Dept _____ Name _____

New Member ☐

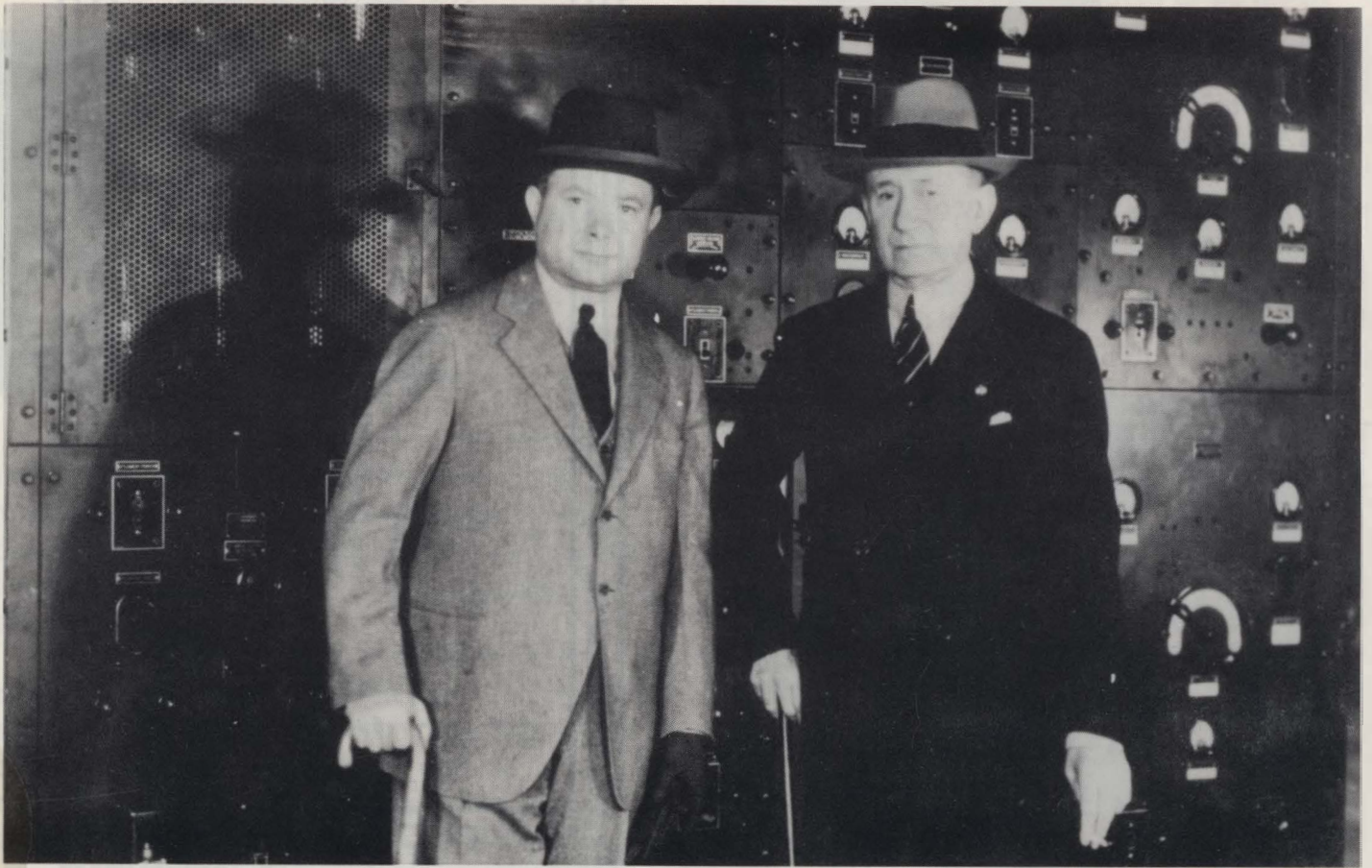
Renewal ☐

Dues: \$20 Per Year - due January 1, 1996

Make Checks payable to Peacock North

Open to NBC Employees with 25 Years or more.

A PICTURE FROM OUR ARCHIVES.....



A rare pair — David Sarnoff and Guglielmo Marconi visited the RCA Communications transmitting center at Rocky Point, Long Island, New York, in 1933. (Photo courtesy of PNeer Don Gogarty)

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30 Ann Arbor Place
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