Ruth Gruber Winner of Silurians 2011 Lifetime Achievement Award
International Correspondent, Photographer on the Cusp of History
Humanitarian of Heroic Tenacity

By Eve Berliner

Images that haunt the mind—a hoisted flag, desperate eyes, outcries, pieces of time and memory, Ruth Gruber, at 100 years of age, a wizened, rather beautiful little butterfly, deep blue eyes peering into time, her wings outstretched, drawn to the dispossessed of this earth, refugees of Nazi death camps and fear, no one to give sanctuary. Her epiphany, the harrowing voyage of _The Exodus_ 1947, a ship carrying 4,500 Jewish Holocaust survivors to British Mandate Palestine in defiance of the British blockade, Shadowed by British men-of-war and under constant threat, the _Exodus_ was brutally attacked by a British Hotlita, leaving three dead, 150 injured. The war torn vessel limped into the Port of Haifa, Gruber there with her camera to bear witness. In the end, the British refused them entry and deported them back to Germany to the refugee camps of Elmden and Wilhelmshaven. “I knew my life would be inextricably bound by rescue and survival,” Ruth Gruber would utter.

Ruth, on that final tragic journey with the desolate, in her white suit and wide-brimmed straw hat, amid the teeming masses on board the prison ship, continued on Page 5.

Summer of ‘77

By Owen Moritz

It may be hard to believe today, but in the summer of 1977 New Yorkers feared for their very lives. A serial killer was preying on young people. In slightly more than a year he killed six people, wounded seven others. No one knew what he looked like and the descriptions from survivors were so sketchy that each new composite drawing bore little resemblance to the previous one. We weren’t even sure if we were looking for Jack the Ripper or Jill the Ripper. There had been suggestions the killer might be a woman.

I was among a number of Daily News staffers writing speculative stories on the police manhunt for someone calling himself Son of Sam. In my case I was getting feeds from Bill Federici and Pat Doyle at police headquarters. Meanwhile, columnist Jimmy Breslin was working his own sources.

We all knew certain things about the killer—he stalked couples in secluded parking spots, used a .44 caliber revolver and fancied pretty girls with shoulder-length dark hair.

And thousands of women were so terrified they cut or dyed their hair blond or made a run on blonde wigs at beauty supply stores.

Moreover, there was the manic boast that put everyone on edge. He sent wild notes to Police Captain Joseph Borrelli and Breslin.

“Sam’s a thirsty lad,” he wrote Breslin, “and he won’t let me stop killing until he gets his fill of blood.”

In the early morning of July 31, 1977 the killer struck again, stalkling a young couple to a parked car in Bensonhurst. He crept up silently as the pair kissed and fired away at close range. Stacy Moskowitz, 20, died within hours and Robert Violante, also 20, lost an eye.

Ten days later, on Aug. 10, continued on Page 4.
The Medical Wars
By Robert Bazell, Chief Science and Health Correspondent for NBC News

It was the regular afternoon story meeting a few months ago for that evening’s NBC Nightly News. The senior producers along with Brian Williams the anchor and managing editor listen as correspondents and producers present the proposed pieces for that evening’s broadcast. E. Repeat with all other bedbugs until they are all dead
B. Capture the bedbug
C. Place bedbug on one block of wood
D. Strike said bug with the other block of wood until dead
E. Repeat with all other bedbugs until they are all dead

The great writer, thespian and raconteur, Malachy McCourt.

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The Question Box
By Ray Corio

Ever wonder about the average weight of major league umpires? Or if a perfect game can include an error by the winning team? Or why baseball players spit so often?

Quite a few readers were curious about those and other such sports-related matters. I learned, during my "interim" term tending to The New York Times SportsMonday Question Box from 1984-1993.

Over a range of more than 400 columns, distilled from an average of 15-20 letters a week, I answered roughly 2,000 questions. But one I never answered stands out: which sport elicits the most questions?

Baseball, unquestionably. By a city and country mile. It made up more than 85 percent of the letters submitted. Be it Super Bowl week, Kentucky Derby week, the Olympics or World Cup, readers wanted to know "If a runner on second base with one out leaves the base too soon..."

The national passion for the national pastime was just dandy for me, a lifelong sports nut encased in a baseball shell. So when S. Lee Kanner retired in 1984 as the Q and A consultant in Englewood, N.J., a frequent contributor: "Hey, what happened to Ray Corio, and his Q&A?"

"Hey, what happened to Ray Corio" was the staff's go-to guy for any reporter or editor in the entire newsroom. Beyond the newspaper, friends and relatives also caught on. "Hey Ray, I've got one I bet you can't answer," became a daily challenge, and nuisance.

The column, born when SportsMonday was created in 1978, invited readers to submit questions on any aspect of sports: statistics, rules or strategies. Sounds dry, even by Times standards, so I would enrich the answers with a smile or two. And a cartoon by Tom Bloom with a witty caption helped, too.

Letters arrived from all types, particularly doctors, teachers and retirees; lots of retirees.

There were inquiries from Brazil (basketball), Canada (curling), and the entire United States (fencing, boxing, six-day bicycle races, etc.) Even a question from my former high school mathematics teacher, who remembered me from the school newspaper. That led to a reacquaintance.

Another reader wondered if I was related to Ann Corio, the legendary stripper from burlesque days. It’s a question I’ve been asked many times, and the answer is still, "Not even barely."

As for sports questions, they often turned up an irony or interesting note that upstaged the original question. This was all pre-Internet, so my sources were record and rules books, as well as phone calls to team media directors (not so good), halls of fame (better), headquarters for the sports (even better), the Elias Sports Bureau (always reliable) and often major league umpires like Marty Springstead (the best), I learned never to disagree with umpires.

Over the years, I also learned how truly popular Babe Ruth, Ted Williams, Joe DiMaggio, Sandy Koufax, and the Bobby Thomson-Ralph Branca dynamic still are.

Here’s a sample question:

If a Dodger fielder dropped a foul pop during Sandy Koufax’s perfect game against the Cubs in 1965, would the perfect game be spoiled?

The answer: Hardly, so long as Koufax retired the batter and every other one without anyone reaching base. But the fielder would be charged with an error for "prolonging the player’s at-bat." So there would be an error for the winning team in a perfect game by the winning pitcher.

And this one: Did Bobby Thomson hit any other home runs off Ralph Branca in 1951 before the pennant-winning "shot heard ‘round the world" in the playoff against the Dodgers?

The answer: Thomson hit two others off Branca that season, one in the first playoff game two days earlier. Interestingly, Branca allowed 19 homerions that year, 11 to the Giants, and Thomson hit 8 of his 32 homers off the Dodgers.

For one question, I got the answer directly from the subject, Dick Lynch, whom I met at my chiropractor’s office (apparently a frequent hangout for ex-football players).

Lynch was a former Notre Dame halfback and defensive back, whose 3-yard touchdown run against Oklahoma in 1957 ended college football’s longest winning streak at 47 games. A reader wondered if Lynch had ever played at running back during his career with the New York Giants in the National Football League.

“I never had a down in the pros,” Lynch told me, pointing out that the Giants were so successful that they kept him at defensive back and kick returner. Lynch managed 37 interceptions and scored 7 touchdowns, but the player who carried the day for Notre Dame never carried the ball from scrimmage as a pro.

That answer was obtained easily, but others, like the weight of umpires and the penchant for spitting in baseball, wound up in my can’t-answer file, along with one I received a year after the column had been phased out. It came from a marketing consultant in Englewood, N.J., a frequent contributor:

“Hey, what happened to Ray Corio and his Q&A?”
Son of Sam Terrors

Continued from Page 1

1977, by a turn of fate, I was assigned to The New York Times, where he used to work.

Headlines were written, 24-hours a day. The reporters and editors made the reporting of certain events.

Son of Sam Terrors

Observations from Down Under

New York Daily News

By Eric Williams

Waugh's.

Melbourne, Australia – When looking at the local newspapers, and viewing the newspapers from back home online, the late New York Times columnist, William Saffire, would have a field day. Now I am not professing to come anywhere near the brilliance of the late master of the origin of various English words, but one thing becomes clear for this ex-pat: I may be in an English speaking nation, but we do not speak the same language. Or write it, for that matter. This is especially true in the matter in which headlines are written, or the reporting of certain events.

One case in point is the recent sentencing of Judith Moran, the mother of one of Melbourne’s crime families. Here is a 60ish woman who has lost two sons, and two husbands in this city’s gangland wars of recent years. Judith Moran was found guilty of planning out the gangland-style murder of her brother-in-law, D e s m o n. ‘Tuppence’ Moran, in broad daylight, on a calm weekday afternoon in Ascot Vale, a wealthy Melbourne suburb, in June 2009.

Moran, 66, had received a stiff 26-year sentence in August of this year, and the local papers screamed with headlines, and sub-titles, depicting Moran as “A sad old hag with a tragic past.” While the Herald Sun court reporter, Paul Anderson, started the first paragraph of his story with a quote; “Judy Moran was an evil witch who deserved a lonely death in jail.”

This is not to say that American, and especially, New York City newspapers, in general, do not use harsh terms when describing the act of a bad guy. But the use of such words, and phrases, “sad old hag” and “evil witch,” struck this writer as raw, and edgy.

Testimony during the dramatic trial had revealed a rift between ‘Tuppence’ and Judy Moran. ‘Tuppence’ had paid his sister-in-law $4000 dollars a month following the death of his brother, and nephews, but he grew tired of that near decade-long arrangement, and confronted Judy Moran about it. Judith Moran, who lived the lavish life of a gangster’s moll, had believed ‘Tuppence’ had access to a fortune of ‘Black’ money “stooked away” (as the local papers put it) by her late gangster husband, Lewis. The secret stash of so-called ‘Black’ money has not been found, and the fate of Desmond ‘Tuppence’ Moran, is now in the record books.

What also strikes me is the use of certain English words and phrases that one would never see in an American publication. Phrases such as a ‘Standover man,” used for the muscle, or enforcer by a gangster, comes to mind. A “punter,” or gambler, and the act of “punting” is another that jars the senses. One sentence by Andrew Rule, the noted Herald Sun associate editor, and reported, who is also the co-author of the UNDERBELLY books, would make an American reader re-read the following sentence several times: “Judy Moran had an evil witch who deserved a lonely death in jail.”

Serious problems can arise when describing the act of a bad guy. But the use of such words, and phrases, “sad old hag” and “evil witch,” struck this writer as raw, and edgy.

By a turn of fate, I was assigned to The New York Times, where he used to work.

Continued from Page 6

The first Son of Sam letter to Captain Joseph Borrelli of the New York City Police Department.
In 1944, while war and Holocaust raged, Gruber was assigned a secret mission to escort 1,000 Jewish refugees from Europe to the United States, in what would be a harrowing voyage of sanctuary. Acting on executive authority, President Roosevelt secretly circumvented the government policy of strict quotas that kept our doors effectively sealed against Eastern European Jews, and moved to give shelter to 1,000 Jewish refugees. He dropped the project in the lap of Interior Secretary Harold Ickes who assigned Gruber to lead the mission. Ickes formally declared Gruber to be a General. In the event the military aircraft in which she was flying to Europe was shot down by the Nazis, her life would be protected by the Geneva Convention.

Throughout the 13-day rescue, the Army troop transport Henry Giffins was hunted by Nazi seaplanes and U-boats. In the end, the refugees were blocked behind a chain link fence with barbed wire by Fort Ontario in Oswego New York, the threat of deportation at war’s end a cruel reality. Gruber fought on, lobbied for the United States to give them permanent refuge.

When the war ended the Oswego refugees remained in America. This was the only attempt by the United States government to shelter Jewish refugees during the Second World War.

In 1946, Ted Thackrey, editor in chief of The New York Herald Tribune, asked Gruber to write the book on the newly created Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine.

The Committee was to decide the fate of 100,000 Jewish refugees who were living in European camps as displaced persons, [DPs]. The Commission traveled throughout Europe, Palestine and the Arab countries for four months, collecting testimony in Munich, Cairo, Jerusalem, Tyre [Lebanon], Haifa, Baghdad and Saudi Arabia [Gruber not permitted entry] -- with another month of deliberation in Switzerland. They toured the displaced person camps of Germany, many filled with orphaned children. They went to Dachau. They attended the Nuremberg Trials of the German war criminals, Gruber staring into the face of Hermann Goering, head of the German Luftwaffe, dressed in his immaculate blue uniform stripped of its medals.

Ben Gurion testified before the Com---Continued on Page 6
Gruber 2011 Honoree

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mission, as did Chaim Weizmann and Golda Meir.

In the end, the twelve members of the Commission unanimously agreed that Britain must allow 100,000 Jewish immi-

grants to settle in Palestine. The British Prime Minister, Harry Truman, im-

ported Great Britain to open the doors of Palestine to the Jews.

But the British Foreign Minister, Eden, said he would not relent.

The answer was No.

Britain renounced its Mandate over Pal-

estine. It no longer wanted to rule.

The United Nations created its own Committee – the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine – UNSCOP.

Ruth Gruber
dited in 2010 by the International Center

In 1951. He is the father of her chil-

son’s. Her daughter’s children, Joel and Lila, her

who passed the revered tradition along to

New York and sixteen years later rocked

the Yiddish word “Shumuck,” but both

“Gormless git.” Gormless, of course,

means one who is stupid, and who is not

able to do what one is supposed to do.

“Gormless” is a Yiddish play on the word

“gormless,” an English term for a man who

is not clever, who is not perceptive.

As a young reporter in the 1960s,

she covered the story of the birth of the State of

Israel. In 1961, she rode with the first

Jewish emigration to Israel.

The 104-year-old Yakut woman casti-

ged her vote in the elections to form the

Knesset, as the Occupy Melbourne sit-ins

continued and, as the October 2011

Public Policy and Message is the same.

And use different words, but the result in

Our political debates are as

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