

Silurian News

Published by The Society of The Silurians, Inc., an organization of veteran New York City journalists founded in 1924

Society of the Silurians
EXCELLENCE IN
JOURNALISM
AWARDS BANQUET

The Players Club
16 Gramercy Park South
Tuesday, May 19, 2015

Drinks: 6 p.m.
Dinner: 7:15 p.m.

Meet Old Friends and Award Winners
(212) 532-0887

Members and One Guest \$100 each
Non-Members \$120

MAY 2015

Silurians Honor the Best Journalism of 2014

Two dozen news organizations won Excellence in Journalism Awards for 2014 in the most competitive Silurians contest in recent years. No single subject dominated the winning entries, although two breaking news stories – the shooting of two police officers in Brooklyn and a fatal building blast in East Harlem – attracted a lot of coverage. Corporate approaches to pursuing profits in health care and the imperious behavior of the governors of New York and New Jersey also received well-merited scrutiny.

At the awards dinner on Tuesday, May 19, at The Players, Silurians Medallions and Merit Awards will be given to reporters, editors, producers, columnists, editorial writers, photographers and bloggers from the tri-state area in 26 categories.

The contest, the first conducted by the Silurians totally online, was overseen by Awards Chair Carol Lawson. The judges devoted hours to reading, listening to and viewing the entries before convening at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism to make the final decisions.

Veteran newsman David Gonzalez of The New York Times received the Peter Kihss Award, given annually to the reporter whose work best reflects the integrity and meticulousness of the late Mr. Kihss, in addition to emulating his qualities as a mentor to younger colleagues.

The Dennis Duggan Memorial Scholarship Award, awarded annually to a promising student at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, was won by Cole Rosengren of the Class of 2015.



CLOSE UP AND PERSONAL Stephanie Keith of The Daily News snapped this picture at a protest rally at Barclays Center following the death of Eric Garner. It was awarded the top prize in the Feature Photography category.

The winners are:

PRINT JOURNALISM Breaking News

Medallion Winner The New York Times, for "Two Officers Ambushed." The Times team: Ben Mueller, Al Baker, J. David Goodman, Matt Flegenheimer,

Kim Barker, Ashley Southall, Jeffrey E. Singer, Nina Bernstein, Alan Blinder, Richard Fausset, Sandra E. Garcia, Edna Ishayik, Thomas Kaplan, Sarah Maslin Nir, William K. Rashbaum, Kenneth Rosen, Marc Santora, Nate Schweber, Mosi Secret, Melody Simmons, Vivian Yee, Jack Begg

Despite minimal metro staffing and the looming early Sunday deadline, the Times reporters scrambled to reconstruct the cold-blooded executions of police officers Wenjin Liu and Rafael Ramos in their patrol car in Brooklyn. The Times team also compiled a comprehensive portrait

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Ralph Blumenthal

David Gonzalez of The New York Times, this year's Peter Kihss Award winner, with a photo of Kihss.

Kihss and Gonzalez: On the Same Page

BY RALPH BLUMENTHAL

It was the 40th anniversary of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis that very nearly plunged the world into Mutual Assured Destruction, and David Gonzalez, Caribbean correspondent of The New York Times, was in Havana as veterans of Camelot huddled with Fidel Castro and other Cuban and Soviet adversaries of the cold war, sharing chilling lessons.

Gonzalez was quizzing Robert S. McNamara in a hotel room when the former defense secretary rose to leave, ostensibly to consult with JFK adviser Ted Sorenson. Gonzalez turned to his buddy, photographer Angel Franco, and whispered in mock panic: "Do you think he found out that two Puerto Ricans from the South Bronx are doing the interview?"

Leave it to Gonzalez to flaunt his Nuyorican roots every chance he gets (although he's looking more and more these days like a sleeker Al Pacino). It's no surprise, too, that his down-to-earth street reporting, atmospheric photographs and journalistic generosity have won Gonzalez, 57, and currently co-editor of The Times's Lens Blog, this year's Peter Kihss Award from the Society of the Silurians.

Kihss, who died in 1984 at 72 after nearly half a century of pounding a typewriter at The AP, The Washington Post, The New York World-Telegram, The New York Herald Tribune and The Times, was the quintessential master craftsman of the trade, a reporter's re-

porter renowned for digging up facts, poring over the fine print in city reports and mentoring his juniors, and the award is given in that spirit.

Actually early in Gonzalez's career, the two crossed paths, although Gonzalez didn't realize it at the time. Fresh out of Yale, where he had disappointed his father by abandoning a pre-med track for psychology, he was working at the National Puerto Rican Forum as the No. 2 publicist (in a two-man office) when Kihss dropped by to pick up a report on the status of Puerto Ricans nationwide. Gonzalez's boss was incredulous. "He came here, himself? Peter Kihss?" Gonzalez didn't make as much of it and by the time Gonzalez reached 43d Street in 1990, Kihss was long gone. But he relishes the connection. And like Kihss, Gonzalez would find a way to nurture journalistic posterity.

"I grew up in the Rodney Dangerfield of boroughs," Gonzalez likes to say – specifically Beck Street between Longwood and Intervale in the South Bronx, the third and last child of Pedro and Lillian Gonzalez, teenage arrivals from Puerto Rico who met at a church dance in East Harlem. When he was 7 the family moved to a better neighborhood, 181st Street and Mapes Avenue, near the Bronx Zoo.

"I grew up playing in the street," he said. "When the Bronx started burning, there were basements we

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President's Report

BY ALLAN DODDS FRANK

As I enter the bell lap of my presidency, I am thrilled to report that my terrific successor and old friend Betsy Ashton will take over the Silurians in June in even better shape than when I was handed the conch two years ago.

Thanks to indefatigable former presidents Myron Kandel and Mort Sheinman, and many other dedicated Silurians, we now have nearly 310 members. Sadly, some members have passed away, but in case you have not noticed, we now commemorate each one with a posting on The New York Times obituary page.

Our Treasurer, Karen Bedrosian Richardson, has managed our finances expertly and our treasury happily has grown, thanks to the generosity of our members who have donated more than \$3,000 in addition to our dues. As many of you now appreciate, Betsy and Karen also have done a fabulous job with handling the inflow at our lunches, and making it possible for attendees to pay by credit card, get electronic receipts and even reusable name tags. Secretary Linda Amster has kept marvelous track of the goings on at the lively board meetings that precede each lunch. Former president Linda Goetz Holmes has provided expert pinch-hitting assistance with the minutes.

Our lunches, which have most recently featured WNET CEO & President Neal Shapiro, the great gossip Liz Smith and New York Times Public Editor Margaret Sullivan, have averaged nearly 90 people each month. And, if you missed them, thanks to Dennis Cieri and his company, Cieri Media, we now have a video archive so you can see them on a YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnKCsfMNf4CNv6-5ur1QFOU3bf1KP3TTQ>

You can also click through to the videos by accessing our website www.Silurians.org, which Fred Herzog most graciously administers.

Board members Bill Diehl and Barbara Lovenheim, with the help of Ted David, also have launched a new Facebook page for the Silurians and invite you to log on and sign up. Tell us what you are up to or what in the news business is on your mind.

Awards Chair Carol Lawson boosted participation in our Silurians Excellence in Journalism Awards for 2014 contest and the level of the entries was excellent, with two dozen news organizations winning awards. In addition to most of the Silurians I have already mentioned, the contest, this year exclusively online for the first time, was also judged by Ralph Blumenthal, Jack Deacy, Gerald Eskenazi, former President Tony Guida, Ben Patrusky, Anne Roiphe and Michael Serrill. And we are grateful to the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism for providing facilities for us to hold the awards deliberations.

Finally, if you are reading this straight from the newsstand at the awards dinner, you will already be appreciating the sensational job Dinner Chair Wendy Slight has done and how Silurian News Editor Bernard Kirsch has revitalized the publication with outstanding stories from our members. I also want to thank the Players club staff for their efforts on our behalf.

I have been honored to serve as the President of this august organization, which I believe has the most enthusiastic, well-informed, caring, professional membership of any group of journalists in the country. I am certain that the Silurians' collective energy and momentum will carry on unabated.

Silurians Honor the Best Journalism of 2014



Tariq Zehawi of The Record won top prize in the Breaking News, Photography, category with this photo that shows a SWAT team subduing a mother who had been threatening her children while other officers are whisking away the youngsters.

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of the killer and illuminated the complex tensions of an NYPD then at war with the Mayor.

Merit Award Newsday for “Deadly Blast”

When an East Harlem gas explosion flattened two buildings, killed four people and injured dozens more, Newsday’s team of 10 reporters produced a comprehensive look at the tragedy and its causes.

Feature News

Medallion The New York Times, “Baptism By Fire” by N.R. (Sonny) Kleinfeld

Kleinfeld crafts the story of a probationary fireman’s first fire and his rescue of a baby boy in a burning apartment into a beautifully written and researched epic narrative. Not only does he tell the story of fireman Jordan Sullivan and his unlikely path to the Fire Department, but he gives us an intimate picture of the men of Ladder 105, the fire they fought and the life and culture of

the firehouse.

Merit The New York Times, “Palm Sunday” by Joe Goldstein

Thirty years after 10 people, including eight children, were massacred on Palm Sunday in a Brooklyn railroad flat, Goldstein revisited the sole survivor, now a 31-year-old woman, and the police-woman who rescued her and later adopted her.

Investigative Reporting

Medallion The Associated Press, “Death on Rikers Island” by Jake Pearson

In a devastating and chilling 10-part exposé that ran from March to December, backed up with exhaustive documentation from internal reports, The Associated Press revealed a sickening pattern of physical abuse and criminal neglect at New York City’s largest jail complex, leading to official investigations and reforms.

Merit The New York Times, “Meddling Governor” by Suzanne Craig, Thomas Kaplan and William K. Rashbaum

This exposé of the collapse of the

Moreland Commission and Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s promise to clean up corruption in Albany revealed that the governor is a master of the back room whose orders mandating government transparency might as well have been written in invisible ink.

Sports Reporting

Medallion The Daily News for “Cooking The Books” by Teri Thompson, Mary Papenfuss, Christian Red, Nathaniel Vinton

A classically investigated and reported look at corruption inside the secret, lucrative world of international soccer at the highest levels and how a group of tenacious insiders made millions—often by illegal means.

Merit Newsday, “Five teams passed on Derek Jeter; here’s what they think about that now” by Steven Marcus

A fascinating story about how Derek Jeter ended up in pinstripes and the teams that passed on him in the 1992 baseball draft ended up in the dumps.

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In Duggan's Footsteps

Cole Rosengren, an outstanding student at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, is this year’s recipient of the Dennis Duggan Award.

Cole, 28, has already amassed a worthy pile of clips about the lives of ordinary New Yorkers. He has filed compelling stories from neighborhoods throughout the city, many focusing on the South Bronx. This review from one of his first-semester professors: “He is smart, analytical, and passionate about bringing professional journalism to the poorest area in New York City.”

And passion is what made Dennis Duggan, a former Silurians president, such a special journalist.

One of Cole’s early stories covered the merger of two struggling Bronx churches. Published by the Hunts Point Express, it gives a glimpse into the lives of both pastors and congregants as it explains the financial crisis that compelled them to put aside doctrinal differences.

“By sharing pews and a pulpit,” Cole wrote, “they hope to not only survive but also thrive.”

A recent piece, published in the Gotham Gazette, describes the scramble for jobs at the Department of Sanitation, as hopefuls at the African American Benevolent Society Organization in Queens prepare for the employment exam – the first offered since 2007. At stake: 500 jobs. Number of applicants citywide: 94,000.

One faculty member who cited Cole’s work describes him as “an insatiable policy wonk” who “wants to tell the stories of ordinary people and how they are affected, pro and con, by the great machinery of city government.”

Cole has long been drawn to urban issues. As an undergraduate at Emerson College (where he was editor-in-chief of Gauge Magazine, the student culture publication), he interned at The Weekly Dig. After graduation, he founded RealcityOnline.com, a website that



Cole Rosengren

chronicled life in cities across the country. In its three-year run, the site published more than 800 articles.

And now he’s keeping busy at the J-School: a current project, a five-part series for City Limits, will focus on the future of New York’s garbage system.

A New York Reporter's Vanished Legacy Reappears

BY JOHN MARTIN

On September 10, 1986, a group of mourners — reporters and editors — gathered in an auditorium at the New School in Greenwich Village to trade stories about a departed colleague, Paul Sann, a longtime executive editor at The New York Post.

As memories unfolded, Ed Kosner, editor of New York magazine, recalled a group of “night vagabonds” on the Post’s city desk in the 1950’s and 1960’s. He called them “a very, very odd bunch.”

One, a reporter, was identified only as “Opotowsky.”

“He was the only guy who could have two cigarettes in his mouth, have his feet up on the desk, and write a story at the same time, faster than anybody else,” Kosner said.

As a chain-smoking national reporter, Stanford (Stan) Opotowsky cut a vivid swath at The New York Post between 1955 and 1965. Later, as city editor and managing editor, he was less memorable — but far from forgotten.

Writer Nora Ephron once described her days as a fledgling Post reporter this way:

“I had an editor there named Stan Opotowsky, and he was always coming up with these great ideas for me. He would say, ‘Go out and find the most expensive apartment for rent in New York and report on it!’”

Jack Robbins, a seasoned Post reporter, said: “He was very easy-going, I liked him. On the other hand — I don’t know quite how to put this — he was just astonishingly terse.”

The son of Ukrainian and Polish Jews who emigrated to New Orleans from Paris, Opotowsky wrote sports reports for The Times-Picayune at age 14. Volunteering in World War II, he served as a Marine combat correspondent in the South Pacific. After the war, he joined United Press as a sportswriter and married a fellow UP correspondent, Marie Coble. In 1955, he moved to the Post, a respected liberal afternoon paper.

On April 1, 1972, Opotowsky abruptly resigned as managing editor, pushed out by Sann and publisher Dorothy Schiff.

“Morale at the paper was not fabulous,” said Marilyn Nissenson, who wrote “The Lady Upstairs: Dorothy Schiff and The New York Post.”

“I think people recognized that the paper’s time had come, and gone,” she said in an interview. “I think everybody was upset with everybody else.”

In a March 11, 1972, memo, Sann advised Schiff: “I would just tell Stan that he has no future here and we feel it is in the newspaper’s interest to reorganize the news operation now.”

Opotowsky quickly sent out feelers. Within days of leaving, he joined ABC News and was soon promoted to director of its worldwide television news coverage. He hired me in 1975 as an ABC news correspondent. We worked together for six years, but I knew nothing of his days as a reporter.

At ABC, despite his brusque manner, Opotowsky earned a reputation as a boss who cared deeply about his staff. In April 1975, as South Vietnam neared defeat, Opotowsky helped orchestrate an ABC News operation to evacuate 15 Vietnamese employees, several former employees, and their extended families. Calling almost nightly from New York, Opotowsky learned that the number seeking rescue was rising steeply as overlooked “sons” and “daughters” appeared.

Opotowsky “protested that the ABC board of directors would not agree to any higher number,” recalled Kevin Delaney,



Stan Opotowsky: A portrait of the journalist at work

the bureau chief. “I would have to point out that we were dealing in human lives. To Stan’s credit, he always pushed the higher number through.”

Over several days, Delaney escorted 101 Vietnamese to the gates of Tan Son Nhut Air Base, where they argued and bribed their way past Vietnamese MP’s to reach an Air America terminal. “Thank God for corruption,” Delaney said. “The system still works.”

At times, Opotowsky used humor to defuse tension. In 1979, returning from the Three Mile Island nuclear accident, I complained that my crew had not been issued protective gear. Stubbing out his cigarette, Opotowsky deadpanned: “Look, if in 40 years you get cancer, we’ll apologize!” We laughed. He immediately ordered an exhaustive series of tests, which found no harmful exposure.

In 1981, ABC News shifted Opotowsky to directing political coverage and devising a system of tracking assignments by computer, a new tool. He retired in 1992, remembered, if at all, as a manager. He died in 1997 in Florida.

But last October, while writing a book on network television news reporting, I decided to include a few lines on Opotowsky. My Internet query turned up a surprise artifact, a two-page typewritten story Opotowsky filed via Western Union to The Post. The dateline: Sept 28, 1962, Oxford, Mississippi

His story was about Governor Ross Barnett’s defiant opposition to admitting a black student, James Meredith, to the University of Mississippi.

Opotowsky explained why the Justice Department had pushed in court to extend by a few days a deadline for admitting Meredith: “There was the political consideration to be made just five weeks before a national election. The Kennedy Administration wants to go into those elections with a victory over Mississippi defiance, but a victory that quite clearly was earned only with a great show of compassion.”

Three days later, Barnett backed down.

The discovery of Opotowsky’s press-rate telegram, held in an Oxford office for four decades, led to a broader search. The results astonished me.

In 1957, the Post assigned Opotowsky, then 34, to look into the burgeoning civil rights struggle. He wrote a 12-part series investigating White Citizens Councils across the south. His conclusion was stark and unconditional. The councils, he wrote, were “a brigade of bigots whose total domination of the populace can be matched only by the Communist Party within Russia.”

In 1958, six months after covering the integration by nine black students of Little Rock’s Central High School, he returned to Central High.

In a series of shocking articles, he reported a barrage of physical and emotional attacks on the eight remaining black teenagers (the ninth had been expelled for fighting back). The perpetrators, he reported, were racist white students encouraged by parents and friends. With few exceptions, moderate white students had turned their backs. Neither the school nor Federal troops intervened.

On April 7, 1958, Opotowsky wrote that eight black teenagers “walk each day into the hostile world of Central High School guarded only by their determination and their dignity.”

“Technically, they are the most protected schoolchildren in the world. They have behind them the majesty of the U.S. Supreme Court, the force of the U.S. Army and the personal guidance of the Little Rock School Board.

“But in reality they walk alone,” he wrote. “You see them move down the twisting halls of Central High in a quick, tense gait, eyes riveted to the fore, fearful and expectant.”

Citing school records of 42 attacks, Opotowsky said: “This is the sort of thing that happens almost daily at Central High — kickings and pushings and name callings, incidents that are pitifully petty when taken alone, yet horrible torture when assembled in the unbroken chain which has lasted for six months now.”

Fifty years later, Vanity Fair writer David Margolick unearthed Opotowsky’s articles on microfilm and began using them for an article that led to his 2013 book, “Elizabeth and Hazel: Two Women of Little Rock.”

“It was just one of those bylines that you learned to look for,” said Margolick in an interview. “His work stood out so much.”

Opotowsky’s coverage “was insightful, it was very sensitive,” he said, “but it was gritty and gutsy because unlike most reporters he actually went inside the school. He saw the way that these kids were being treated.”

Opotowsky’s daughter Anne, a journalist, editor and graphic novelist, said, “All nine of those kids knew my father, they invited him over, they trusted him.”

Her father, she said, was one of a “sub-

group” of Southerners especially skilled at civil rights reporting.

As journalists, they faced danger in “being able to get people to talk to you about this — white men who would admit to the crimes, prosecutors who had to put their lives on the line just to talk to you off the record,” she said.

On November 22, 1963, Opotowsky, who had covered the 1960 Kennedy presidential campaign, was working on a story in Washington, D.C. When he picked up a pay telephone to call his office in New York, said Anne Opotowsky, he got a busy signal before he could insert a coin.

“His instincts told him that nothing could ever have done that, other than a crisis,” she said. “He found out about five minutes later and got on a plane” to Dallas.

Days later, she said, her father confronted Melvin Belli, Jack Ruby’s lawyer, as he portrayed patriotism as his client’s motive for killing Kennedy’s assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald.

“My father wasn’t buying it,” she said. “It increased Belli’s respect for my father and it developed a relationship. They would talk and he would tell him things off the record. My father got tons and tons of information from a guy that he didn’t give an inch to.”

The following year, Opotowsky co-wrote a Post series exposing lucrative insider deals for restaurant franchises at the 1964 New York World’s Fair. The no-bid deals favored friends of Robert Moses, the city’s parks commissioner.

Opotowsky wrote four books. Critics were often (but not always) impressed.

“Vivacious, sharply written, highly readable,” wrote a New York Times reviewer on March 6, 1960, of “The Longs of Louisiana,” which described the family that dominated his home state for decades. Despite the author’s flair for storytelling, the critic decided, “the book is about as profound as a tablet.”

Nevertheless, a Times book columnist praised the author’s description of the day in 1935 that Huey Long was assassinated. “Mr. Opotowsky uses the skill of a novelist to develop all the suspense a situation can stand.”

“The Kennedy Government” (1961) described the political figures aligned with the newly elected president, explaining how Kennedy chose among them to form his cabinet.

Richard Rovere, a leading political analyst, found “a sound, sensible, crisply written account of the President’s work in assembling a government.”

The problem, he concluded, was that despite Opotowsky’s “competent, objective, and instructive” reporting, the book would be useful only for readers who did not follow the news and they “don’t read political books.”

“TV — The Big Picture” (1961), a “close, hard look” at the world of the broadcast medium, was written during a New York newspaper strike and attracted little attention.

His final book, “Men Behind Bars” (1972), appeared in the wake of the Attica Prison riots and described dehumanizing experiences still faced by convicts today.

This winter, 17 years after Opotowsky’s death, a New York Times reporter who covered many of the same topics recalled his work.

“I am sad to say I did not know Stan Opotowsky personally, only by his reputation as a fine journalist,” said Gay Talese.

“I read many of his pieces — his was a prominent byline, and I always read The Post,” Talese wrote in an email. “He was a respected figure in serious journalism during my time on the beat.”

Finding Her Voice(s)

BY MAGEE HICKEY

"Do you sing?"

It was freezing cold. We reporters were huddled together waiting for a fire chief to give us any morsel of information about a suspicious fire, so we could go back to the relative warmth of our TV trucks. Fortunately no one was seriously hurt on a forlorn block in the north end of Newark.

But I was on another mission as well: recruiting newscasters to sing in the first cabaret fundraiser I was organizing. It was to benefit a special needs school my late father had helped to develop and it had been named after him.

The Lawrence F. Hickey Center for Child Development, run by Astor Services for Children and Families, serves 40 preschoolers who have already been expelled from other nursery schools and kindergartens in the Bronx. More than 80 percent live below the poverty line.

Now, the tougher question for my fellow intrepid reporters.

"Hey, will you risk looking like a fool up on stage, trying to sing, to raise money to help others?"

I was working at CBS 2 News at the time. And I had already corralled a passel of my closest colleagues at the deuce to join me in this enterprise.

Reporter Hazel Sanchez and meteorologist John Elliot were the two terrifically talented standouts in the crowd of more than a dozen fearless colleagues, including Kirstin Cole, Dana Tyler, Cindy Hsu, Maurice DuBois and Lou Young.

I had been hoping for a representative from each TV station. Luckily, for me, Sarah Wallace of Eyewitness News is a good sport. And she is married to Harry Martin, formerly of My9 News, who happens to play the piano and write music.

They jumped on board, as did my good

friend Ernie Anastos, anchor of FOX 5.

Ernie and I first met in Providence, R.I., in the 1970s. I was a Brown University junior interning at WPRI-TV and Ernie was the brand new general assignment reporter, fresh from a radio gig in Boston. We became fast friends and have also worked together at WABC and WCBS over the years. But I didn't know he was a wonderful cabaret singer.

So now I just needed someone from NBC 4 and NY1.

I didn't find any takers at that Newark fire. But eventually Andrew Siff, who played Mayor Bloomberg so well in our annual Inner Circle musical, joined in both singing and playing the piano. Budd Mishkin brought along his guitar and did an original song about James Taylor.

And the funny thing is I am the one who is scared to death to sing in public.

Six years ago, I stumbled into a "Face Your Fear" cabaret singing class at the 92nd Street Y, taught by the incredibly nurturing Collette Black. With my heart pounding and my throat dry, I warbled a few tentative notes. What I lacked in innate talent I hopefully made up for with self-deprecating humor.

I am not sure why I decided to try to conquer this fear of singing, but it had something to do with missing my mother, an actress, who had passed away the year before. Jean Hogan Hickey had loved the Great American Songbook and so do I. My childhood had been filled with songs from all the great Broadway musicals, with my mother being a lot like Auntie Mame in real life.

My mother had always taught me to be brave, confront what scares you, never be snobbish or self-satisfied. Once you take the attention off yourself, it frees you to think of others, in this case, the developmentally delayed children at the



IN TUNE: Ernie Anastos and Magee Hickey, the author, at a benefit event.

Hickey Center.

So now I am a singing fool. It doesn't matter if I am a good or not.

My signature songs are parodies of my long TV news career in this city, having worked at every station in town, three of them twice, over the last three decades.

I come out on stage dragging my microphone, which is so heavy because it has microphone flags from the seven stations I have worked at. I sing a parody of the parody song from "Blazing Saddles," "I'm Tired." The late, great Madeline Kahn played the broken down cabaret singer Lili von Shtupp, singing about being sick and tired of love in the original. Now I sing about being sick and tired of TV news.

"Tired of being admired, until my contract's expired, tired of then getting fired let's face it, I'm tired," I sing, dragging my heavy microphone behind me.

Another favorite parody, also with words by my journalist colleague Bob

Wiener, is a reworking of "I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face" from My Fair Lady.

Bob wrote, in making fun of my long career in tv news:

"Damn, damn, damn, damn.

They've grown accustomed to MY face.

I used to make their day begin.

They've grown accustomed to my hair,

My Wild Irish flair,

My smiles, my frowns,

My Q score's ups and downs."

I can't believe I'm working still.

Some say I'm too old to fit in..."

You get the gist.

So now, along with my fellow singing TV reporters, we have raised close to \$100,000 to help the children at the Hickey Center.

Something Seemingly for Everyone at Awards Dinner

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Business & Financial Reporting

Medallion The Record, "The For-Profit Prescription" by Lindy Washburn

This three-part series revealed how the business of health care has changed dramatically in New Jersey, enabling some for-profit hospital operators to make fortunes by acquiring faltering non-profit institutions in a shadowy health-care/business/political environment.

Two Merit Awards Bloomberg News for "Wall Street Finds New Subprime With Brokers Pitching 125% Loans" by Zeke Faux

When there is a new way to exploit the vulnerable with predatory lending, financial vultures will find it. This story illuminates the latest dark blot on the record of the financial industry as its usurious practices target small businesses.

Vanity Fair, "War of the Words" by Keith Gessen

A map of the battle between Amazon on the West Coast and Hachette publishing in France over money that has the financial fate of publishing capital of the world and writers everywhere in its grip.

Science and Health Reporting

Medallion The New York Times, "A Father's Wish, a Daughter's Anguish" by Nina Bernstein

An exhaustively researched and eloquently crafted narrative of a daughter's frustrating and heartbreakingly fruitless quest for end-of-life home care for her dying father. By personalizing the story and writing it as poignantly as she did,

Bernstein brought into stark relief the manner in which the nation's health system, driven by financial incentives and based on finding the maximum government reimbursement, works in favor of hospitals, nursing homes and other health-care providers over the needs of the patients they serve.

Merit Bloomberg News, "Emergency by Appointment at Mount Sinai" by David Armstrong, Peter Waldman and Gary Putka

This exposé of how Mount Sinai — one of New York's leading hospitals — games the Medicaid system to extract maximum profits while degrading emergency room care should be required reading for regulators and legislators. And patients.

Arts/Cultural Reporting

Medallion Bloomberg News, "Art Flippers Chase Fresh Stars as Murillo's Doodles Soar" by Katya Kazakina

This story exposed the mania of the art market and the bad behavior of moneymen who are chasing little-known young artists, buying and stockpiling their works and then hyping them to make quick financial killings.

Merit Vanity Fair "Too Rich, Too Thin, Too Tall?" by Paul Goldberger.

A disturbing portrait of the shadows cast by new construction projects for the ultra-rich and how Central Park and the psyche of New York City will suffer.

Editorial Writing and Commentary

Medallion The Record, Charles Stile, in a yearlong series of riveting

columns, chronicled in keen-eyed detail the political evolution of the embattled governor of New Jersey, Chris Christie. Prompted by a quote from Mahatma Gandhi that Christie oddly invoked in his keynote speech at the Republican National Convention in 2012, Stile matched the governor's deeds to other words by India's legendary exponent of non-violence, resulting in a wry, informative study in contrasts.

News Analysis

Two Medallion Winners The Record, "Christie's Report Language Tells a Story," by Herb Jackson, John Reitmeyer and Michael Linhorst

The Record expertly parsed the 344-page report prepared by Christie's legal team that exonerated him. The Record's analysis delineated many instances in which the report failed to meet accepted standards for writing government investigative reports.

Newsday, Columns by Joye Brown
In several insightful columns about life on Long Island, Joye Brown called on Hempstead Town officials to bear responsibility for shortcomings in education. Another column investigated a spate of unsolved killings in Suffolk County and prompted a public outcry for action.

Community Service

Medallion The Daily News, in conjunction with the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism's NYCity News Service, for "Stop the Mold: Tracking the

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Society of the Silurians Officers 2014-2015

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The Beginning of a Very Long Love Affair

BY HERBERT HADAD

I never expected anything to come of the job. I showed up at an ancient building in downtown Boston, took the elevator to 5 and entered a large, disorderly room. The ashtray was the floor. Cackles and shouts bounced off the walls. I asked for the person whose name I'd been given by my college, and a nervous, unsmiling man appeared. "The hours are bad and the job has no future," he said. "You'll work 4:30 until 12:30 in the morning, Tuesday and Wednesday off. And make sure you arrive on time." I answered, "Yes, Sir," and he gave me a suspicious look. He seemed to know I would never call him "Sir" again. I stared around the City Room and began my career at The Boston Globe.

I watched and listened carefully. One night, a political reporter asked everyone to say he was out if an especially obsequious state senator called, and already I knew to put the call through. "This is Senator McGillicuddy and I'm happy to have this opportunity to explain my new legislative package," he said. All around jaws grew taught with suppressed laughter. Then the explosion came as the squirming reporter spotted a colleague imitating McGillicuddy. As he did, another reporter administered a hotfoot by lighting a match tucked into his instep.

When the reporters spotted a couple making love in an adjacent building, someone tracked down the phone number and dialed. The whole City Room was at the window. The phone rang and the couple leaped off the desk. "God is watching you," the caller said. I wondered about that couple for a long time. I bet they fled home and mystified their families and neighbors by resuming regular worship habits.

Yet I noticed that the same men who enjoyed these pranks seemed to take their profession of reporting the news with a gravity that resembled reverence. Would I want to be one of them someday? It was most unlikely.

"No one leaves a staff job at the Globe," we five copy boys had been informed. "No one's been hired in five years, no one may be hired in the next 10." In a quieter tone we were told they don't want Northeastern boys, of which I was one. If a reporter is ever hired, he'll be from Harvard.

Many of the men in the City Room were ruffians in disguise, street wise but often poorly educated in the formal sense, yet well suited by temperament to cover the daily news. They would be the last of their breed. I had inadvertently placed myself into an apprenticeship to them, which would lead to a dead end.

A copy boy's pitiful status did carry a modicum of prestige unless he was obnoxious in habits or appearance. Something resembling brotherhood emerged between us, the reporters and the editor, although no one wanted to be an editor — it was obvious reporters had all the fun.

The one woman on the scene was a medical writer who moved her desk around the corner from all the hijinks and treated the men like frisky kid bothers. And the ringmaster of this human circus was City Editor Alexander J. Haviland. He was bald and handsome, wore a tweed suit and insisted on being called "Al." He commanded respect and affection with apparent ease but would not tolerate slipshod reporting or writing. He would go over a story, with a sharpened pencil in hand, word by word, reporter at his elbow, and when he was done the reporter would say, "Thank you, Al," and



THIS IS THE WAY IT WAS A scene from The Boston Globe City Room in the 1950's.

he would say, "Not at all."

I witnessed it all from my perch atop a metal desk. "Not at all." What a gracious expression. I began to use it and still do.

"Copy!" a gruff editor shouted. "Cream, no sugar. And tonight, not tomorrow." I raced down to a Howard Johnson's across the street and placed the coffee on his desk, expecting no acknowledgement. "Not at all, Harold," I said.

"Copy!" shouted another elderly editor flailing the air with a sheath of papers. I flew across the room, rolled the paper into a cylinder and sent it in the pneumatic pipeline to the composing room. "Not at all, Warren," I whispered close to his head.

I realized after some time that I was being lured irresistibly into the City Room life. I loved the joy and anarchy that grown men with wives and children seemed to sprout with meager encouragement. I admired their equal devotion to their work.

"Herbie, you're studying economics, have you decided what you want to be?" my father asked over dinner on a night off. He had been trained as an accountant shortly after arriving in America from the Middle East. He spoke almost a dozen languages, I admired him and, over a bowl of large purple olives, I confessed my infatuation. "Dad, I'm going to become a newspaperman," I said.

I returned to the same copy boy job for four years during college, a time in which my second education commenced. "Write the lead as clearly and as tightly as you can," Al told me one night. "Work on it hard and the rest of the story will fall right into place." It seemed nothing more than an ancient truism, but I did as he instructed and he was right.

During a daytime stint, the day city editor, Alfred J. Monahan, insisted, "The lead must be a maximum of 16 words." I sometimes found that impossible, but I noticed the lead on this story is only nine.

Reporters added their wisdom. One removed a few sheets of paper folded into three panels from his breast pocket. "Get the quotes right," he said. "The quotes must be absolutely accurate. The rest of the story you can remember." Another said to carry pencils. "If you

cover a fire, the spray will ruin notes made with a pen." And a profound observation from a third: "Show me a reporter with too much respect for authority and I'll show you a lousy reporter."

One night shortly later Al Haviland summoned me to his desk. "Get to the Parker House. There's a fire alarm in." I began to gush a thank you but his look said to shut up and run. I ran to the hotel — there was no smoke or fire trucks or people hanging out of windows. I ran inside. "I'm here from The Boston Globe to cover the fire," I told a clerk. He looked dumfounded. "Get the manager!" I demanded. He appeared and said, yes, an alarm was turned in, perhaps by a guest who had overindulged and thought he was summoning room service. Everything seemed in order so I called Al. He must have known it was a false alarm by then from the fire department signal box in the City Room. But he said six of the most important words I have ever heard. "Good work. Come on home, Son."

I left the Globe and became a reporter in Keene, N.H. And one day the Globe called and asked me to come back for a reporter's job. I'd broken the Harvard code. Eventually I came to New York, where I was born, and worked for "Sesame Street" and ABC News, did a stint in Washington for the Muskie for President campaign, reported for the Post and the Times, and ultimately joined the U.S. Department of Justice.

And at every place I've been I've used

the same early lessons in how to be a good and true newspaperman. They included the values of being kind as well as tough, the importance of friendship and the folly of vanity.

Years later, feeling imposed itself. It arrived with a curious force and it lingered. It was this: had I been able to stay on at the old Globe, smiling good evening to Al, greeting my friends and heroes in the City Room and beginning the night's adventures, I would have been happy to show up there every night for the rest of my life.

New Members

Maggie Berkvist was a photo editor at The New York Times (Book Review Section and the Magazine) from 1960 to 1979. From 1980 to 2013, she was a freelance photo editor and researcher at The Times and at LIFE magazine. She now takes photographs for the WestView News, a monthly publication covering her West Village neighborhood.

Myra T. Forsberg, from 1983 till this year, when she retired, held down a number of posts in various culture departments of The New York Times. The roles she filled included classical music and dance editor, deputy culture editor, Weekend section editor, and copy editor. Prior to joining The Times, she was entertainment editor at The San Jose (Calif.) Mercury News.

Joan Kron has been writing professionally since 1969. Her byline has regularly appeared in magazines and newspapers on subjects ranging from fashion to facelifts and from décor to decorum. Since 1991, she has been a contributing editor at large at Allure magazine. She is the author or co-author of several books, including "High-Tech: The Industrial Style and Source Book for the Home" and "Lift: Wanting, Fearing, and Having a Face-Lift."

Bert Shanas, before embarking on a career in public relations, was with The Daily News from 1964 to 1986, where he took on various reporting and editing assignments, including education editor. In 1975, he was a co-winner of a Silurian Excellence in Journalism Award for investigative reporting. He has also taught journalism at NYU and at Hunter College.

Charles Strum was with The Times from 1979 to 2014, during which time he was a metro editor, New Jersey bureau chief, obituaries editor and a national deputy editor. In 2006, he was named an associate managing editor.

Pamela Vassil, from 1977 through the early 1990s, was an art director and photo researcher at The Times (on staff and then freelance); her work could be found on the Op-Ed and Editorial pages, in Sunday Arts & Leisure sections and other special sections.

Leonard Fisher is a retired associate editor of The Newark Star-Ledger, where he had been on staff for 36 years. Prior to that, he was a reporter for UPI and for Dorf Feature Service.

In Memoriam

Edith J. Cahill, a long-time Silurian and a veteran reporter who worked for The New York World Telegram & Sun and WNBC-TV, died on Feb. 28 at Calvary Hospital in the Bronx. She was 89. When the New York Newspaper Reporters Association — now known as the New York Press Club — was formed in 1948, she was a charter member.

Milton Hoffman of The Journal News, who was known as the dean of Westchester journalism, died on April 7. He was 86. In a 50-year career that ended with his retirement in 2002, Hoffman was a reporter, metro editor, columnist, editorial page editor and a mentor to generations of reporters who became known as "Milt's Kids." In 2001, he was recognized by the Silurians as winner of that year's Peter Kihss Award.

Hoffman won first-place awards for editorial writing from the Deadline Club and The Associated Press of New York State.

Silurians Honor the Best Journalism of 2014

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Scourge in Public Housing,” by Greg B. Smith, *New York Daily News*. Allegra Abramo, Natalie Abruzzo, Julia Alsop Frank Green, Gwynne Hogan, Ross Keith, Roxanne Scott, Melisa Stumpf, María Villaseñor, *NYCity News Service*.

This investigative series on problems with the New York City Housing Authority depicted the heartbreaking, ongoing frustration many tenants suffer. These stories triggered a city investigation into the epic failures at the housing authority.

Merit *The Poughkeepsie Journal*, “Killers & Pain” by Mary Beth Pfeiffer

Utilizing Freedom of Information requests and robust data bases, this series revealed the deadly links between heroin and prescription drug overuse.

Breaking News Photography

Medallion *The Record*, “Hostage Situation” by Tariq Zehawi

Zehawi’s dramatic photo of a SWAT team subduing a mother who had been threatening her children also captures the precise moment when other officers were whisking the youngsters to safety.

Merit *The Daily News*, “EDP Businessman” by Marcus Santos

An unconventional portrait of an

emotionally disturbed man hurling ice and epithets at New York City’s finest near the World Trade Center.

Feature Photography

Medallion *The Daily News*, “Eric Garner Protest at Barclays Center” by Stephanie Keith

A close-up and personal depiction of two vastly different faces in a confrontation between police and protesters in Brooklyn following the death of Eric Garner.

Merit *The Daily News*, “Ramos-Liu Memorial” by James Keivom

For his powerful photo of a former police officer and his daughter at a memorial for two NYPD officers who were murdered in Brooklyn.

Sports News or Feature Photography

Medallion *The Daily News*, Robert Sabo

Sabo’s you-have-to-see-it-to-believe-it photo of Giants receiver Odell Beckham making a stunning touchdown catch against the Cowboys.

Merit *Newsday*, “California Chrome” by J. Conrad Williams

A glimpse of the Derby and Preakness winner, and a possum, working out at Belmont Park.



James Keivom of *The Daily News* was cited for a Merit Award, in the Photography features category, for his shot of a former police officer and his daughter at a memorial for two NYPD officers who were murdered in Brooklyn.

MAGAZINES

Investigative Reporting

Medallion *Bloomberg News*, “Anything But Secure” by David Evans

Evans uncovered a \$1 billion internet-based scam that preyed on investors around the globe with promises of big returns trading currencies. The U.S. Attorney in the Eastern District of New York opened a criminal investigation.

Feature Writing

Medallion *Vanity Fair*, “To Live and Die in America” by Nancy Jo Sales

This exploration of the murders of four young Iranians who had migrated to Williamsburg, Brooklyn, to develop an indie rock band called the Yellow Dogs captures the decline of one former band member and how his despair shattered the

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Kihss and Gonzalez: On the Same Page

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could go in.” He attended Catholic grammar schools and Cardinal Hayes High School on the Grand Concourse where he ran track. To this day he venerates the priests and nuns who taught him — “the illuminati of the South Bronx,” he calls them. Discipline was sometimes harsh but he wasn’t molested. “I know that happened,” he said. “Happened to friends of mine. Didn’t happen to me.”

He had never heard of the Ivy League but his teachers wisely encouraged him to apply to Yale. Upon graduating with a degree in psychology (“which was useless”), he worked for Puerto Rican and Harlem civic groups while nurturing an interest in photography at a Bronx collective called En Foco. “My parents thought a photographer was a guy on the corner taking Latino communion pictures,” he said. They also convinced themselves they were rearing a doctor. Years later, at his father’s wake, people were still coming over asking him, “How’s medical school?”

“Holy [expletive]!” he reflected, “did my father not tell them?”

As he learned photography, Gonzalez also taught it, to youngsters at Community School 61 on Charlotte Street. Inspiring tales like that didn’t show up in the desolate photos when President Carter paid a visit, but the borough was often stereotyped, complained Gonzalez. “Take what you know about the Bronx — and think differently.”

He was working at the Puerto Rican Forum when Thomas A. Johnson, the first black reporter at *The Times*, came by, like Kihss, to pick up a report. Johnson soon left *The Times* to found the Harlem Third World Trade Institute and invited Gonzalez to join him. After two years there, Gonzalez, at Johnson’s urging, applied to the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, where he won a fellowship to cover tuition. “Columbia taught me how to write,” he said, singling out mentors like Prof. Penn Kimball and Wall Street Journal reporter Karen Rothmyer. When he graduated in 1983, it was

Kimball who told him about an opening at *Newsweek*.

Gonzalez was hired as a researcher and rose quickly, winning promotions to reporting assignments in Detroit and Miami. But in Miami he became “super homesick” for New York, especially after coming across a copy of “Meyer Berger’s *New York*,” a collection of the great man’s *Times* columns. By 1990 he was back at *Newsweek* headquarters on Madison Avenue, with a fancy title, deputy bureau chief — and bored out of his mind. “It was one of the most difficult times of my life,” he recalled. He spent his days going to lunch and killing time. Maybe, like his idol Mike Berger, he wondered, he was more cut out for life as a newspaperman? Or — dare he think it? — a columnist?

At an Hispanic journalist convention in San Francisco, he learned that *The Times* was recruiting. “It was a time when *New York Newsday* was kicking our ass so they wanted to beef up coverage,” Gonzalez recalled, from the later vantagepoint of a *Times* man. Suddenly, Latinos were hot. Assistant Managing Editor Carolyn Lee badgered him to send *The Times* his résumé. And then he was being ushered in to meet her fellow AME, the fearsome Allan M. Siegal, keeper of the paper’s exalted standards.

“Everyone warned me about Al Siegal,” Gonzalez said.

Siegal sat him down and said, “Let’s cut the crap. Where’d you grow up in the Bronx?” Siegal, it turned out, was a landsmann.

Gonzalez had been warned that getting hired at *The Times* was an exhaustive process but there was Executive Editor Max Frankel courting him and waxing lyrical about “the Traditions of *The Times*.”

“Holy [expletive]!” Gonzalez thought. (He often thinks in expletives.) “Is he offering me the job?”

He started off on general assignment. When Metro Editor Gerald Boyd offered him the Brooklyn bureau, Gonzalez said no way. Brooklyn? Where was Brook-

lyn? When Boyd asked what about the Bronx?, “I couldn’t say no to that.”

In one big exposé, Gonzalez investigated the “South Bronx Padrino” Ramon S. Velez, who had built his Hunts Point Multi-service Center into a multi-million dollar empire. But to his chagrin, Velez emerged unscathed.

Gonzalez’s family often asked him, “How’s *The Daily News*?” Fine, he would answer, puzzled. He realized that *The News* was the only newspaper they knew. If he was working for a paper, it had to be *The News*.

Imagine Gonzalez’s delight when in 1992 Columbia honored his fresh brand of street reporting with the coveted Berger Award.

Much as he loved covering the Bronx, when Ari Goldman left the religion beat to join the Columbia Journalism faculty, Gonzalez asked to replace him. He loved covering religion too — from a street perspective. He did a story on how midnight mass in the Bronx was becoming too dangerous — so midnight mass was being celebrated in daylight hours. He did another story on what impossible things believers were praying to St. Jude for. One of them was a job.

He had been at the paper three years when Mort Zuckerman called. Would Gonzalez be interested in a column at *The News*? (Finally, his family would have it right.) It was attached to serious money. Gonzalez needed to think about it. But there are no secrets in this business. Boyd called him in. What was this about *The News*? What could *The Times* do to keep him happy?

Well, *The News* had offered him a column. How about the “About New York” column — originated by Mike Berger in 1939. Mike Kaufman was writing it then and Gonzalez had occasionally filled in when Kaufman and his predecessor, Doug Martin, were off. But when Kaufman left...

In 1995 Kaufman decamped for Prague to publish George Soros’s newspaper. Gonzalez went back to *Times* editors and held them to their promise.

After four years on the column, The

Times sent him to Miami as the Caribbean correspondent, where he spent another four years covering Haiti and the Dominican Republic, Cuba, El Salvador, and Guatemala. By then he was married to fellow journalist Elena Cabral, who had left the Ford Foundation to take a reporting job with *The Miami Herald*, and they had a son, Sebastian, later to be followed by a daughter, Paloma.

He had also returned to his earlier interest in photography, doing some of his own shooting on assignments. So when *Times* editor Jon Landman turned up in Miami in 2003 and offered Gonzalez a chance to return to New York with a new photo column called *City Wide* that would splash his panoramic pictures over the metro display page, sometimes all six columns wide, Gonzalez grinned, “That’ll work.”

He continued to report, too, winning, among a slew of prizes, the Distinguished Writing Award in 2008 from the American Society of Newspaper Editors for his three-part multimedia series, “House Afire,” about a storefront Pentecostal Church in Harlem. In 2009, he joined Angel Franco and four fellow photographers in founding a collective, *Seis del Sur*, or *Six from the South*, to document life in the South Bronx. He also became a founding member of the Bronx Documentary Center, a nonprofit gallery and educational center in Melrose near the Hub.

As co-editor of the *Times Lens* blog with Jim Estrin, Gonzalez, starting in 2013, joined 150 photographers and 75 gallerists, curators and editors in a huge annual mentoring project, the *New York Portfolio Review*, offering free career consultations for young photographers.

Meanwhile he’s also been writing the *Side Street* photo column every other Monday while contributing stories as well. “I’m a street reporter, that’s where the stories are,” he says. “I like to be the first reporter someone has talked to. I like to talk to regular folks.”

Of course, after years far afield from his beloved city, he’s landed back home in his native borough. OK, so he bought the family a co-op in Riverdale, but, hey, it’s still the Bronx.

Silurians Honor the Best Journalism of 2014

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dreams of the others.

Merit Bloomberg Markets, “Andy Hall Goes All In” by Bradley Olson

A penetrating profile of a legendary Wall Street commodities trader whose golden touch trading oil may have turned to lead.

Public Service

Medallion Financial Planning magazine, “Could Financial Planning Help Stem the Rate of Military Suicides?” by Ann Marsh.

This in-depth examination of how financial stress has become a major factor in military suicide led to Congressional legislation mandating the military to provide financial advice and counseling to active-duty personnel and veterans.

Merit Bloomberg Markets, “Overworked and Underwhelmed” by Dawn Kopecki

This article helped prompt Wall Street investment banks to rethink the path to riches they set out for young associates. It illustrated the stress and lack of a normal 20-something life that are devastating to physical and mental health

TELEVISION

Investigative Reporting

Medallion News 12 New Jersey, “Kane In Your Corner: Students Restrained”

A troubling investigation examining the abuse — or is it discipline — of special needs children in New Jersey. In the absence of laws governing the conduct of teachers and counselors, children are at risk and their parents are in the dark.

Merit NY1 News, “Sex Trafficking” by Dean Meminger

A good look at the exploitation of teenage girls in New York and the difficulty of stopping it.

Breaking News

Medallion NY1 News, “No Indictment in the Death of Eric Garner”

It was high drama as NY1 broke the news that there would be no grand jury indictment in the chokehold death of Garner on Staten Island.

Feature News

Medallion ESPN, “Outside the Lines: Tragic State.”

John Barr, correspondent; William Weinbaum, producer;

Bryan Brousseau, Joe LoMonaco, Marc Lustig, directors of photography; Rob Berman, Scott O’Leary, editors; Chris Buckle, deputy editor; Joshua Vorensky, production assistant; Carolyn Hong, coordinating producer; Rayna Banks, associate producer; PJ DeCordova, Eric Lynch, assignment editors; Dwayne Bray, senior coordinating producer; Vince Doria, vice president of news.

This examination of the tragic aftermath of the injuries suffered by heavyweight title contender Magomed Abdusalamov in a Madison Square Garden fight offers deep insight into how the fight establishment works and how imperfectly it functions when it comes to protecting fighters.

Merit NY1 for “How NYC Works: Food Rescue.” Roger Clark, Reporter. Davide Cannaviccio Producer & Photographer. Jessica Steiner, Producer; Dan Komarinetz, Editor Leisha Majtan, camera operator.

A delightful jaunt around New York with a delicious behind-the-scenes look at how City Harvest feeds the needy.



THE CATCH Robert Sabo of The Daily News was at MetLife Stadium to take this photo of the Giants receiver Odell Beckham making a stunning touchdown catch against the Cowboys. The shot garnered top prize in the Sports Photography competition.

Public Service

Medallion WPIX 11, “Pregnant and Addicted,” by Narmeen Choudhury, correspondent. Victor Lopez, photographer/editor.

Compelling stories of three women drug users who confront their addictions and the births of their methadone-affected babies while receiving treatment in a Lower East Side clinic and working toward becoming responsible parents.

Merit WLIW, “MetroFocus Special Report: The Eric Garner Decision.” Rafael Pi Roman and Jack Ford, anchors; Michael Hill, reporter. Sally Garner, executive producer/writer; Erica Zolberg, editorial producer; Andrea Vasquez, Marisa Wong, producers; Matthew Chao, associate producer; Ann Benjamin, director; Kirsti Itameri, multimedia producer; Sean McGinn, producer/editor; Kerry Soloway, editor; Christofer Nicoletti, production assistant; Diane Masciale, general manager, WLIW21; John Servidio, vice president of subsidiary stations

A thorough and thoughtful round-up of a big breaking story.

RADIO

Breaking News

Medallion 1010 WINS, “NYPD Officers Fatally Shot”

1010 WINS reporters delivered riveting coverage when two officers were shot while sitting in their patrol car in Brooklyn

Merit WCBS 880, “Explosion in Harlem”

A quick, comprehensive reaction to a big breaking news tragedy.

News Feature

Medallion ESPN Radio, “Outside the Lines and The Sporting Life: Roberts Rules.” Kelly Naqi, correspondent; Will-

iam Weinbaum, producer; Robert O’Reilly, Justin Stokes, location sound mixers; Jason Sharkey, editor; Kelly Rohrer, production assistant; Carolyn Hong, coordinating producer; Rayna Banks, associate producer; Eric Lynch, assignment editor; Dwayne Bray, senior coordinating producer; Vince Doria, vice president of news.

A portrait of Michele Roberts, new head of the N.B.A. players union. We learn she is charming, bold, and dedicated to making certain that, in her words, “an institution this important and one that is predominantly African-American cannot be allowed to fail.”

Merit WCBS 880, “The Gem Vac Vets” by Wayne Cabot/

Military veterans tell their stories on Veterans Day as a small group does every Tuesday at a little shop in New Jersey.

ONLINE

Breaking News

Medallion The Wall Street Journal (WSJ.com), “East Harlem Explosion”

With digital bulletins, constant tweets, video, and overall mastery of social media, alongside print coverage, Journal reporters covered the explosion that killed eight, collapsed two Park Avenue buildings and overturned countless lives.

Two Merit Awards DNAinfo.com, “4-Year-Old Tortured Before Death Endured Nomadic Life Filled With Abuse.” Murray Weiss, James Fanelli, Janon Fisher

Fine pursuit of the reasons for the unnecessary death of a 4-year-old boy who slipped through the cracks of the social services network.

Newsday.com, and Newsday Staff, “Cops Shot”

An exhaustive multi-media coverage

of the shooting of two New York police officers in their patrol car.

Investigative Reporting/ Web Exclusive

Medallion ProPublica, “How Wall Street Tobacco Deals Left States With Billions in Toxic Debt.” “Tobacco Bond” Series by Cezary Podkul.

Building special data bases to probe the public records left by Wall Street bond deals built around scheduled payoffs from the national tobacco settlement of 1999, these meticulously researched stories were the first to document that nearly half the money no longer goes to benefit taxpayers. Instead, it’s being siphoned off to cover a multi-generational legacy of debt taken on by dozens of the governments involved — debt that some may never be able to repay. Apps built by Yue Qiu and Lena Groeger allow readers to track the financial effects of these bad deals county by county in New York State and elsewhere.

Merit DNAinfo.com, “Mayor’s Top Aide Hid Relationship With Convicted Felon” by Murray Weiss & James Fanelli.

Ongoing digging about the relationships of the chief of staff for the First Lady of New York affected the running dispute between the Mayor and the police union leadership.

News Commentary

Medallion TheStreet.com, “Unaccountable Bureaucracy” and other columns by Susan Antilla

In these searing columns, Antilla highlights the anti-consumer sentiment that has taken hold of significant portions of the Republican Party as it attempts to dismantle agencies such as the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which she says “has broken new ground reining in sleazy debt collectors, slipshod mortgage servicers and banks.” In just two years, the agency has handled 270,000 complaints from consumers and has returned almost \$3 billion to them.

Merit The Record, “GWB Files,” Staff of The Record

The Record’s ongoing catalogue of the evolution of the George Washington Bridge scandal is the multi-media scorecard subscribers need to keep track of this cast of characters.

Public Service

Medallion ProPublica and National Public Radio, “Red Cross” by Jesse Eisinger & Justin Elliott, ProPublica; Laura Sullivan, NPR

The diligence of this reporting team paid off as it refused to accept the original explanations from the Red Cross about how it spent hundreds of millions of dollars during responses to Hurricanes Sandy and Isaac. As ProPublica/NPR concluded: “The Red Cross botched key elements of its mission after Sandy and Isaac, leaving behind a trail of unmet needs and acrimony.”

The Red Cross’s shortcomings were detailed in confidential reports and internal emails, as well as accounts from current and former disaster relief specialists.

Merit Newsday/News 12, Cash Crop: “Marijuana on Long Island and Across the United States.” Mandy Hofmockel, Thomas Maier, Saba Ali, Matthew Cassella, Timothy Healy and Newsday.com and Newsday Staffs

The complete package on marijuana on Long Island with text, photos, videos, charts, maps and other interactive graphics, legal documents, etc.

A Home, Home From the Range

BY TONY GUIDA

*I build my house of straw
I build my house of hay
I toot my flute
I don't give a hoot
And play around all day
- "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?"*

A curious building rose in the courtyard of MoMA/PS1 in Long Island City last summer. Forty feet high, it resembled a teepee at its base and suggested a slinky top. Ten thousand bricks were used in its construction but nothing like it had ever been built before. It was neither a residence nor a commercial structure, but a herald from the future, a curtain raiser on what may be the next generation of building.

Its creator, David Benjamin, is not your everyday architect. He is also a bio-researcher whose studies of bone growth, bivalves, and slime mold inform his ideas about building. With this structure his idea was to reinvent the most basic component of architecture, the brick.

"This brick is basically made of chopped-up corn stalks, agricultural waste," he told me. "We combine that waste with mycellium – mushroom roots – and in about five days, with no added energy, it grows into solid objects."

The Book of Genesis springs to mind. "Dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return."

Benjamin agreed: "We were thinking that building materials could have a kind of ecosystem and cycle like our bodies do, like plants do, so yeah, exactly like that quotation."

Architecture, meet synthetic biology. It's Benjamin's passion and the reason he named his firm The Living.

Already he has created Living Light, an interactive canopy in a park in Seoul, Korea, whose flashing lights announce air quality conditions across the city.

Soon to come in New York's East River, Amphibious Architecture, floating lights whose colors will broadcast the presence of fish and the river's levels of pollution.

And Hy-fi, Benjamin's name for a structure built, essentially, of hay.

Hy-fi won last year's prestigious Young Architects Award given by MoMA/PS1. Museum director Pedro Gadanho said Benjamin's idea could be revolutionary.

"Imagine, if you can, that people could get a little packet of mushroom roots and they could mix it with whatever is available and build their own structure."

Revolutionary indeed. Not just for primitive cultures but for urban landscapes as well.

Ron Shiffman, an architect and urban planner at Pratt Institute, points out that the progenitor of the modern movement in city planning, Patrick Eddies, was a biologist who looked at cities as living organisms.

Shiffman said that by studying nature one can study the next generation of building. "Unless we do that," Shiffman warns, "unless we look at the environment from



In the courtyard of MoMA/PS1 was a building made up primarily of chopped-up corn-stalk bricks.

that perspective we are not going to survive as a species."

Many architects and engineers tell us our buildings produce a heavier carbon footprint than anything else in our environment. From the energy it takes to produce glass and steel to the energy wasted by inefficient structures our built environment is profligate; a luxury, experts say, that is increasingly unaffordable.

David Benjamin's brick – grown, no energy wasted – points toward a brave new sustainable world.

"It is one of those things that is a game changer," said Susan Szenasy, editor in chief and publisher of Metropolis, a magazine of architecture and design.

"The fact that David was able to ac-

complish a whole building no matter how primitive it is, that's its charm," she said. "Hand-laid brick, an old system but a new way, maybe that is the new avatar."

Szenasy smiled, and said, "It's incredibly encouraging because human intelligence at work is a fascinating thing to watch."

At the close of summer according to plan, Hy-fi was dismantled, all 10,000 bricks composted. Though it has been returned to the earth from which it grew, the promise of Hy-fi lingers and intrigues.

(Tony Guida now freelances for a program called Arts In The City on CUNY TV. This article is based on one of his episodes, which aired this year.)

The Gospel According to Liz Smith



Bill Diehl

HOW MUCH AM I BID At the Silurian March luncheon, Allan Dodds Frank holds up a memoir by Liz Smith, who was the guest speaker.

In her luncheon visit in February, Liz Smith, 92, noted that she was born one year before the Silurians were born as an organization. And speaking of age, Smith opened her talk (standing at the podium, declining a chair) by noting a Time magazine cover about the frontiers of longevity that said "this baby could live to be a hundred and 42 years old."

Smith said she isn't worried about living that long, unless you have a religious belief that there'll be something wonderful in the hereafter. But "I find it perfectly wonderful right here." Addressing the internet, Smith said there once was a time when a byline meant something, but not anymore. Now everybody can have a byline, expressing their thoughts, attacking people, praising people, without fear of getting fired or going to jail.

Texas-born Smith arrived in New York in 1949. Armed with a journalism degree, she later became a producer for Mike Wallace's CBS Radio chat show, "Mike and Buff," and was a ghostwriter for the "Cholly Knickerbocker" gossip column. She spent 11 years working for Helen Gurley Brown's Cosmopolitan magazine. She called Brown an extraordinary woman, though she disapproved of everything she believed in. "I guess she kept me around as a curiosity."

As for being dubbed the Grande Dame of Gossip? "I never thought of myself as a very good gossip," she said. "I was always more a sort of star-struck observer, a bystander. I've had 65 years of working, observing this wonderful life in New York and I wouldn't take anything back for those glory days."

— Bill Diehl

Eyes on the Times

Margaret Sullivan may be one of the few people in the world of journalism who can wag a finger at The New York Times—and the paper listens, quite respectfully.

She is its public editor, the fifth person to hold that untouchable position at the paper. At the Silurians' March meeting at the Players Club, she spoke passionately of the respect she has for The Times and eloquently of the juggling act inherent in the role.

"I get a paycheck—but I'm not of The Times," she explained. She was responding to a question by Joe Berger, who asked how she was able to navigate the newsroom which she may have to criticize from time to time.

"I try to be respectful," she said. "No surprises."

Among the most difficult jobs she has tackled has been a public discourse on the paper's coverage of Israeli politics. She believes the paper "can never satisfy any-



Bill Diehl

Margaret Sullivan at the podium.

one." And her perception of the paper's Israeli-Arab coverage?

"I think it sets out to be fair, but sometimes falls down."

She also is juggling the newer forms of journalism with the kind she grew up with—"when there were gluepots on the desk." She concedes that in hiring her, the paper wanted her to expand the public editor's role into various platforms. "Now the first thing I do is turn to Twitter," she quipped.

— Gerald Eskenazi

Public Television's No. 1 Fan

There are many moments when people tell Neal Shapiro just how important public television has been in their lives.

"My daughter became class valedictorian because of what you did," Shapiro recalled a father told him.

It was one of many such anecdotes he recited, with pride, at the Silurians' April luncheon at the Players' Club.

Since 2007, following a career in commercial television, he has been the CEO of WNET, where he oversees Channels Thirteen, WLIW21, and NJTV.

"Public TV," he said, "can make our country smarter, and improve people's lives."

Small wonder he considers his television operations "a public trust."

"Great TV should touch you in your head and your heart," he explained. "Commercial TV doesn't care about that—they want to see how many eyes are watching."

His vision of public television has played a major role in his many awards, account-



Bill Diehl

Neal Shapiro

ing for some of his 32 Emmys.

Before he came to WNET he was president of NBC News, where he oversaw Today, NBC Nightly News and Meet the Press.

Now, the challenge for public-TV is no different from that facing commercial television: "We have to think how the media world is changing. So much of what we see is a legacy of what was. We need new ways."

— Gerald Eskenazi