



# We are all in this together.



*"I thought we agreed—no dressing up for video chats."*

Cartoon by Elisabeth McNair © The New Yorker 2020

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## Marilyn's Page



One year ago, I, along with the rest of the world, was heralding in the new decade, looking forward to 2020. How odd that all seems now, having been in lockdown and listening to daily reviews of the pandemic and its death toll creep everywhere in the world. Never mind the protests, riots, looting, loss of jobs, election hype and post-election hype. But we are now welcoming in 2021 with the first vaccine doses being given as I write this.

This was “the year that was”, for sure, but some relief is on the way.

This issue has some look-back as well as thoughts about the near future. We have included some personal profiles and a fun article from Martin Fletcher, because fun is not overrated. We could all use a good laugh.

We are saying *au revoir* to a bunch of our colleagues from News and Sports. The new reality of working from home with a reconfigured workflow has impacted work protocols, possibly forever. It will be interesting to see how things shake out.

On a high note, Peacock North continues to remain robust. We have a large and vigorous membership which is keen to keep in touch by sharing information and experiences.

It is possible that the 2021 Luncheon will be moved to late October or early November, depending on Covid. We may also do a ZOOM event complete with a guest speaker.

That said, I ask that those of you who sent in your payment for the 2020 Luncheon please let your payment stay with us. I truly hope to have a 2021 Luncheon and Sardi's plans on being open in the Fall.

Part of this note is also to ask that you pay your 2021 Dues (the flyer is in the mail). This will help Peacock North with publishing the magazine and help Sardi's stay afloat. The restaurant has been closed since mid-March.

Thank you for understanding this difficult situation.

And now to the good stuff...the rest of the magazine.



*What's Now!***A Bit of Love and Legacy  
by Marilyn Altman**

We at PN do not usually do wedding announcements, but this one is different. It captures some of our history, especially for women, especially during this pandemic, and I thought it warranted a bit of fanfare.

Laura Butler married Colby Hickerson on November 28<sup>th</sup>. She is the daughter of Pamela and Tab Butler, and the granddaughter of Marcia Kuyper and Frank Schneider, which is where my story begins.

Many of us worked with Marcia. She goes way back to 1951 as the Associate Director on *Your Show of Shows*, *The Bell Telephone Hour* and the original *Peter Pan* (1960), to name a few. She directed and won an Emmy for *Sing Along With Mitch*, and did numerous news and space specials. I met her when she was the Director of the Network Religious Unit, where

she was Producer/Director of specials such as *Palm Sunday*, *Christmas in Washington*, *Christmas in Rockefeller Center*, and many other shows. She was a force of nature, a trailblazer in our business and was respected and liked by all, not an easy feat for a woman in those days. She married Frank Schneider, a Scenic Designer for NBC, in 1956. He was a wonderful and gentle man. They had their daughter Pamela in 1959.

I met Pam Schneider and Tab Butler in 1980, when they were college students working as vacation relief personnel to fill the gap expected to be caused by Summer Olympics. They both were successful in their careers at NBC. Tab moved on to Broadcast Management at MLB Network in 2008. Pam went from being a Camera Operator to a Technical Director and then, following in her mother's footsteps, joined the production side as an Associate Director. She is currently with *The Today Show*.

Laura, carrying on the traditions of her mother and grandmother, has also joined the production track, working at MLB, *Hawaii Five-0*, NBC's *Education Nation* and is currently an Associate Producer for Company Three in New York. She has the fire that her mom and Marcia exhibited. She decided to see her wedding plans through, with or without this "stinking pandemic". And so congratulations to Laura and Colby.

The legacy of Marcia Kuyper Schneider and Frank lives on.



**Left: Pam, Tab, Laura, Colby, and Laura's siblings Kristen and Matthew at the wedding.  
Right: Mitch Miller, Marcia and Frank in 1982.**



*What's Now!*

## A Time for Trust By Bill Wheatley



As 2020, a year of extraordinary coverage of a once-in-a-century pandemic and a fiercely fought presidential election, draws to a close, it's an ideal moment for the television news business to take a deep breath and reflect on what's working well and what needs improvement.

In doing so, it might wish to consider recently published Gallup figures measuring public trust in the mass media. Even as journalists were doing remarkable work this year, fully 33% of Americans interviewed said "none at all" when asked how much trust they had in the news; an additional 27% answered, "not very much"; only nine percent said they had "a great deal".

Separate polling done earlier this year by Gallup and the Knight Foundation focused more narrowly on television news. Once again, the results weren't good: 49% of those surveyed said they had "very little or no trust" in TV's performance, the highest percentage in the quarter-century the question has been asked. (In other studies, confidence rises when people are asked about the specific media outlets they rely on, as opposed to the news media overall. But, even then, the lack of trust is sizable.)

Why is the public's trust in the news media, including television, at such low levels? Opinions on that vary widely and detailed research on the subject is hard to come by. Some critics claim that staff and budget cutbacks have diminished journalistic quality; others say it is the natural result of the media, particularly cable news and websites, becoming increasingly politicized; still others point to a sense that journalists no longer share the values of the public at large. The list goes on from there.

Whatever the causes, the waning of the public's faith in the news media shows few signs of abating. For journalism organizations that value the public's confidence, the big question is whether the slide can somehow be turned around and, if so, how best to do it.

Clearly, there are any number of steps that leaders in the field can take to advance the trust process. Here are just a few suggestions:

### **Double down on standards.**

At a time when anyone with a digital device can command an audience, traditional values like accuracy, clarity and context remain critical to inspiring faith in your product. Accuracy, in particular, has special importance in a time when news professionals are being attacked as purveyors of "fake news" and public officials have taken to citing "alternative facts." With so much bad information circulating, it's essential that truth be separated from fiction. As always, the editor's adage holds true: "If your mother says she loves you, check it out."

**Avoid bias.**

There's no such thing as complete objectivity, but you your organization can try hard to come close to it. Among other things, this means insisting that your news stories not be an outlet for the personal views of those who report them.

Remember also that bias can display itself in your selection of stories. For example, if your coverage assignments concentrate mostly on liberal causes, it's not likely that conservatives will trust your judgment. And, even if you run an outlet designed to appeal to a particular political interest, it's important that your journalism not only be accurate but also that it displays a range of ideas and opinions. When it comes to what to think, most people, including news consumers, don't like to be spoon fed.

One way to achieve range is to support diversity in your staff. Hiring competent journalists from differing economic, racial and ethnic backgrounds will go a long way toward helping rid your newsroom of the "groupthink" that historically has driven so many uninspired editorial decisions.

**Separate fact from opinion.**

For those outlets that offer their audiences both news and opinion, it's important that such content be clearly separated. That's particularly true in cable news, where reporting and commentary often run side-by-side or even intermixed. Don't assume that everyone in your audience understands the difference between the two concepts.

In that regard, discussion panels can be problematic when they include both reporters and partisans. How is the public to distinguish easily between the two? And doesn't combining them play into the conceit that journalists are intertwined socially and economically with the establishment? The easy fix: limit your reporters to panels of their own and don't let them editorialize.

Also, since your brand probably operates on multiple platforms, be sure that your standards are consistent across them. Correspondents expressing opinions on one platform can undermine their credibility on another. If your reporters use social media, insist that their communications stick to facts, avoiding the type of commentary and speculation that could conflict with your standards elsewhere.

**Reject hype.**

As the number of media outlets increases, so, too, has the competition for advertising dollars. In the process, hyperbole has been steadily increasing in television news: tabloid words like "bombshell," "shocking," "stunning" and "miraculous" are becoming much more common; the designation "Breaking News" is now almost ubiquitous, used even after a story has been reported on for many hours and sometimes when the content barely qualifies as news; "exclusive" is now often applied to stories and interviews of only modest interest and importance or to interviews conducted by a competitor as recently as the day before. It's hard to ask the public to trust your work if you wrap it in such hype.

Can these and other worthy practices help restore the public's trust in media? They certainly can help. Confidence in media wasn't lost in a day, nor will it be regained in one. But let there be no misunderstanding: there are no shortcuts. In the end, trust must be earned.



Bill Wheatley is a retired executive vice-president of NBC News. This article is adapted and updated from a longer essay he wrote for the book "Brexit, Trump and the Media," Abramis Publishing, London.

*What's Now!***Becoming an American Correspondent****By Martin Fletcher**

With supreme confidence I lay claim to the stupidest assignment in the history of television news. December 31, 1999.

At the turn of the Millennium, hundreds of evangelical Christians camped out on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, praying, singing, and dancing in blissful expectation of the Second Coming.

NBC News had all the traditional points covered: the Pacific island that would be the first landmass to celebrate the new year, Hong Kong's harbor, London's Big Ben, Times Square. My assignment from the Holy Land: Stake out the Mount of Olives for the Messiah. Moreover, Julian Prictoe, London Bureau's most imaginative engineer, had the dreadful idea of training a live, 24-hour webcam on the cloister of the Chapel of the Mount of Olives, considered the most likely spot for the Messiah to appear, so that when He came NBC could broadcast His coming live.

What a scoop! An exclusive live broadcast of the Second Coming! Would He ride a donkey? Would He walk? What would he wear? Hundreds of newsmen had come to the Holy Land to cover the dawn of the new Millennium but nobody else had the idea to stand on the roof of the Mount of Olives hotel and wait for the Messiah. I wonder why.

Jeff Riggins, our intrepid cameraman, bought an electric heater and a chair for the stake-out. But by 3am, freezing and tired, he rebelled.

"That's it, this is ridiculous. I'm going to bed."

"No, you're not," I said. "We have to wait till dawn."

"Forget it. If He comes I'll get up again."

"Oh, right. And I'll say 'Come again, for Riggins?'"

"Good night!" Jeff said, turning his back, and began to turn off the lights.

At which point I shouted, "Put the lights back up! We're all staying here. I'm not going down in history as the reporter who missed the f&#@\$g Messiah!" CYA for the ages. But by then I had learned, fairly typical of an American television network, which I had joined from the BBC and Visnews.

Mine was a steep learning curve at NBC, especially moving from cameraman to correspondent. In addition to filming, I had done some reporting from Africa and the Middle East, mostly from places nobody else wanted to go, but when the call came I was surprised. Only a few weeks earlier Bill Small, then the NBC News president, had asked me to report with an American accent. "Are you kidding?" I said. "It took me years to lose my cockney accent, I can't go through that again." Then, before he could fire me, he was fired.

Tom Petit was on the phone. I didn't know who he was and had never spoken to him. "Reuven Frank and I want to make you correspondent in Tel Aviv."

"Really? What about my accent?"

"Don't worry about that. We're the ones with the accent."

I became the first correspondent on American network news with an English accent. I had broken the glass ceiling. I'd like to say the rest is history, but - no.

I arrived in Israel just in time to be sent to cover Israel's invasion of Lebanon in June, 1982, working with a young stateside producer, M.L. Flynn. One of our first stories involved a Lebanese Christian who had returned to his burnt-out home in Damour, and, as one does in wartime, wanted to plant some tomatoes. When I tracked, I pronounced it my way, Tuh-mah-toes. M.L. pounced. "No way. It's Tuh-may-toes." I blanched. "No way I'm saying Tuh-may-toes. It's like a music hall joke. I can't say it that way and look myself in the mirror." I lost of course, but M.L. and I became firm friends till this day.

An Englishman writing for an American network, I soon discovered, when I pronounced Maryland exactly as it is written, instead of Muh-ruh-land, and Arkansas as it is written instead of Ar-ken-saw, needs to adopt the American way at every juncture. No point talking if he can't be understood.

That glass ceiling, I was discovering, was more like a road paved with broken glass. The number of times my American colleagues saved my English ass became legendary. No, I didn't sit on the bonnet of the lorry by the pavement, I sat on the hood of the truck by the sidewalk. Jim Maceda once helped me to write a basketball script and used the phrase Backboard crusher. I had no clue what it meant but tracked it anyway.

No surprise then that I came close to being fired a number of times, and probably should have been after my first live Nightly top and tail. In Teheran for the revolution I ended my tag with the words: "...and for the Shah of Iran, this is the beginning of the end. Martin Fletcher, NBC News, Teheran." Or rather, that's what I meant to say. What I actually said to John Chancellor, and fourteen million Americans, was: "...and for the Shah of Iran, this is the end of the beginning. Uh, the beginning of the end. Oh fuck!"

I waited for the shoe to drop but it never did. Nor did it after I began a Nightly story, after almost simultaneous bombs in Rome and Vienna airports, with the words over a still photograph: "This is the most wanted man in the world today, the terrorist Abu Nidal, whose bombs today killed..." Unfortunately, our photo showed some guy from Cleveland. His brother yelled at the desk and complained that his family may have to go into hiding. We waited in agony for the law suit, but it never came. I learned a lesson that day. From then on, when NBC asked my bureau to find a photograph of someone, I told them to find it themselves.

Then there was the time we thought our cameraman, shooting from a chartered plane, had exclusive video of American battle-ships approaching the Lebanese coast to bombard it, only to find it was the Israeli navy going the other direction. In that case we were saved minutes before air by the observant Israeli censor who said, "Nice pictures, wrong navy."

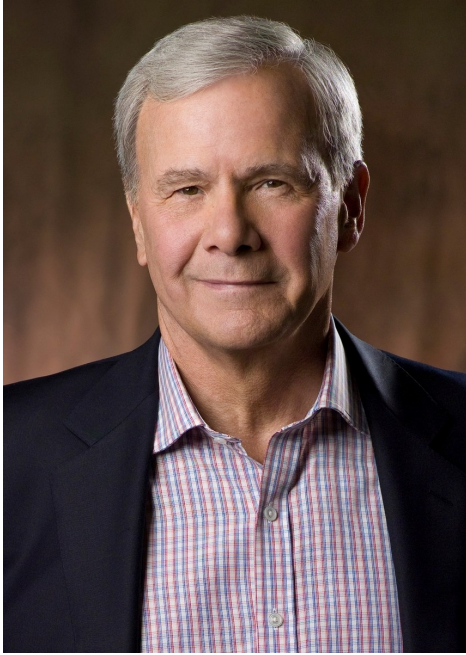
Talking of the ocean, in Tel Aviv we had two studios which we called Studio A and Studio B. But Jeff, Tom Aspell and I, avid sailors all, could more often be found at our sailing club, which we called Studio Sea. When the desk called in the days before cell phones, Ziv, who ran the club, put the flag at half-mast and we'd race in to take the call. In our defense, for us a regular work day, given the time difference, began at 7.00 a.m. local time and ended at 1.30 a.m., and this could go on seven days a week, for weeks and sometimes months. And almost all the stories we did around the world included some degree of danger. So we felt justified in occasionally removing our noses from the grindstone.

And it was a grind, but an important one, which I loved. Making the move from British TV news to American was the best move I ever made.



**Martin and Jeff Riggins in Somalia (Spot the Correspondent!)**



*What's Now!***Tom Brokaw**

In all the years I've been at NBC News – 54! – This one has been the most challenging by far.

Covering an election and a deadly virus 24-7 with so many contradictions and grave health dangers, working from home and in dangerous conditions right after the challenges of domestic upheavals – well, it doesn't get more demanding.

So I have a thought.

Ask your membership to start a letter-writing campaign to correspondents, techies, secretaries, etc., expressing your pride in what they're doing.

Facebook might be the easiest way to accomplish this task.

Old School to New School.

**Al Roker Returns from Surgery**

Al Roker is back on the Today show set, two weeks after undergoing a five-hour surgery for prostate cancer.

On November 16th, the TV weatherperson, 66, returned to Studio 1A at 30 Rockefeller Plaza in New York City to deliver the forecast during the NBC morning news show and offered a health update as he caught up with his co-hosts, including Savannah Guthrie, Hoda Kotb, Carson Daly and Craig Melvin. "Great medical care and the love of friends and family — it goes a long way," said Roker early in the show, as Guthrie and Kotb agreed he was looking well. "Actually I was hoping I looked a little better," he replied.

Last Tuesday, Roker appeared virtually from home on the morning show for the first time since revealing his cancer diagnosis on the Nov.

6 broadcast, updating fans that he's "doing great." Doctors said he has no evidence of cancer now but will continue to be monitored in the coming years. "The outpouring of love and support that I have received from all of you, including the prayers, have been truly heartening. And this Thanksgiving, I'm truly thankful for all of you," he added. He later said that he learned of his optimistic prognosis from the doctors with his wife Deborah and 18-year-old son Nicholas by his side. "It was a great relief," Roker said. "Look, we're not out of the woods ... but for a first start, this is terrific news. I'm gonna be up for, as a lot of people who live with cancer, up for lifelong testing to make sure this doesn't come back."

Condensed from an article by Benjamin VanHoose, © People.Com, November 17, 2020



*What's Now!*

## **YES Network Meets Pandemic Challenge By John Filippelli**

The latest news concerning a vaccine to treat C19 is well beyond encouraging. It provides planet earth with some real optimism that this unimaginable nightmare may finally be close to its end.

Last baseball season saw a 60 game schedule for the Yankees—games with no fans in attendance; reduced crewing in the name of social distancing; strict guidelines with respect to proximity of anything to everything; the ubiquity of face coverings were/are now a “new normal.”

We produced and staffed all of the home games for YES, while providing a world feed for use by the visiting team. They returned the courtesy when we were the visiting team.



Our announcers called the home games live in the booth, when the team was playing on the road, we called those games over monitors in the announce booth from the stadium.

There were challenges galore everywhere we turned.

The by product of all of this was a recalibration of the way our business needed to be done for the foreseeable future—no travel, no second team in, less crewing because of social distancing and a newfound reliance on robotics—this was not a choice, it was a mandated necessity to help limit the spread and exposure to the virus.

We pride ourselves on our total dedication to excellence but our standards had to be somewhat adjusted to reflect the new reality of C19 and its considerable and unrelenting reach and demand.

At least for the first two or three months of 2021, we should brace for the same type of compromises. The artistic and creative sides of our production nature will continue to reflect this commandment...get it on air in a cost effective manner, while always protecting the health and safety of each and every person.

Our industry has collectively lost countless sums of money, adjustments are necessary for us to survive and for us to someday thrive again.

We have a line of sight for us to now return in a big way. But it will not be totally as we once remember. This is no longer possible or probable, but we can still comeback in a manner that reflects a more well-grounded approach, one that makes some concessions and one that dedicates itself to achieving quality in a new reality environment.

We remain resilient and resolute, a true testament to who we are as professionals and as people.

*What's Now!*

## Lenny Stucker, Photographer

We are pleased to present this wonderful interview of our own Lenny Stucker  
by Long Island Portfolio writer Alex Wolff.



*Alex: You haven't always been a photographer, so what led you to be one of the leading, if not the leading A-list photographer on Long Island?*

Lenny: Well, I thank you for the compliment. That was very kind. You are an excellent photographer in your own right.

To make a long story short, when I was 12 years old I had my own darkroom. Way back when there was no such thing as digital! It was all chemicals and paper. I loved it. My parents were concerned that I was going to be a recluse because instead of being out playing with all the other kids, I would spend countless hours in my darkroom. I loved photography and through high school I was the photographer for the high school newspaper.

When it came time for college, I honestly didn't know what I wanted to do until I met with my guidance teacher, whom I've never forgotten. She told me I could go to college for photography and I was amazed that you could do that! I went to New York Institute of Technology for four years and earned a degree in communication arts. I majored in television and photography.

My career led to television where I worked for NBC and I advanced quickly. I became the youngest Technical Director at NBC, and I TD'd Super Bowls and major events. I had a wonderful career, very exciting, a lot of creativity. When I retired, I felt a tremendous void of a creative outlet, so I got back into my photography. Now I sit on the Commission of Suffolk County film Commission. One of the other members, an owner of East Hampton TV, invited me to come out to East Hampton and watch their televised productions, which were major events such as polo matches, and the Hampton Classic horse show.

I started doing photography at these events just for the fun of it because I was already retired; I wasn't looking for another career, but from 12 years old, photography was my love. And I made a career in television because I was a TV director, I chose what people saw and how they saw it, so the composition of a frame was my whole life.

*Alex: And story-telling—making sure that the image that was in front of everybody was telling the story that needed to be told.*

Lenny: As best I could, and I just loved it! So, getting back into photography and people liking what I did, it came as a surprise to me when I started getting offers to do magazine covers, and then celebrities. Notable socialites started asking me to do portraits and headshots and to photograph their private parties and charity events, and it just developed from there.

*Alex: You didn't mention that you're also doing a lot of shoots for the theater, although that's parked at the moment because of Covid. Tell me a little bit about doing the theater stills and how Covid has impacted what you do currently.*

Lenny: I'm glad you asked that Alex because of all the things I photograph doing the theater is the cat's meow to me. I've gotten to the point where the directors and notable producers on Broadway trust me and allow me to shoot it the way I like to shoot it. In the beginning, of course they were paying me, and not totally familiar, but I did come recommended. They would give me a lot of direction and then I would say, "What do you think if I stage it this way just for the photo shoot, not to change your Broadway staging direction but for the way the photo is going to look?"

*Alex: That's about compressing the space, because sometimes the stages are so wide you can't get the story. It looks good if you're in the seats looking at it, but it becomes such a wide space that you can't really tell that story in the photograph.*

Lenny: That's correct, because the peripheral vision of the human eye is greater and wider than the peripheral vision of a camera, depending on the lens used of course. To consolidate, to stack it so that you don't have big gaps between characters, so they have to come closer.

## FEATURED

# Featured Artist: Lenny Stucker

ON NOVEMBER 16, 2020 • ( LEAVE A COMMENT )

## FEATURED ARTIST:

Alex: This is Alex Wolff with Long Island Portfolio and I'm here with my friend photographer Lenny Stucker. It's good to see you today.

Lenny: Thank you for having me.

Alex: You haven't always been a photographer, so what led you to be one of the leading, if not the leading A-list photographers on Long Island?

Lenny: Well, I thank you for the compliment, that was very kind. You are an excellent photographer in your own right.

To make a long story short, when I was 12 years old I had my own darkroom. Way back when there was no such thing as digital. It was all chemicals and paper and darkrooms. I loved it. My parents were concerned that I was going to be a recluse because instead of being and playing with all the other kids, I would be countless hours in my darkroom.



I started doing photography at these events just for the fun of it because I was already retired. I wasn't looking for another career, but from 12 years old, photography was my love.

I made a career in television because I was a TV director. I chose what people saw and how they saw it, so the composition of a frame was my whole life.

Alex: And story-telling—making sure that the image that was in front of everybody was telling the story that needed to be told.

Lenny: As best I could, and I just loved it. So, getting back into photography and people thing what I did, it came as a surprise to me when I started getting offers to do magazine covers, and then notable celebrities. Notable celebrities started asking me to do portraits and headshots and to photograph their private parties and charity events, and it just developed from there.

Alex: You didn't mention that you're

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wide space that you can't really tell that story in the photograph.

Lenny: That's correct, because the peripheral vision of the human eye is greater and wider than the peripheral vision of a camera, depending on the lens used of course. To compensate, to stick it so that you don't have the big eye holes and a big gap between characters, so they have to come closer.

That started when I got an invite for an interview to start shooting Bay Street theater productions in Sag Harbor, which in some cases would hold a production that was on its way to Broadway. This was their trial run to workout bugs, to correct things and see how the audience responded to certain things. I began to meet different notable people in Broadway who really liked the photos, and started asking me to do portraits of them, and promotional pictures for billboards on the side of the buses. I started getting involved in Broadway and I got to do some major productions. As of last year, 2019 before the terrible year of 2020 I was really on a roll! I was getting to shoot new Broadway shows coming up, but, like everybody else, unfortunately because of the coronavirus, Broadway has come to a halt. All productions have come to a halt. So, I miss that. It was creatively just a blast to shoot. I do like shooting portraits, I do like shooting headshots, but shooting stage production and being allowed to do it the way I like to do it just really fluffs my feathers.

Alex: Now that we're not doing a lot of shooting, are you reflecting on your work or your personal choices about the future?

Lenny: Post-processing is my most favorite thing to do. I've taught some classes at NYIT and Berger Brothers. I did it because I had a captive audience to listen to me talk about photography for two hours! The pay was nothing, but the fact that I had someone that would listen to me, because I could go on and on and on talking about photography. I tell my students that you have to develop a style. Shooting is one-third, and two-thirds is your post-processing because technology has advanced very much in photography. For the most part, people could see that their iPhone has a little tiny lens. With all the advancement in the technology, the camera can take a pretty damn decent picture.

Years ago when you shot film, you really had to know what you were doing because you had to really understand the camera and you didn't see if you had it until the film came back. At that point, the people you shot or the event you shot was over, and either you had it, or you didn't. So, you really had to be good at what you do.

Alex: I appreciate so much you're taking some of your time for me

Lenny: Well it's my pleasure. Thanks very much, my pleasure Alex.



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Portfolio

## LENNY STUCKER

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What I like about digital, to the way, is that instead of having just two dimensions that you could work (shutter speed and your f stop), now you can also change your ISO on the fly.

Lenny: And the numbers that you can exceed in ISO as compared to film, where ISO 400 was like "Oh my God," 400 versus 125. For those that don't understand what we're talking about it's the light sensitivity that the camera could use, which affects how dark or how bright the picture is.

Alex: Could be going to be around for a while, but when we open up again, what do you want to be shooting?

Lenny: I'm turning down requests now because I just don't think I would love what I get the view. I hope the cliché of out of sight out of mind doesn't hold true, because even though I don't do it, the client is going to find someone that will do it. I don't know if everything will come back. I've seen some of it will come back but, as I mentioned earlier, they were a retirement thing for me. I do it for the enjoyment and the creative aspect of it, so I hope some of it comes back.

I think we'll be lucky if we see things get back like normal in 2021. I think it's more like 2022 and then if everything goes correctly.

Alex: I appreciate so much you're taking some of your time for me

Lenny: Well it's my pleasure. Thanks very much, my pleasure Alex.

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I started getting involved in Broadway and I got to do some major productions. As of last year, 2019 (before the terrible year of 2020) I was really on a roll! I was getting to shoot new Broadway shows coming up, but, like everybody else, unfortunately because of the coronavirus, Broadway has come to a halt. All productions have come to a halt. So, I miss that. It was creatively just a blast to shoot. I do like shooting portraits, I do like shooting headshots, but shooting stage production and being allowed to do it the way I like to do it just really fluffs my feathers.

Alex: Now that we're not doing a lot of shooting, are you reflecting on your work or your personal choices about the future?

Lenny: Post-processing is my most favorite thing to do. I've taught some classes at NYIT and Berger Brothers. I did it because I had a captive audience to listen to me talk about photography for two hours! The pay was nothing, but the fact that I had someone that would listen to me, because I could go on and on and on talking about photography. I tell my students that you have to develop a style. Shooting is one-third, and two-thirds is your post-processing because technology has advanced very much in photography. For the most part, people could see that their iPhone has a little tiny lens. With all the advancement in the technology, the camera can take a pretty damn decent picture.

Years ago when you shot film, you really had to know what you were doing because you had to really understand the camera and you didn't see if you had it until the film came back. At that point, the people you shot or the event you shot was over, and either you had it, or you didn't. So, you really had to be good at what you do.

Alex: I appreciate so much you're taking some of your time for me

Lenny: Well it's my pleasure. Thanks very much, my pleasure Alex.

You can see Lenny's work at  
<http://www.lennyStucker.com>

Excerpted from the article by Alex Wolff, © Long Island Portfolio, November 16, 2020



*What's Now!***Mike Meehan Retires**

We are saying *au revoir* and congratulations to Mike Meehan. After 47 years of service at The Peacock, Mike is retiring. What a run! Mike had a myriad of jobs at NBC: he was a Page on the first Saturday Night Live, worked in Studio/Field scheduling, BOC and eventually moved into Sports.

This has allowed him a front-row seat to dozens of playoff games, World Series, Super Bowls, Wimbledon, and Olympics. He leaves his job as Vice President of Sports and Operations at the end of the year with the love and admiration of those who worked alongside him. There will be more to come from Mike in the next PN edition as he looks back on his rich and robust life at NBC.

Good Luck Mike! You leave very large shoes to fill.



BOC Managers in 1983: Les Diamond, Mike, Bill Jarr, Jim Grabowski, Doug Nelson, Joe McCourt, Amy Epstein Forman, Alexis Janaro, Tony Ramos, Don Brown, Jill Flegenheimer, Walt Ehr Gott and Stu Wolther.

**Rashida Jones Named New MSNBC President**

MSNBC was already preparing for one momentous presidential transition next year. Now the 24-hour cable channel and home to liberal stars like Rachel Maddow is about to take on a second. Phil Griffin, the MSNBC president whose left-leaning shows yielded big ratings in the Trump years and minted media brands like “The Rachel Maddow Show” and “Morning Joe,” will depart on Feb. 1 after a 12-year tenure, the network said on Monday.

He is to be succeeded by Rashida Jones, a senior vice president for news at MSNBC and NBC News, who will become the first Black woman to take charge of a major television news network. Ms. Jones, 39, currently oversees daytime news coverage for the network and breaking news and specials for NBC’s broadcast news division.

Her promotion, announced by Cesar Conde, the chairman of NBCUniversal News Group, is another big shake-up in the network’s management ranks. Mr. Conde, who formerly ran Telemundo, took over the news division this year after Andrew Lack departed following a bumpy tenure. Ms. Jones, who once served as director of live programming for the Weather Channel, joined NBCUniversal seven years ago. MSNBC staff members took notice of what has been a steady ascent: Beginning last year, she was the executive producer for a pair of primary debates that set ratings records for a Democratic presidential contest.

This past April, she was handed oversight of MSNBC’s daytime news coverage, and within three months, she had added weekend news programming to her portfolio. By the fall, Ms. Jones produced two town-hall events with the 2020 presidential candidates and helped supervise preparation for Kristen Welker, the NBC correspondent who moderated the second presidential debate to glowing reviews.

In a memo to employees, Mr. Conde praised Ms. Jones’s “laserlike focus and grace under pressure.”

Condensed from an article by Michael M. Grynbaum and John Koblin, © The New York Times, December 8, 2020  
Photo by Virginia Sherwood © NBC.



*What's Now!***SNL's Costume and Wardrobe Miracle Workers**

Kamala Harris walked on stage in Wilmington, DE, to address the nation as vice president-elect around 8:30 p.m. ET. In that moment, the Saturday Night Live cast and crew had just began dress rehearsal for the show, which starts promptly at 11:30 p.m. ET. The mood? Intense, especially for the costume department, which includes producer and costume designer Tom Broecker and wardrobe supervisor Dale Richards, who was in charge of making the outfit actor Maya Rudolph would wear as Harris for the cold open. "I had a member of my team working on each piece: the blouse, the jacket, and the pants," Richards told POPSUGAR.

Rudolph had already perfectly pulled off Kamala's Converse sneakers on the show — would she do this Carolina Herrera white victory suit and coordinated silk pussy-bow blouse as much justice? Of frickin' course — even with such a limited amount of time. We spoke with Broecker and Richards about the speedy process. They confirmed that everything Rudolph was wearing to pay homage to Kamala's own salute to the women's suffragist movement was, in fact, pulled from stock or made from scratch.

"My assistant started capturing screen grabs of everything [Harris] was wearing so we could get all the details right — the shoes, the jewelry, the hair, makeup, blouse, and the suit. By 9 p.m. we had pulled all the 'research' photos together and started looking through our stock to see if there was anything that could work. Every store in the city had been closed for hours. There was no way to shop this look anywhere, except in our back rooms," Broecker said, setting the scene.

He continued: "A box of cream charmeuse fabric was found to make the blouse, and then a cream double-breasted suit was found that could be completely recut and altered to make the suit work. It would require an incredible amount of work to recut a double-

breasted suit into a single-breasted suit, but I work with the most incredible tailors in the world. They put the jacket on Maya's mannequin form in the office and went to work, just like in the movie *Cinderella*. Eighty minutes later, and four tailors exhausted, Maya did a fitting. It was perfect and she was ready to go to the stage. As she was leaving her dressing room, I realized she didn't have her flag pin on her lapel. Her dresser went running into the wardrobe room to get her flag pin. I will say this: nowhere else in the world could this happen."

Rudolph ended up performing the cold open in nude Jimmy Choo pumps and the cream suit that was, interestingly enough, originally purchased from a suit supplier a year earlier for Cecily Strong to play Melania Trump in a sketch, though it was never used. All these minor details are extremely important to Broecker and his team, who confirmed that Harris's small touches with her clothing, like her meaningful jewelry or her Converse, define her as a real person. "I believe fashion is always incredibly important in helping an actor play a character. Whether that character be a real person or an 'invented' character, that actor must rely on costume to help them define their character . . . [it's] an impossible task for any other place other than Saturday Night Live. We have the best people anywhere in the world," Broecker went on to say.

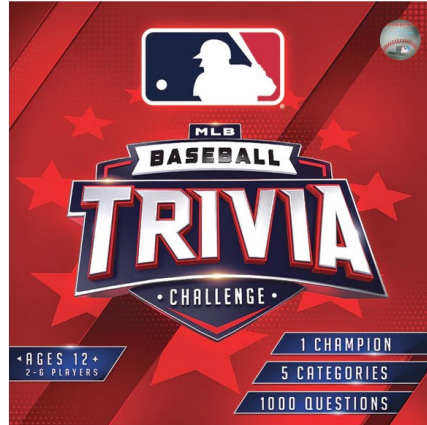
Broecker and Richards also confirmed that they do not have contact with anyone on Harris's team, so they'd have no way of being notified ahead of time what she might wear for any one event. "Even if we had a contact in Kamala's camp, by the time they told us who designed it, the stores would be closed and it would be way too late to source it," Richards said.

By Sarah Wasilak, © Popsugar.com, November 9, 2020



*What's Now!*

## Tom Merritt's MLB Trivia Challenge



*If you love the MLB and you think you know baseball better than anyone else, here's your chance to prove it with the new MLB Baseball Trivia Challenge board game. With 1,000 questions every baseball player will have to be up to the challenge.*

*There's only 1 champion. Do you have what it takes to win?*

*Includes game board, 200 trivia cards, 50 cover cards, 5 divider cards, and rules. (Ad copy)*

### **Former NBC Sports executive Tom Merritt helped to develop this game. He writes to Peacock North:**

Quick recap on my days at NBC. In 1975 I was hired by the great Til Ferdenzi, Manager of Sports Information, to be his assistant. My first big duty was handling college basketball, which first became a regular season property in 1975-76. I grew with the position as the sports department expanded and acquired more programming. In 1982, I was promoted to Director of Sports Information to head the sports publicity unit. In 1987, I was succeeded by my assistant, Kevin Monaghan, when I left NBC to become Executive Director of Thoroughbred Racing Communications.

Last year, with a big assist from Bob Costas, I found a new publisher for my sports trivia board game. As a result, MLB Baseball Trivia Challenge published by MasterPieces Inc., is now available nationally in stores and online. I wrote the Q&A material for the game--1000 questions in total. Recently, I got confirmation that a question that featured Harry Coyle survived the MLB vetting process and is in the game. I thought it was a fitting way to keep Harry's name and memory alive with baseball fans.

I always considered Harry Coyle a legend when it came to directing baseball. He made a lasting contribution to the game and help create countless memories for baseball fans through his work.

Look for the game at <https://www.masterpiecesinc.com/mlb-trivia-game/>

### **Comments from NBC Sports colleagues:**

Harry was the best. I was always ready for a good left from him like at one of the post season meetings he told the PM that he wanted to stay at the hotel where the windows were made of glass..... love him and miss him.

#### **Phil Parlante**

Loved and learned so much from Harry... Interrupting in the midst of an endless discussion of some minutiae, "Gentlemen, gentlemen, what about the ballgame?!"

And Tom was such a wonderful guy. Best of luck with the game!

#### **Andy Rosenberg**



*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Bill Melanson**

Wilfred “Bill” A. Melanson, age 85, died on November 4<sup>th</sup> in Denver, CO.

Bill was born on December 23, 1934 in Yonkers, NY. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1953-1956 in Yokosuka, Japan during the Korean War. Upon his return, he spent time working in the Aleutian Islands, where he infamously read the entire Random House dictionary from start to finish, as well as time in Sacramento and Syracuse and many places in between. He returned home to the Bronx and eventually began his career with NBC Sports where he worked as a senior maintenance engineer for over 35 years. Throughout his career he worked at Super Bowls, World Series, basketball games, tennis matches, golf tournaments, Thanksgiving Day parades, political primaries, and so much more. His NBC family remained dear in his heart until the very end. Bill and Terri spent more than 30 years in Washington Township, NJ, 15 treasured years in Jupiter, FL and then relocated permanently to Denver, CO in 2017.



Bill is survived by his children, daughter Claudine (Joe) Locascio of Denver, CO; son Brian (Madonna) Melanson of Charlotte, NC; grandsons Nicholas and William Locascio of Denver, CO; granddaughters Abigail and Vanessa of Charlotte, NC. He is predeceased by his beloved wife of 51 years, Teresa; his sisters Theresa DeLuca and Maureen Smith; his parents Wilfred and Dora Melanson of Bronx, NY. He was “Uncle Bill” to 14 nieces and nephews.

Bill will forever be remembered for bringing a smile to everyone’s face with his sense of humor, his storytelling, his love of all music but especially Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett, live theater and jazz and dining out in great restaurants. His immense pride in his grandchildren shined through at the mere mention of their names. Bill made sure that everyone was taken care of at all times. He will be so greatly missed.

A funeral mass was held at Risen Christ Catholic Parish on November 30th.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to  
Highline Place Staff Appreciation Fund  
6767 S. Broadway  
Littleton, CO 80122.

© Horan Funeral Home





*Tributes to Silent Microphones*

**Ed Delgado**



It is with great sadness that we report that Ed Delgado suffered a stroke on November 30th and passed away on December 2nd, 2020.

Ed was a video editor at NBC from 1979 to 1987. He was one of the first generation CMX Editors and edited numerous NBC News documentaries, such as "Wasted: Just Say No" which earned him a News & Documentary Emmy in 1986. He also won 2 Sports Emmys for NBC Sports NFL '86 and Major League Baseball: An Inside Look, 1986. He went on the road occasionally editing NFL Football games.

His work brought him to the Super Bowl and the Olympics, with his time at the Barcelona Olympics being one of his most treasured professional memories.

He then worked at Nexus Productions and Frame Runner Productions, followed by 20 years at ABC News editing feature for their magazine shows such as Primetime and 20/20. In 2014 he formed Delgado Editorial, and was proud of his last piece, a PBS documentary on St. Augustine, Florida, which was where he called home in the later years of his life.

Ed was an incredible craftsman and could often be found in his workshop, taking pride in restoring furniture and renovating his home—he was skilled at everything from electrical work to tiling—there was simply nothing he couldn't do when he set his mind to it. For much of his life he had a home darkroom and was an avid photographer, passing his love of the form on to his wife and daughters. Ed loved to ski, scour garage sales for antiques and frames, and enjoyed golfing with friends. He was a fantastic chef, making the best Palomilla sandwiches—a Cuban treat—and his pancakes were so delicate they were like crepes. He was very proud of his Cuban heritage—"Guantanamera" was his anthem, though he also loved "God Only Knows" by the Beach Boys and "I Only Have Eyes For You" by The Flamingos. Ed had a true fondness for animals. He worked tirelessly to certify the family dog, Tucker, as a therapy dog, visiting hospitals to spread love and comfort. He had a fantastic sense of humor and his laughter was like a song. He will be remembered as a tremendous father and loving family man. He gave the warmest hugs.

He is survived by his wife, Ellen Delgado (nee Jacobson); his daughters: Amanda Delgado and Elizabeth Van Ginneken; as well as his granddaughter Estella Joelle Valverde and her father Joel Valverde; son-in-law Damen Van Ginneken; grandson Logan Gerbig (son of Amanda Delgado and James Gerbig); and many dear friends and neighbors whom he loved like family, including beloved pals Charles Chin and Jeff Staton. He is predeceased by his parents, Eduardo and Lucille Delgado, and his best friend, Richard David.

Condolences may be sent to the family in care of his daughter,  
Elizabeth Van Ginneken at  
560 Park Avenue  
Paterson, NJ 07504.

A memorial will be held in NJ when it is safe to gather  
and celebrate the beauty of his life.



**This 1994 family photo at right is from Ellen,  
with Ed and Elizabeth, Ellen and Amanda.**



**Ed Delgado Remembered by Charles Chin,  
who provided the photos on these pages.**



I've known Eddie from the good old days in the early 80's at NBC where he and I worked in the edit rooms. Once we worked 36 hours continuously just to meet air. We made a good team. We both went to Barcelona, our first Olympics, where we were roomies. Later, on a trip there, we almost got arrested. He enjoyed playing jokes on co-workers: who can forget the elaborate joke when we played sound effects of raccoons and angry bears during the night on a camping trip, scaring the shit out of an unsuspecting colleague. Or using a credit card from a napping colleague to order him plaid pants. Ah, the good old days. He was one of the core of people in Video Tape who made coming to work fun.

I was very saddened when he left NBC for better hunting grounds. Although we didn't see each other every day, we stayed close. We've been on numerous skiing and camping trips where we would cook gourmet meals such as Lobster Cantonese, Prime Rib steaks or Lobster Newburg. Ed was a very good and adventurous cook. I recall his fried Thanksgiving turkey that was black like charcoal but tender and juicy on the inside.

He was an avid photographer and developed his black and white photos in his basement darkroom. His favorite subjects were his two daughters, Lizzie and Amanda. Lizzie, by the way, appeared in an NBC Sports ice skating promo, which coincidentally, I helped edit. He always had the answer to any home repair and he had the best equipped workshop I ever seen. He loved fishing and enjoyed taking his dog, Tucker to hospitals to help raise the spirits of bed bound patients. He loved dogs.

Again, I was saddened when he and his wife, Ellen moved down to Florida where I visited several times and played golf. Both of us had not improved. But I remember with a smile when we overturned the golf cart. I attended both of his daughters' weddings. And he and Ellen attended our daughter, Sarah's wedding in June 2019. I didn't know, but that would be the last time I would see Ed.



I hope he knows how much I thought of him. We had a long and storied history together. The comments about Ed [on Facebook] only show how many people he's touched. I am proud to call him my Best Friend.

"When you're in jail, a good friend will be trying to bail you out. A best friend will be in the cell next to you saying, 'Damn, that was fun.'" - Groucho Marx

Like Butch and Sundance.

This is the Ed I knew. I wish I could talk to him and tell him what people are saying and how much he was loved. Rest in Peace, my good friend. I'll see you on the back 9. I love you.

**Above: Ed and Charles.**

**Left: Barcelona 1992 with Ed, Howie Hirsch,  
Susann Thomas and Charles.**

*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Tim Gorry Remembered by Mike Noseworthy**

Tim Gorry passed away suddenly on October 8, 2020 at the age of 68. He began his career at NBC in 1973 in the Video Tape Library, then transitioning to the Video Tape department.

I first met Tim in 1980 while training to work in *On Air Video Tape Ops*. From the first time I met him it was evident that he was a good man. He was eager to help the trainees and patiently answer any questions that we had.

Years later, Tim transitioned into *Studio Field* as a Video Engineer and painted the cameras that we watched on the *Today Show* broadcasts each morning. His warm, friendly, nature always warmed up a room or conversation.

Tim was dedicated to his colleagues throughout his 47 years at NBC, always serving NABET Local 11 as Shop Steward, Executive Board Member, and finally Secretary. Tim was respected by his peers and management alike. He was a man of his word and his handshake was gold.

He was the beloved husband of Lorraine, and the late Margaret. He also leaves his children Mary Hall, Timothy, Maggie, and Denis; three grandchildren; and his siblings Terry, Tracey Schroder, Maryellen Kennedy, and Betsy White.

Sadly, Tim had just retired in January 2020. Gone way too soon. You will be missed, my friend.  
Rest Peacefully.

**Stu Wolther**

Stuart E. Wolther, 72, of Meriden, died Saturday, October 17, 2020, at Hartford Hospital. He was the loving husband of Donna Wooding Wolther.

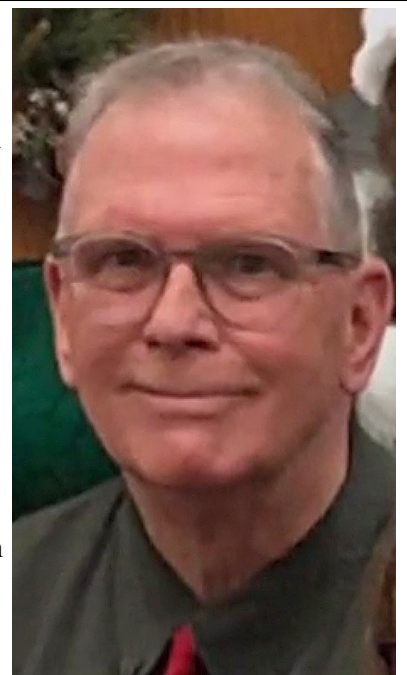
Stuart was born in Bronx, NY, on April 8, 1948, a son of the late Benjamin and Anne (Sohn) Wolther. He retired from NBC News, New York in August of this year where he worked as a Satellite Operations Manager for the last of his 45 years with the company.

In addition to his wife Donna, he is survived by his son Craig Wolther of Pearl River, NY, his daughter Dawne Rizas, her husband Tom Rizas of New Milford, NJ, daughter Rachel Wolther of Meriden and his son Daniel Wolther also of Meriden. He leaves as well his cherished grandsons Orin, Liam, Hunter, and Nathanael; his sister, Lana Worth of Corapeake, NC; and his cousin Steve Wolther.

Relatives and friends were invited to attend a memorial service Sunday, October 25, 2020, at 2 pm in The Wallingford Funeral Home. (COVID precautions were followed and masks required). Friends who could not attend in person watched the service via livestream on Stuart's online Obituary page located at [www.wallingfordfh.com](http://www.wallingfordfh.com)

The family asks that in lieu of flowers please turn to your loved ones and tell them how much you love them. Tomorrow is not promised.

© Wallingford-Funeral Homes





*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Walter C. Miller**

Walter C. Miller, the veteran director who helped forge the template for live awards telecasts by overseeing and fine-tuning the annual Grammys, Emmys, Tonys and Country Music Awards ceremonies for decades, has died at his home in Los Angeles. Miller, who won awards by the armful, died Nov. 13 after battling pneumonia, said his son Paul. He was 94.

He was at ease in an industry teeming with enormous egos and outsize personalities and seemed to possess a native skill for knowing exactly which camera to cut to during live performances. He also bemoaned the languid pace of awards shows that, in his mind, seemed to stretch on interminably. When NBC announced in 1998 that the Emmys show would last an unprecedented four hours, Miller winced at the thought of such a marathon ceremony. "It's horrendously boring enough at three hours," he told the Los Angeles Times that year. "But I suppose maybe if they can do something creative with clips they might manage to make it more entertaining."

His longevity at the helm of the annual run of awards shows was staggering. He directed both the Grammys and the Country Music Awards broadcasts for more than 30 years and the Tony Awards for nearly 20.

For three decades, he directed and produced the National Memorial Day Concert and A Capitol Fourth, the Independence Day concert in Washington. "He had a tremendous respect for the artists and wanted them to feel comfortable and sound as good as they possible could," his son said in an interview with The Times.

Born Walter Charles Miller in New York on March 15, 1926, the future director got his start as a projectionist at ABC. His early credits included work on "The Bell Telephone Hour" and "Sing Along With Mitch." His first big break arrived in 1967 when he was asked to direct "The Belle of 14th Street," a Barbra Streisand special on which he employed multiple cameras to give viewers the impression that they were there.

Once cemented as the go-to awards show director, Miller exuded a confidence in bringing out the best in the hosts and presenters at the shows. While prepping for the 1998 Tony Awards, Miller told his staff not to micro-manage that year's host. "Remember," he said, "Rosie O'Donnell is not going to be a traffic cop on this show. She is hosting our show. She is a personality, and we are going to let her personality shine. Am I understood? She will shine." He was less charitable when comic Gilbert Gottfried got on a roll at the Emmys with a string of off-color Pee-wee Herman jokes. "Not only is Gottfried not invited back, I don't even want him to watch," Miller told Newsday in 1992.

Paul Miller, who worked alongside his father and later directed "Saturday Night Live" and stand-up routines on Comedy Central, said his father believed that if an awards show ran over its allotted time, there was generally a comedian to blame, as they went off script in search of a laugh. Just the same, some of Miller's closest friends were unpredictable and colorful comics such as Sam Kinison and Rodney Dangerfield.

Though the awards shows often seemed filled with spontaneity, Paul Miller said his father was a diligent planner who spent sleepless nights plotting out every camera move, every angle. "He did his homework," his son said. "He believed in being prepared." In addition to the awards shows, Miller directed variety specials for Frank Sinatra, Dolly Parton, Robin Williams, Bob Hope and Billy Crystal, among others. Miller was nominated for 19 Emmys during his career, winning five. He also won a Peabody and the Grammy Trustees Award.

Long divorced, Miller is survived by his son, daughter Deborah, grandchildren Trevor and Tess, and two great-grandchildren.

**By Steve Marble, Obituaries Editor, © Los Angeles Times, November 18, 2020**



*Peacock History***Reuven Frank  
Remembered by Mike Chapman**

Reuven Frank, twice president of NBC News and the man generally credited with pairing Chet Huntley with David Brinkley, was born 100 years ago today in Montreal. “December 7th, 1920 - a day that will live in infamy!” he noted wryly.

Frank was a shy, unassuming man possessing a towering intellect. He was quick to praise colleagues and subordinates, and his critiques were often soft-pedaled: “Don’t you think it’s a bit long?” And he inspired fierce loyalty. Lloyd Dobyns recalled that “I’d rather have shot myself in the head than disappoint him.”

Frank joined NBC in 1950, already a WWII veteran, Columbia Journalism School graduate and night city editor at the Newark Daily News. He eventually became the producer of “The Camel News Caravan” with John Cameron Swayze. When NBC higher-ups wanted Swayze replaced for convention coverage in 1956, Frank suggested pairing Washington reporter David Brinkley with an anchor at KNBC, a tall, deep-voiced Montanan named Chet Huntley. The rest, as they say, is history.

Arguably, Frank had as great an influence on television news as his much louder, swashbuckling contemporaries at CBS, men like Fred Friendly (Morrow’s producer and later CBS News president, a man not above throwing furniture to indicate his displeasure) and the famously voluble Don Hewitt of “60 Minutes”. Frank quietly and firmly insisted his staff assume that the audience was at least as smart as they were - and he hired very smart people. There were no snowstorms, puppy bowls or “fluffy” pieces; Frank was keenly aware that he had less than 30 minutes per night to convey the news, which in the day included Vietnam, the Berlin Wall, elections and assassinations.

Besides pairing Huntley and Brinkley, Frank is perhaps best remembered for the iconoclastic “Weekend”, which pre-dated Saturday Night Live, and of course “NBC Overnight”, recognized as one of the great TV news programs of all time. “It was fantastic,” the usually soft-spoken Frank recalled, “You had a wonderful young producer - Herb Dudnick - who would try anything, and you had [Lloyd] Dobyns and [Linda] Ellerbee trying to out-write each other. And some of those scripts are classics!”

Frank returned to his favorite role as a documentary producer in 1986. Two years later, his contract was allowed to expire by his successor, Larry Grossman. He left NBC after 38 years and the TV critics had a field day. Frank was able to “read my own obituary while I was still able to enjoy it!” He retired to his home in Tenaflly, NJ, where he remained bemused and mildly annoyed as he watched the devolution of a business he’d helped to define.

Don Hewitt said that the essence of “60 Minutes” was “Tell me a story.” Frank knew that the power of television was to show you a story, for pictures can be far more evocative than words.

Reuven Frank, 1920 - 2006.



*Peacock History***Wide Wide World  
Live from Havana in 1955**

The Sunday afternoon, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 1955, episode of NBC's Wide Wide World included the first live TV pickup from Cuba. This was the first controlled telecast that was ever beamed from a foreign country to the U. S. across a body of water. The distance between Havana, where the cameras were located, and Miami Beach, Florida, where the video cable starts, is roughly 250 miles, too far for a TV signal to reach.

In Havana, pickup cameras at historic Cathedral Square focused on a group of Cuban children in native costumes, and performing native songs and dances from 1830. Another camera, located atop a 35-story apartment building presented a panoramic view of the city. The transmission dish was located here as well.

Between the two points, therefore, an airplane flew a tight figure-eight at a height of 11,000 feet and a distance of 60 miles to relay the picture and sound to the receiving equipment atop the Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami Beach.

In the photo above, © NBC Publicity, are Enrique Pages of CMQ, the Havana Television Network and Lew Hathaway of NBC's Engineering Department, aboard the airliner during the broadcast.

Other land-based segments of the broadcast, titled "A Sunday Afternoon with Youth", included pickups from Bennington, VT; Oakland, Ojai and San Fernando CA; Toronto, Canada; Massillon and Dayton, OH; Madison, WI; Brigham, UT; Detroit, MI and Miami Beach, FL.

The show was hosted by Dave Garroway, produced by Norman Frank and directed by Dick Schneider.

Copy adapted from "The Classic TV Archive" website and an uncredited magazine source seen on Facebook.

*Peacock History***The Heidi Chronicles**

Since we all need something fun in our lives right now, today is the anniversary of the famous "Heidi" game. Many of the principal players are no longer with us but the key to the whole thing was an order given by our own Dick Cline to switch from the game (Jets vs Raiders) to the movie. He was actually only following the orders and procedure given to him by the programmers of the time, but it is still a classic. Salute to Dick.

**Ken Fouts**

**We present the Original "Heidi" Memos**

To: Charles Corcoran  
From: Richard Cline

November 17, 1968  
Subject: Football-Heidi Confusion

At the request of Jack Weir, I am enclosing a report of my activities in BOC Sunday evening, November 17, 1968 between approximately 6:00-7:00pm.

To the best of my recollection this report should explain what happened.

cc: J. Weir

APX 6:00PM SCOTTY CONNALL CALLED TO SAY THAT HE THOUGHT THE FIRST HALF RAN LONG AND IF THE SECOND HALF RAN AS LONG, WE MIGHT BE IN TROUBLE AT 7:00pm.

APX 6:49pm SCOTTY CONNALL CALLED TO ADVISE THAT CARL LINDEMAN WAS GOING TO CALL MR. GOODMAN TO SEE IF WE COULD STAY WITH THE FOOTBALL GAME IF IT RAN BEYOND 7:00PM. SCOTTY SAID THAT I WOULD BE ALERTED IF MR. GOODMAN GAVE THAT PERMISSION. I ADVISED TRAFFIC (C. MANGANO) AND TVC.

6:57PM I TRIED TO CALL SCOTTY CONNELL AT HOME (ON BOTH NUMBERS), BUT BOTH LINES WERE BUSY. BY THE TIME I RECEIVED THE BUSY SIGNAL ON HIS SECOND NUMBER IT WAS APX 6:58:30PM. BURBANK ASKED ME WHAT TO DO. I TOLD THEM TO HIT THWIR CLOSING NET IDENT ON TIME AT 6:58:40PM WHICH THEY DID.

APX 6:59PM I RECEIVED A CALL FROM MR. GOODMAN DURING THE STATION BREAK. HE REQUESTED THAT WE RETURN TO THE FOOTBALL GAME.

APX 6:59:30PM I TOLD TRAFFIC TO KEEP THE FOOTBALL NETWORK INTACT, NOT TO NORMAL THE NETWORK. THEN I CALLED TVC AND ORDERED THEM TO RETURN TO THE INCOMING ROBIN AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE STATION BREAK. AT THIS TIME, DES MCBRIDE WAS TRYING TO GET NBC CHICAGO ON THE PHONE TO TELL THEM NOT TO MAKE THE SWITCH FROM THE INCOMING BURBANK LINE. HE WAS UNABLE TO GET A LINE OUT OF THE BUILDING. BY THIS TIME, THE STATION BREAK WAS OVER, TVC HAD MADE THEIR SWITCH TO THE INCOMING ROBIN. THEY RECEIVED FEEDBACK AND SO WISELY RETURNED TO THE STUDIO 4G (HEIDI) FEED. WHEN I REALIZED THAT WE COULDN'T GET THROUGH TO CHICAGO, I CALLED MR. GOODMAN AT APX 7:02PM AND HE ADVISED ME TO STAY WITH HEIDI AT THAT POINT.

NOTE: I LEARNED SUBSEQUENTLY THAT SCOTTY CONNALL HAD TRIED TO CALL ME BACK WITH A DECISION BUT HE COULD NOT GET THROUGH THE SWITCHBOARD. HE THEN CALLED THE MOBILE UNIT AND TOLD THEM TO RELAY THE DECISION TO ME. THE MOBILE UNIT DID TELL ME THAT THEY WERE "GOING TO STAY ON", BUT THAT WAS AT APX 6:58:30PM AND NO NAMES WERE MENTIONED. JUST "WE'RE GOING TO STAY ON." AT THAT POINT THERE WAS NO TIME FOR DISCUSSION. ALSO, PAST EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT ME THAT THE PRODUCER OF THE GAME GETS DEEPLY INVOLVED WITH THE ACTION AND DOES NOT WANT TO LEAVE THE GAME. THIS SEEMED LIKE JUST SUCH A SITUATION. THIS "WE'RE GOING TO STAY ON" IS, THEREFORE, HEARD FREQUENTLY BY ME AND IS DISREGARDED AS SUCH.

RICHARD CLINE.

TO: C. CORCORAN  
FROM: B. BROWN

November 17, 1968  
JETS VS OAKLAND AUDIENCE REACTION AND  
RESULTING SWITCHBOARD FAILURE

1. GAME INTERRUPTED BY COMMERCIAL AT 6:53:19 FOR ONE MINUTE.
  2. SWITCHBOARD IMMEDIATELY FLOODED WITH CALLS BECAUSE OF THE COMMERCIAL INTERRUPTION. SOME TIME LATER SCOTTY CONNALL TOLD AN OPERATOR HE HAD TRIED TO GET THROUGH TO BOC AT APPROXIMATELY 6:55 BUT COULDN'T GET AN ANSWER AT THE SWITCHBOARD.
  3. GAME CUT OFF THE AIR ON TIME (6:58:40) BEFORE IT ENDED. CUT OFF PER CONDITIONS WHICH ALLOWED NO LEEWAY FOR HEIDI.
  4. AUDIENCE REACTION WAS GO GREAT AT THE SWITCHBOARD THAT IT BECAME OVERLOADED AND A FUSE BLEW OUT. CALLS WERE PROBABLY BACKED UP IN THE TELCO CENTRAL OFFICE AS WELL.
  5. OPERATOR CALLED THE 50<sup>th</sup> ST. REPAIR BUREAU AND A MAN ARRIVED AT 7:15. TWO MORE MEN ARRIVED SHORTLY AFTER.
  6. FUSE BLEW OUT EVERY TIME IT WAS REPLACED ... 25 FUSES USED IN ALL.
  7. EXTRA OPERATORS CALLED IN AND SOME PEOPLE ROUNDED UP FROM THE AD STAFF, NEWS ROOM, AND TVC TO HELP ANSWER CALLS. THE THREE TELEPHONE REPAIRMEN AND I ALSO ANSWERED CALLS. THE MORE CALLS ANSWERED OR KNOCKED OFF THE SWITCHBOARD, THE LESS THE CHANCE OF A FUSE BLOWING.
  8. BY 10:30 CALLS HAD SLACKENED OFF CONSIDERABLY.
  9. NO WAY OF TELLING HOW MANY CALLS THERE WERE, BUT IT WAS PROBABLY WELL OVER TEN THOUSAND.
- BILL BROWN.



**Fast-forward to 2020 - Barbara and Dick Cline with Rick Stern looking over these memos and some emails from their colleagues.**

**Dick writes: I checked my emails yesterday and with all the emails listed, I assumed that someone had died. I was right - it was me! After all these years, I think I had finally learned to ignore that infamous date. Thanks for bringing it back. I do appreciate all the responses, so thank you all. I'm still here. Note: Barbara thought it was a hoot! Have a safe holiday and please wear your mask.**



*The Kicker*

**Rock Center Tree News**



This year's Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree arrived with a stowaway: a little owl. One of the workers who had helped transport and install the tree had found a small owl in its branches. The owl had apparently hitched a ride all the way to NYC and was being treated and cared for at the Ravensbeard Wildlife Center in Saugerties, N.Y. The owl was brought there by one of the workers who had "tucked him in a box for the long ride home." He delivered the bird to an employee at the center, who identified it as a saw-whet owl. Center employees were giving the owl, which they named "Rockefeller," fluids and "all the mice he will eat," the Facebook post said. They planned to release him "to continue his wild and wonderful journey" once he received "a clean bill of health." The tree lighting ceremony took place without spectators and was largely pre-recorded. Visitors were permitted to make timed reservations starting on the following day, with five minutes allotted to each group of four people. Those folks were confined to a "pod" for their visit, and then required to leave the area. (Owl photo by © Lindsay Possumato, AP)



Quarantine restrictions caused the annual WNBC-TV Sing Along event to be a virtual one as well. Viewers were invited to sing along with a 30-second "bouncing ball" version of Frosty the Snowman and then upload their take to the station where it was combined with many others. Here's a typical frame.



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