

Silurian News

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Society of the Silurians
LIFETIME
ACHIEVEMENT
AWARDS BANQUET
The National Arts Club
15 Gramercy Park South
Honoring Steve Shepard
Wednesday, November 15, 2017
Drinks: 6 P.M. • Dinner: 7:15 P.M.
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NOVEMBER 2017

Life with Steve

BY LYNN POVICH

Stephen Shepard, winner of this year's Silurians' award for lifetime achievement, for a half century has illuminated the journalist fraternity of New York and the world. For much of that time, he has been married to Lynn Povich, who was the first female Senior Editor of Newsweek, Editor-in-Chief of Working Woman magazine and Managing Editor/East Coast of MSNBC.com. Her book, The Good Girls Revolt, was published in 2012. The Silurian News asked Povich, who has been by his side for so many of his adventures and accomplishments, to reflect on her journey with Steve.

Steve was born to be a journalist. It just took him awhile to realize it. In third grade, at PS 86 in the Bronx, he fell in love with penmanship, which he conflated with writing, and decided he should be a sports writer. But was he too shy to try out for the school newspaper at the Bronx High School of Science. At City College, he majored in engineering, but also took journalism courses with Professor Irving Rosenthal, who became a mentor. Steve soon became the editor of *The Vector*, which was voted the best college science magazine in the country.

Still, Steve wasn't ready to commit to journalism. He got his masters' degree at Columbia in engineering and even

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1980: Steve, as Newsweek National editor, with Reagan, Kay Graham and Nancy.

“Mr. Markel” and Times Gone By

BY MARTHA WEINMAN LEAR

I have been trying for months to think how Lester Markel, the late, largely unlamented Sunday editor of The New York Times, would have reacted to the paper of July 28, 2017. If he was, as many who knew him believed, an ogre, he was also a prig. I imagine him turning to page A 20. He reads “fucking paranoid schizophrenic”. He reads “not trying to suck my own cock”. What does he do? I swear I think he would have dropped dead.

In fact he did just that, 40 years ago, on October 23. The great Tom Wicker gave a eulogy at his funeral. When I asked why he had performed that duty, he said, “I guess because nobody else wanted to. I felt sorry for the old bastard.”

Markel was The Sunday Times. It was his baby. He changed the very meaning of a Sunday paper, transforming the product of a single day over the weekend into a model for newspapers across the country, and ran it as his own fiefdom from 1923 until he was eased out in 1964. He was a bully, a brat, a brilliant editor whom we

minions never saw as happy as when he was inflicting torture upon us.

Abe Rosenthal—God knows, no slouch for savagery, but a cupcake next to Markel—was Abe. Markel was Mr. Markel to everyone, even top editors who had worked for him for 30-plus years. The late Herbert Mitgang recalled an office party when some madcap said, “Hello, Lester,” and Markel recoiled as though slapped. “We were all stunned,” Herb said, “because we’d always thought his first name was Mister.”

I was at the Magazine (then called The Sunday Magazine) in the 1960's, first as an assistant copy editor, then as a staff writer. I was young and impressionable, and Markel liked to impress young women. He held a daily Magazine meeting that was for senior editors only and I, a newcomer, was as junior as you could get. Yet he insisted I attend.

It was a production written, staged, directed by and above all starring Markel, whose point was to dismember the men in attendance (there were no senior women)

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Lester Markel takes a stroll through The Times morgue with Marilyn Monroe in 1959.

President's Report

BY BERNARD KIRSCH

Dear Silurians,

The new Silurian season is off to a fast start, with both Floyd Abrams and Jim Rutenberg drawing extremely large crowds to our first two luncheons. Both spoke — how could they not — about our favorite topic: the media and our president.

And I am delighted to write that for the last few years, we have been averaging well over 100 Silurians and guests per luncheon. We expect the rest of the season to continue to be exciting. We are hoping to have Katrina vanden Heuvel, the editor and publisher of *The Nation*, and Dan Rather as future guest speakers. Stay tuned.

This month we are celebrating our lifetime achievement winner, Steve Shepard. Together with his wife, the award-winning journalist Lynn Povich, they were our guest speakers in 2012. Following a long career in magazine journalism, Steve served as the founding dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at the City University of New York from 2005 to 2014. Prior to CUNY, he was editor-in-chief of *Business Week* for 20 years, a senior editor at *Newsweek*, and editor of *Saturday Review*. His memoir about journalism, *Deadlines and Disruption*, was published in 2012. To know a bit more about Steve, read his wife's riff on Life With Steve that begins on page one of this issue of *The Silurian News*, which was put out by its editor, David A. Andelman. For those who don't know David, he is the editor-emeritus of *World Policy Journal*, and columnist for CNN Opinion and *USA Today* after a long career at *The Times*, CBS News, and *Forbes*. And, much more important, he is the first vice-president of our society.

Most of our board members have had long and distinguished careers in journalism, or as writers — which, of course, is true of most of our members. Our most recent board member is Clyde Haberman, former foreign correspondent and columnist for *The New York Times*, not to mention proud father of Maggie, whom we read most days on that paper's front page.

The Society of the Silurians is in good financial shape, and our membership is growing; we are now at 310 or so. And if you know of anyone who qualifies, please recruit her or him. Moreover, we have been doing good things with our money, as we continue to award two scholarships to J-school students at CUNY and NYU. This year's recipients are Comice Johnson of CUNY, who's chronicled her career in this edition of TSN, and Kat Rendon at NYU.

All the best, and see you soon,
Bernard

Life with Steve

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worked for a year as an engineer. But he was unhappy and unfulfilled. Finally, he applied to the editorial training program at McGraw-Hill and got a job writing for a trade magazine called *Product Engineering*. Two years later, Steve transferred to *BusinessWeek* starting his stellar career: Star science and tech writer at *BusinessWeek*; Senior Editor of the Business and National Affairs sections at *Newsweek*; Editor, briefly, of *Saturday Review*; and back to *BusinessWeek*, where he was Editor-in-Chief for 20 years, from 1984 until 2004.

Journalism plays to Steve's strengths as a person. His friend Jane Bryant Quinn once said what made Steve a great journalist was that he was a skeptic who wanted to get to the bottom of things. As he himself said in his book, *Deadlines and Disruption, My Turbulent Path from Print to Digital*, he loves dealing with "a complex situation that required hearing all sides, sorting through the arguments and coming to some analytic conclusion about what could be done." As an editor, he values what he calls, "the eternal verities of journalism—colorful, accurate reporting, clear, stylish writing, critical thinking, and on our best days, something approaching wisdom."

What that means for those of us who live with Steve—our kids growing up, as well as me—is that he is thoughtful, insightful, analytical, humble, a good listener and open to ideas. He is also impishly witty. When our children, Sarah and Ned, were small, Steve was an engaged father, walking them to school every morning and making up stories to tell them at night. He was also the Jewish mother in our family, a worrier who insisted that most things turned out ok only because he worried about them.

Steve is not a self-promoter. He is extraordinarily modest about his successes and has never forgotten his roots. He's proud to be a son of the Bronx, a graduate of CCNY and a fervid Yankee fan. We still watch many Yankee games on TV, on mute, with Steve advising the managers and umpires while the game is in play—and usually right in his calls.

Steve and I met cute—at *Newsweek*. We were colleagues first and then a couple. We were both Senior Editors and single but we wanted to keep it quiet. Fat chance. After several months, we went on a vacation together to Little Dix Bay in the Virgin Islands. At dinner the first night, the maitre d' brought over a bottle of wine with a note: "From all your friends at *Newsweek*."

We say our meeting was *besher*—



Power couple: Steve and our author.

destiny--and it's been a joyride. We complement one another. Steve worries about the big things, I the small ones. He's the natty dresser in the family, carefully laying out his clothes each night for the next day. I get dressed and out of the house in 15 minutes. I love reporting, Steve loves writing. Steve encouraged me in my career and is my best editor. He says I'm his best sounding board. I've brought him closer to his Jewish roots; he's challenged me in more intellectual endeavors.

I was curious about what Steve would do when he retired from *BusinessWeek* in 2005. But several months before the end, he received a call from Matthew Goldstein, then Chancellor of the City University of New York. Matthew wanted to start a new J-school, the first publicly supported graduate school of journalism in the entire Northeast. Why? To provide opportunities to good students who couldn't afford the best private universities. He wanted Steve to be the first Dean. It appealed to Steve for three reasons: as a product of public schools, he believed in public education; he was a New Yorker and cared about the city; and he was passionate about journalism and about offering an affordable education to underserved students. Today, years later, the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism is one of the nation's top-notch J schools, competing with Columbia, NYU and Northwestern—all private. And thanks to Steve's efforts, nearly half of its students are immigrants or people of color—bringing much needed diversity to our profession.



Steve and covers in his first six months as Editor-in-Chief of Business Week.

That's Steve. Quietly, without any fanfare, creating a great new journalism school, one that offers students, much like he was, a high-quality education at a fraction of the cost of the private universities.

Steve stepped down as Dean at the end of 2013 and again, I wondered what he would do. I knew he was intellectually curious. When he was a graduate student at Columbia in engineering, he took a seminar on Virginia Woolf. Now he has first editions of all her novels. When he bought an original photograph of Woolf, it inspired him to start collecting vintage photographs, which continues to this day.

Steve has always been interested in 20th century Jewish American writers. He has collected first editions of all their works. So, I wasn't surprised that he signed up for a course in Isaac Bashevis Singer at City College and started a men's book group to read classic fiction. But then Steve started writing again. It just came to him naturally. First it was thoughts about his family and various relationships. Then it was about the writers he always loved. Why was he attracted to them? What was it about them that spoke to him?

Last month, he finished his next book, *A Literary Journey to Jewish Identity: Re-Reading Bellow, Roth, Malamud, Ozick and Other Great Jewish Writers*.

That's Steve: A journalist, a writer, a thoughtful, kind person, and a wonderful husband and father. He's also a man who appreciates his history and feels grateful for the opportunities he was given.

Steve attended his 50th reunion at City College in 2011. As he describes it in his book, "I had gone there by the same route I had taken every day as a student: the subway to 145th Street, up the hill to Convent Avenue, then the walk along the brownstones, past the lot where Alexander Hamilton's house once stood, before catching sight of the vintage neo-Gothic buildings now so gloriously restored."

He watched as students from some 160 countries received their degrees. Although no longer free (tuition is about \$6,000), City College's mission is still the same: giving the city's poorest students an excellent and affordable education. As the commencement ended, he writes, "the sky was still bright, the sun strong. I lingered for a while, took a final look around, and started walking slowly to the subway. Somehow it didn't seem right to hail a cab."

Floyd Abrams: Champion of the Press

On September 20, the Silurians welcomed to their debut lunch for the Fall season, the man who president Bernard Kirsch described as “the premier first amendment lawyer of our age. In this era when the president of the United States is not really on speaking terms with the Constitution, Floyd Abrams is needed more than ever.” Abrams, of the firm Cahill Gordon & Reindel, described his vital work for the past half century and his hopes for today and the future.

When I hear someone say there’s important news, my breath is taken away as I wonder what it is [President Donald Trump] did this morning. But nothing bad today. When I look around and see a few here I’ve represented, at last one who got out of jail finally, but all in a good cause, I can’t help but think of the line that Reuven Frank who headed NBC News in the middle of a case I was doing for NBC told me. When the other side was arguing that what was in question was not investigative journalism, I sent him a note saying give me a definition of investigative journalism. And he wrote back “sunshine is a weather report, a flood is news. . . .period.” So I think of that often when there are press related cases.

I thought I’d start today first with an historical observation. People don’t realize how close we came to not having a first amendment at all, or even a bill of rights. When the framers met in Philadelphia in 1787, they wrote a constitution to create a government. But there was nothing of the sort of revolutionary rhetoric in Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence, nothing about freedom of speech or the press. But a lot of states would not sign on without a Bill of Rights. The chief opponent, Alexander Hamilton, before he was a musical comedy figure, wrote in *The Federalist*, why should we begin to list all the things the government can’t do. If we start listing, we are going to leave things out, and people will think that’s all that’s protected. Ultimately, the side that

said we must have a bill of rights carried the day.

I’ll just itemize for you the genuine dangers to the press right now. The first is a series of verbal thrusts at the press by the president, who more than once said he wanted to change the libel laws to make it easier for people like me to bring lawsuits against the press and win. I like to think that by this time one of his lawyers has told him there is no federal libel law, so there is nothing to amend or change. We have 50 state libel laws, all subject to the first amendment. He could say I’ll deal with it by changing the personnel of the Supreme Court and hope I can get then to do what I want. He has [also] said he wants to bar journalists from using confidential sources. He told James Comey he wanted the FBI to consider putting journalists in jail for publishing classified information, which has never been viewed as a crime. He urged Comey to investigate leaks of non-classified information. He’s also said people who burn the American flag ought to lose their citizenship or spend a year in jail. But the Supreme Court has concluded that burning the American flag is a form of free expression which is protected by the first amendment.

I want to talk about three areas where I think the dangers are real. One is the Espionage Act, which has been on the books now literally a century since in 1917 during World War I, under President Woodrow Wilson, it became law with some very broad language which has allowed prosecution of individuals in the government who release classified information and it could be argued to allow prosecution of recipients who then in turn make the information public if they know it is classified. Unfortunately, the language of the Espionage Act talks about information “related to the national defense,” which every journalist who covers the defense department, state department or CIA writes about in one way or another. The most likely way that could become a very public

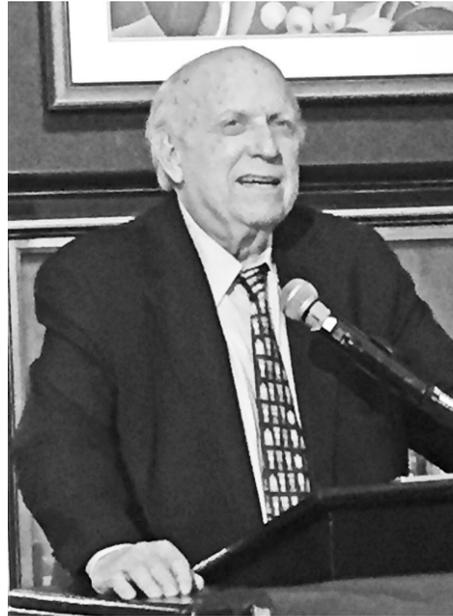


Photo credit: —Bill Diehl

issue is if they go after Wikileaks and Julian Assange. The Obama Department of Justice looked very closely about indicting Assange and ultimately decided there was no way to prosecute him without also imperiling *The New York Times* or any journalist who obtains classified information and publishes it. There has never been a prosecution of a journalist under the Espionage Act. But it’s there, and it remains a risk I think is real.

A second relates to confidential sources. We were on the very brink a few years ago of having a new law adopted which would have been a federal shield law. There is no federal shield law. States, like New York, have very broad protection for journalists with respect to confidential sources. But the area where it comes up most often is national security situations. The law at this moment is not good in terms of whether the first amendment provides protection for journalists who assert their right not to reveal confidential sources. My firm represented Jim Risen. Confidential sources were sought from him in a criminal trial of someone who the government claimed was his source. He refused to answer. We argued in District Court that ruled for us, a Court of Appeals

ruled against us in a broad opinion saying there was no protection for confidential sources under the first amendment, and the Supreme Court declined to hear the case. That was followed by a criminal trial when the government called Risen to the stand and he refused to answer source-like questions. There was a conviction without any testimony from him. The reality is there is no sure protection for journalists who write material based on confidential sources under federal law.

The other area I want to mention is more diffuse and even more threatening. It’s the impact of the daily denigration of the press by the President. He does this as a matter of course—fake news, a sort of daily articulation of disdain for the press and anger and rejection of it as a good faith body of individuals, organizations trying to gather news and release it. I’ve always thought the press, especially the best of the press, has not been a very successful advocate for its own activities. The press could do a much better job publicizing what it does well, especially in circumstances where the public has been served.

A final note. Do we want journalists to act in a sense as censors or editors? It comes up all the time. It came up after Charlottesville. We protect hate speech in America as a first amendment matter. One of the most interesting issues that exists right now is what we would like the government to do? The enormously wealthy and powerful private media corporations play the role of censor. Or you can use the word editor. All these entities have policies against carrying racist slurs—something the government is not allowed to do. I like them to engage in that limited amount of what I consider editing—deciding whether they want to carry material of this sort. Under existing federal law, they don’t run any risk of libel simply by carrying without comment and without editing the vilest sorts of slurs and libelous defamatory information. My own view is that’s their problem.

Abrams for the Defense

BY ANDREW FISHER

For more than half a century, Floyd Abrams has sprung to the aid of innumerable journalists and others trapped between the often-inequitable wheels of justice and the desire to present the news freely and fairly as the Constitution provides. This is the experience of one Silurian, rescued by Mr. Abrams, his passion for justice and the role of a free press.

In October and November 1980 and June 1981, NBC News broadcast investigative reports by Brian Ross and producer Ira Silverman, suggesting links between entertainer Wayne Newton and organized crime. Newton sued, and NBC was ordered not to make any further mention of the matter. I went to work for NBC Radio at the end of 1981, and in one of my newscasts, I inadvertently mentioned the suit and was added to the case as a defendant.

That was when I first met Floyd Abrams, whom NBC had retained to defend it in court. Although a crusading newspaper editor for whom I had worked had told me to never fear a libel suit if I knew I was right, I was terrified. But from the first day, Abrams put me at ease, asserting that the Constitution was on my side.

Early on, things didn’t look good. In 1986, an eight-week trial in Las Vegas ended with a jury awarding the entertainer \$19.3 million, including \$5 million in punitive damages. At the time, the award for punitive damages was the largest ever levied against a news organization in a libel trial. Federal

District Judge Myron Crocker later reduced the total award to \$5.2 million.

Then, in the summer of 1990, a Federal appeals court in San Francisco overturned the award, finding that there was insufficient evidence to show that Ross and Silverman had either deliberately lied or recklessly disregarded the truth, the pertinent legal standard. The next year, the United States Supreme Court rejected Newton’s request that it review the appeals court’s ruling. The case followed me through the rest of my 25 years with the NBC organization, but because of Floyd Abrams’ fine defense work, it became more of a topic of conversation than a demerit.

A few years ago, the Columbia University Club of Northern New Jersey gathered to hear Paula Franzese, the Peter W. Rodino Professor of Law at Seton Hall, speak on “The Changing Face of the Supreme Court.” It was a captivating speech, Franzese observing that in one year in the late 19th century, the court had handed down hundreds of decisions, while more recently, that number had dropped to a few dozen.

In the question-and-answer session that followed, I suggested that giving more time to fewer, important cases might be wiser, noting that the Court had declined to review the Wayne Newton case, and I appreciated that *very much*. That brought a laugh, but when I turned back to Prof. Franzese, there was a look of shock on her face.

“That was my first case out of law school!” she exclaimed. Floyd Abrams was not my only lawyer on the case.

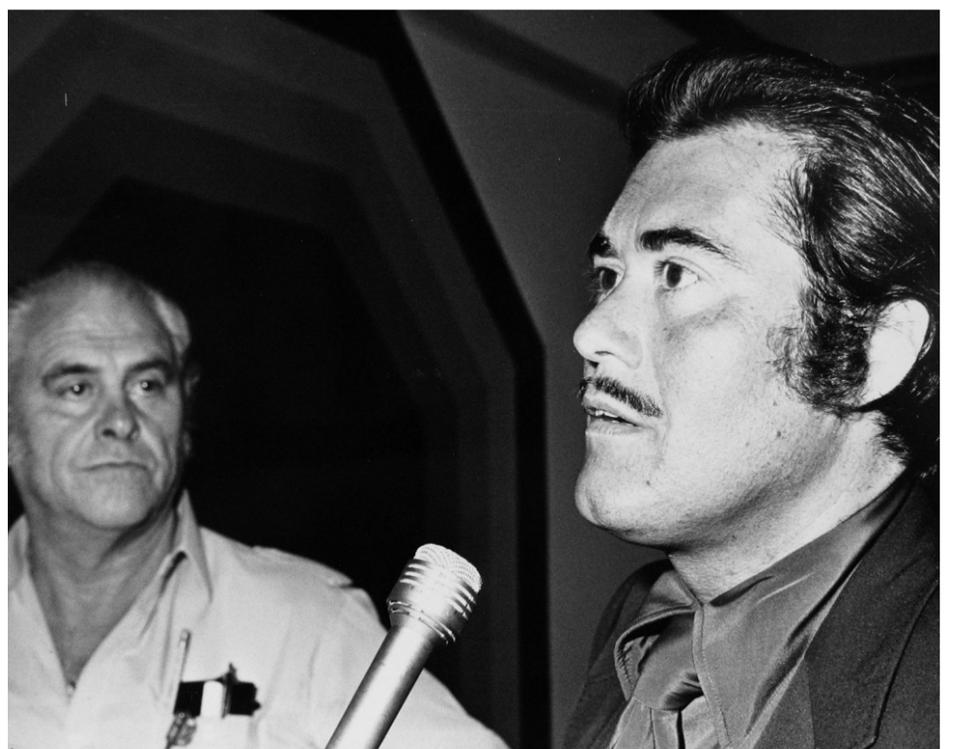


Photo credit: —Las Vegas Sun

Wayne Newton and his manager say he’s innocent.

After graduating from Columbia University Law School at the top of her class, Paula Franzese had begun work with Cahill, Gordon, and Reindel, Floyd Abrams’ firm. Abrams had assigned her to establish Wayne Newton as a public figure, which would change the legal landscape on which Newton’s case had been built. “One day,” she recalled, “I was getting on a subway train in lower Manhattan, and through the

closing doors of the subway car, I saw a magazine cover on a newsstand: ‘Wayne Newton: Entertainer of the Year.’”

Case closed.

Andrew Fisher’s memory of the Newton case was refreshed for the purposes of this article by contemporaneous accounts in *The New York Times* and *The Los Angeles Times*.

The Origins of The Voice

BY EDWIN FANCHER

At Village parties in the 1950s, people had been talking for years about starting a new Greenwich Village newspaper to rival the old-fashioned weekly *The Villager*. They said there were so many writers, artists, and theatrical people living or hanging out in the Village, who were not represented by a paper featuring neighborhood gossip penned by a cat named Scoopy. At one such gathering my good friend Dan Wolf turned to me and said everyone has talked about starting a new paper, but no one has done it. Let's start one. Maybe my friend Norman Mailer will join us.

Indeed Mailer did. I had offered an investment of \$5,000, part of a small inheritance from my grandfather. Norman matched it.

So, Norman was in. The three of us had decided to start a newspaper with a \$10,000 budget, or \$90,000 in today's dollars. None of us knew anything about either journalism or business. We must have all been mad! I have often wondered how to explain such folly. My conclusion is that it had a lot to do with our experience in the military during World War II. Dan had been a soldier under General MacArthur in the Pacific from New Guinea to Korea. Norman's battle experience was documented in his first novel, *The Naked and the Dead*, and I had been in combat in Italy against the Wehrmacht in the last months of the war. We three had all lived under the fear of horrible death or dismemberment in battle, and had survived. The war was over and, were alive,

and none of us had even been wounded so we assumed we should be able to do anything, even start a new newspaper in Greenwich Village in 1955 with almost no money.

I think it led to a kind of arrogance and a faith that providence would take care of us and preserve our paper. Mailer was already a well-known author. Wolf was a free-lance-writer who had contributed to the one volume Columbia Encyclopedia (published by the Columbia University Press) writing mostly on philosophy and psychology. He had also worked for the Turkish Information Office in New York. I was a psychologist who had just finished my internship in clinical psychology.

My only journalism experience was based on meeting E. F. Jessen when I was an 18-year-old freshman at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. It was January 1942 and he had just arrived in Fairbanks to start a weekly newspaper called Jessen's Weekly [<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024018/>] to compete against the local Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. He asked me to write a weekly column of news

about the University of Alaska for his paper, which I did during the spring of 1942. Then came the war, and now the Village Voice.

Dan Wolf defined our orientation to journalism most clearly in his *Forward to The Village Voice Reader* (1962) which he and I edited. "The Village Voice was originally conceived as a living breathing attempt to demolish

the notion that one needs to be a professional to accomplish something in a field as purportedly technical as journalism," he wrote. "It was a philosophical position. We wanted to jam the gears of creeping automatism." Our method was to operate an "open newspaper," welcome to a wide variety of would-be writers and artists.

We rented a small office on Greenwich Avenue, and started calling friends to tell them that we were starting a new Village paper in the Fall and invited them to contribute. And when we did open our doors, they did come. They had a lot to say, and they found an open forum for whatever they wanted to write. Our first issue appeared October 26, 1955.

Soon we were joined by another World War II vet, a freelance writer, Jerry Tallmer who had written for *The Nation*. In many ways, Jerry might be considered a fourth founder because without Jerry there would not have been a *Village Voice*. He was the only one among us who really knew how to put out a newspaper. He had been the editor of his college paper, the *Dartmouth Daily*. He became Associate Editor and edited the "back of the book", writing about off-Broadway theatre, and founding the Obies in the spring of 1956. As our first employee, he was also directly related to the war. He had been my former Squad Leader in the 10th Mountain Division and had been wounded in our first battle.

By the time Wolf and I decided to launch the paper I had just finished an internship in clinical psychology and had been offered a full time job as psychologist in a mental health clinic. Wolf

suggested that I work half-time at the clinic year and half-time as publisher of the new paper for a year to get the new enterprise off the ground. I agreed, but actually ended up working at both jobs for 19 years, until both Wolf and I left the Voice in 1974.

Mailer left after about six months when he had a dispute with us over a typo in his column in the Voice. He also believed the paper was not sufficiently radical. He described this incident in his book *Advertisements for Myself*. Many years later Mailer said to me that Dan Wolf and I were right in the way we ran the paper, and that he had been wrong.

Wolf, himself was an unorthodox editor. He rarely used a red pencil to edit copy, but rather edited by talking to writers about their stories, often challenging their assumptions and points of view. He liked particularly to work with young writers and preferred English Department graduates to anyone trained or schooled in journalism.

It is hard to believe that this *Village Voice* enterprise has survived for 62 years. Now it is giving up its print identity, which makes me sad, but hopeful that it will continue to be *The Village Voice*—in spirit—just in a new form, online.

I can't do justice to all the hundreds of people who found an outlet for their creativity by contributing to the Voice over the years. I can only thank the many writers and artists who stuck with the *Village Voice* through hard times, and made it the great newspaper that it did become. I firmly believe that the *Voice* had an enduring influence on New York journalism as a truly original, unique and enduring voice in itself.

From the Dish Pit to CUNY Graduate School of Journalism Comice Johnson

Comice Johnson is the 2017-18 recipient of a Silurian scholarship to CUNY Journalism. The Silurian News asked her to describe her path to CUNY and her hopes for the future.

"Can you get to those pots please?" "Yeah." I sighed, looking at the mountain of dirty dishes that surrounded me. I was wearing a long black plastic apron that resembled a tarp. Foamy dishwater dripped off its hem into my foul, sodden tennis shoes. I was 18 years old, working as a dishwasher and trying to set aside my minimum wage earnings. Once I had managed to save several thousand dollars I left my hometown of Eugene, Oregon, and went on a backpacking trip through Europe with my two best friends.

Following my first journey, I spent several years alternately working restaurant jobs and going on trips throughout Southeast Asia and South America. Traveling was a truly inspiring education for me. However, eventually I grew ready for a different kind of education. I wanted to learn more about the histories and political landscapes of the places I had visited. Crafting long emails about my trips became part of the adventure and I wanted to improve my writing. So, in 2010, I enrolled at Portland State University.

At 22, I had the maturity to make college my focus. I threw myself into my studies with absolute dedication, always aiming for straight A's. I also worked at restaurants to support myself throughout college. During my junior year, I had the good fortune to study abroad in Quito, Ecuador. To maintain my financial aid, I had to take five upper division classes, all taught in Spanish. It was a very demanding curriculum and it seemed there was barely time to sleep during those months. I finished the program well-grounded in Latin American history and culture, and with solid Spanish skills.

As time went on, I became interested in journalism. I have always enjoyed writing, and I have always felt intense curiosity about the lives of people with backgrounds vastly different from my own. I believe certain stories have the power to change the world. Of special interest to me are the experiences of marginalized groups within our society. In college, I interviewed and wrote about undocumented immigrants, transgender women, strippers, plus-size fashion models, and striking brewery workers among others.

In 2014, I graduated summa cum laude. Excited to start my writing career I moved to New York City with the goal of finding internships and other opportunities. I struggled to navigate the world of freelancing, and eventually decided that returning to school would be the best route.

Last fall, I applied to CUNY Graduate School of Journalism because of its diverse and unique students, the affordable tuition, and because it is among the top journalism programs in the nation.

Now I am well into my first semester



Comice on a foreign foray in Santiago

at CUNY, and I feel incredibly grateful and excited to be here. Every day is interesting and challenging. I am learning how to code and create websites; how to find sources and do beat reporting for a specific neighborhood; and I have also developed a new-found love of creating news stories for radio.

During the next year and a half, I will

be working very hard to become a skilled reporter.

I want to thank the Society of the Silurians for its generous contribution to my education. The scholarship I received is helping me achieve my dreams. When I graduate, I hope to find a position as a foreign correspondent covering Latin America for a major U.S. news outlet.

Society of the Silurians
PO Box 1195
Madison Square Station
New York, NY 10159
212.532.0887
www.silurians.org

The World of Trump

Good News, Bad News, Fake News

BY ANNE ROIPHE

In the world of fake news where left is right and wrong is good and good is bad we are all falling down Alice's rabbit hole. And who knows when this bad dream ends.

How are we to understand ourselves, how are we to create a community of selves if we cannot know what actually is happening to our fellow citizens, wives, husbands, children? How can we protect the vulnerable, learn to trust or not trust our leaders if we cannot know what is happening behind closed doors, political doors, personal doors? If we cannot talk to each other about infidelity, about greed, about failures of all kinds, then we will be isolated in the platitudes and the empty promises, the pretty words of officialdom, the pieties of religion and state. Soon we will become a bamboozled citizenry prone to the whims of dictators, tyrants and fools.

That is why we have newspapers, magazines, television, internet. We who work in the fourth estate know that we are an essential pillar of the democracy we serve. Trump would like to silence us. Putin has silenced us. Stalin jailed and exiled us. Hitler destroyed us. But I think Trump for all his tweets will not succeed: not here, not now. We can see clearly that Trump accuses others of exactly what he is guilty of doing. We can call it projection. We can call it slimy politics. But it remains a dictator's useful tool: accuse the opposition of lying just as he spreads the biggest lies of all.

Yes, I know all news is not a service to the reader. Some is just silly and wasteful even if enjoyable for some. However, even when it is only a story about some movie

star who has divorced his fourth wife, we learn something about how vows can be broken. We learn that it is hard to be faithful, movie star or not. We learn that money and fame do not guarantee a life of contentment. We also see in the stories we hear or read reflections of our own trials and failures. This can remind us of our own humanity, of the hard stuff we all struggle with. It may make us feel superior or inferior as it lets us see that fidelity is hard won, fame is a two-edged sword.

And then there is political news. We need to know far more than we do know. Who has power? Who are those people? What matters to them? Are they steady and moral in their personal relationships and in their political ties? Can we rely on them? Have you heard the story that...? If the mayor has bought a house in wine country or the principal of the school is driving a Lexus and his computer is storing porn sites, we need to know. If the clergyman who is thundering about the evils of homosexuality has been seen leaving a gay bar at two in the morning we need to know. First because the fact affects how we view the clergyman's Sunday sermon, but also because we need to understand that human sexuality is complicated and hard to repress, while love and sex are subjects that no one can simplify or dismiss. When a reporter writes that financial manipulations made a political figure or a member of the country club wealthy at the expense of other stock holders the community can respond. At the same time, you could say embarrassing anyone is not nice, but sometimes nice must give way to necessary.

There is in this country now, drummed

up by our current President, a nasty suspicion of the media. Fear of a vital and energetic press is not a good sign. Widespread fear of the truth is really a terminal problem for a democratic nation. All dictators attempt to discredit and then silence the press so they can do as they please in the dark. People will whisper things against the state, some will go to jail or into exile, but the public will be numbed and muted and crimes will be committed and wars will start when not even a child dares to stand up to say the Emperor has no clothes.

I am sure the child in that story grew up to be the Woodward and Bernstein of his state. Of course, he might also have become an excellent tailor.

Fake news is what they call real news they don't want us to read or hear. Fake news is the reality they want to suppress in Trumpland. But real news, as we understand the phrase, is our life line to greater clarity, to better government, to more nuanced and more compassionate understanding of our selves—above all, an antidote to or an inoculation against propaganda

The good news for journalists is that we will never come to the end of this project. Generations will trod newsrooms, no matter what form they may take. We will never come to the end of our work discovering what is in the human heart—what harms us, what helps us, what will make our communal lives richer and stronger. Real news allows us to know ourselves as we are, unpleasant sometimes but very real. Simply because the project of understanding human life on this planet is unending doesn't mean

it isn't worth our effort. Even if all we can do is stick a finger in the dyke, we'd better be prepared to keep it there as long as history unfolds.

If the public starts to believe that the news is fake, then the liars win. It is a devilish stroke to claim that the press is lying when the President and his court are the source of the lie. Dictators lie, presidents only sometimes—when they really want to start a war, or retain their hold on power. This is all too easily done by repeatedly accusing others of exactly what he (or she) is guilty of doing. And it is hard to combat the ruler's lies while the same ruler is calling us liars.

The one thing we know for sure is that our President's pants are on fire. And it is our job, our lot, to keep pulling the fire alarm, even if we get accused of arson.

There is a connection between such social truths of how we live, marry, raise our children, make our living, fight our diseases, worship whatever we worship and the reality of how our government marches across the public space. The fallibility of the human heart may be writ large on the political stage, but is equally or perhaps more clearly seen in the lives of ordinary people, hot with their rages, deep into their loves, mourning whatever they mourn, aspiring to whatever they aspire, lonely or fulfilled. The human experience is also the journalists' subject, public or private, and if, as we explore our territory we become brash and unpopular, we are still just doing our jobs.

The man who calls the truth fake news is as dangerous as the man who calls out fire in the darkened movie theater. It is our job to turn on the lights.

A Tale of the News

BY OWEN MORITZ

The New York Daily News has been sold again...this time for \$1 to a newspaper conglomerate called Tronc—and for what its arch competitor, The New York Post, some gracelessly observed was less than the newsstand price of a single copy. Here, Silurian Owen Moritz takes for a stroll down memory lane for another time when his paper was on the block. And the curious coda about how Chicago has finally taken over New York, thirty-five years later.

One day in April, 1982, photographer Dan Farrell and I went to the Carlyle Hotel in Manhattan to track down someone named Joe L. Allbritton who was intent on buying our paper, the Daily News.

It was a strange assignment, as were the events that followed. Allbritton, a Texas financier and next-to-last publisher of the defunct Washington Star, had cut a tentative deal to buy The News from the parent Tribune Company of Chicago. The News, at the time, the nation's top-selling metropolitan newspaper, with a daily circulation of 1.5 million, was nonetheless losing an estimated \$12 million a year. Allbritton's deal was contingent on reaching an agreement on layoffs and job cuts with the tabloid's 11 unions.

He was, he reminded everyone, "the buyer of last resort." A previous suitor,

who made his fortune in real estate, had bowed out of contention after being passed over for Allbritton. His name was Donald Trump.

Sale rumors had an unsettling effect on morale. In the middle of the newsroom, a mock Kool-Aid stand was set up, channeling cult leader Jim Jones and his doomed followers who drank flavored water laced with cyanide. What some on the staff consumed that day was a lot stronger than water. The fact is we were bystanders at our own funeral. Finally, the editors recognized the prospective sale as the major news story it was. So Farrell and I were sent to the elegant and discreet Carlyle where Allbritton was staying.

In the eerie quiet of the Carlyle lobby, with its Old Money décor, the two of us staked out the elevator bank and hallways. It's still hard to believe President John Kennedy once had a suite on the 34th floor and reputedly trysted with Marilyn Monroe the night she famously serenaded him with a sultry "Happy birthday, Mr. President" at Madison Square Garden. Or to imagine years later that one evening three of the world's great icons—Princess Di, Michael Jackson and Steve Jobs—shared the same Carlyle elevator.

A nattily-dressed Allbritton and his wife appeared. He was a small fellow with a cheerful, aw-shucks manner. As Farrell snapped away, Allbritton was

asked about the state of negotiations between his bargaining team and members of the union coalition, the Allied Printing Trades Council. The talks were going on just blocks away at Ted Kheel's Automation House

"I guess they're going all right," he said. "But you'll have to ask the folks over there."

Was his goal the elimination of 1,000 jobs? "Well that's a big number isn't it," he replied coyly.

Then things got hostile. A couple of radio newsmen arrived, as word spread that the prospective owner of The News was holding an impromptu news conference. One of them was Joe Bragg, a reporter for WHN (and later an ordained minister in Harlem), whose baritone was the envy of colleagues

"Mr. Allbritton," he shouted, "do you love the Daily News?"

Allbritton winced. He looked left down the carpeted hallway, he looked right. He looked left again to see if maybe the question was meant for someone else. He probably wished he gave a more thoughtful answer, one that didn't cause rollicking laughter in the newsroom.

"I love my wife," he stammered, pausing to add. "I like the Daily News."

The upshot was that the would-be publisher did not have to choose between investment and family. The Tribune Company simply pulled the rug from under him after fruitless weeks of negotiations. Allbritton—who owned the Washington Star for three years before selling it in 1978 to Time Inc. (which eventually

closed it)—was seeking agreement on \$70 million in cost savings, a wage freeze and elimination of 1,500 jobs from a full and part-time workforce of 5,000. But the dealmaker ran into an implacable foe. The unions did not budge, though they were civil about it and said they wanted to save the paper.

The Allied unions, counseled by venerable labor lawyer and mediator Ted Kheel, were in an awkward place. They were not just speaking for their own members, but their counterparts as well at The Times and Post. This was because, under "me too" clauses in certain labor contracts, any giveback or change in workplace rules could trigger demands by rival publishers for the same concession. On the other hand, lack of an agreement could spell the end of the Daily News—if Tribune was true to the words of its president, Stanton R. Cook: "If these negotiations fail, we see no alternative but to cease publication of The News."

Well, the negotiations failed. Allbritton's 30-day deadline—extended an additional five days at the urging of Mayor Edward Koch—did not come close to producing an agreement. His last hope was dashed when the Allied rejected his plea for a wage freeze. But far from closing the paper or standing by its pledge that Allbritton was buyer of last resort, Chicago went looking elsewhere for a deal. What they came up with was mildly shocking.

The real drama was going on at Automation House. Behind their united

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Gruber Lives in Miami

BY HERBERT HADAD

Ruth Gruber, awarded the Silurians' Lifetime Achievement Award in 2011 for her daring witness-to-history global coverage over 70 years, is being honored at the Jewish Museum of Florida – FIU (Florida International University) in Miami Beach through January 7. She died at age 105 in November 2016.

“Ms. Gruber called herself a witness, and in an era of barbarities and war that left countless Jews displaced and stateless, she often crossed the line from journalist to human rights advocate, reporting as well as shaping events that became the headlines and historical footnotes of the 20th century,” The New York Times observed in her obituary, written by Robert D. McFadden, a Silurian Governor Emeritus. “Over seven decades, she was a correspondent in Europe and the Middle East and wrote 19 books, mostly based on her own experiences,” McFadden continued.

In the November 2011 issue of The Silurian News, Ms. Gruber was quoted on page one observing, “I knew my life would be inextricably bound by rescue and survival.”

In the Jewish Museum exhibition, a selection of Gruber's vintage prints, never before exhibited, are presented alongside contemporary prints made from her original negatives. The prints are on loan from

the International Center for Photography (ICP) in New York, and are drawn from Gruber's private archive.

Appropriately, the exhibition is located in a former synagogue that housed Miami Beach's first Jewish congregation. The museum's restored 1936 Art Deco building and 1929 original synagogue are both on the National Register of Historic Places.

“Ms. Gruber was such an important photojournalist, not only because she was the first woman to have access to historical events in the world, but because she was the very first person at all to access certain parts of the world,” said Susan Gladstone, director of the museum. “For example, she was the first correspondent to fly through Siberia into the Soviet Arctic in 1935, at the age of 24. She was fearless in her quest to capture the images that now bring to life, for all who view them, stories of the fight for survival and freedom.

“Specifically regarding Jewish history, Ms. Gruber was the first photojournalist to interview Holocaust survivors during her very secret mission accompanying 1,000 Jewish refugees across the Atlantic, to Oswego, NY. [The only large group of Jews to escape from Nazi-controlled Europe.] She was even named a ‘simulated general’ so she could be taken prisoner if the ship was attacked. And, she was instrumental in lobbying to allow all the

refugees to remain in the U.S. after the war. She was a personal witness to the famous incident of the Exodus ship in 1947 and was allowed by the British to enter the ship and photograph the plight of the refugees, all the while also recording, in words, their stirring stories. The fact that she spoke Yiddish allowed her to capture these very first stories of the Holocaust survivors. And she continued to document the history of Jewish people seeking freedom well into her 70s, when she visited isolated villages in Ethiopia to document the rescue of Ethiopian Jews.”

Ms. Gruber graduated from Bushwick High School at 15 and New York University at 18, by then already fluent in German. On fellowships, she earned a master's degree in German at the University of Wisconsin at 19 and a doctorate in German literature at the University of Cologne at 20, one of the youngest ever to achieve that distinction.

Ms. Gruber, who worked for The New



Unidentified Photographer

Ruth Gruber, Alaska, 1941-43

York Herald Tribune, The New York Post and, briefly, The New York Times, covered the Nuremberg war-crimes trials and many events in the history of Israel, including its war for independence. In 1952, she escorted Eleanor Roosevelt on a visit to development sites in Israel.

She told an audience at Stony Brook University in 2008, she always knew how to be in the right place at the right time. “Whenever I saw that Jews were in danger,” she said, “I covered that story.”

A Tale of the News

Continued from Page 5

front, the craft unions and Newspaper Guild were assessing their future in the print business. So was Kheel. He knew, as did many observers, that the Chicago company was in a precarious situation. It had bought the storied Chicago Cubs plus Wrigley Field the year before and was planning to go public the next year. Ditching The News, possibly touching off protests that could reverberate on Wall Street, would be bad news on the eve of a stock offering.

Moreover, Kheel was trying for a comeback. At his peak, he'd been the city's main man for settling municipal and newspaper strikes. Mayor Robert Wagner called on him to end a crippling 114-day newspaper strike in 1962-63 between the New York Typographical Union, led by Bert Powers, and the Publishers Association, which represented seven dailies in Manhattan and two in Queens. “The 12th resurrection of Humpty Dumpty,” Kheel joked.

By the end of the 1960s, only the News, Times and Post were standing. The settlement has been blamed for the loss of the *Daily Mirror*, *World-Telegram and Sun*, *Journal-American*, *Herald Tribune*, and Newhouse's two Queens-based dailies, *Long Island Press* and *Star-Journal*. No one blamed Kheel at the time. But in the 88-day pressman's strike in 1978, Post owner Rupert Murdoch accused Kheel of colluding with the News and Times to fashion a settlement. Meantime, animosities between Kheel and Koch led the mayor to force Kheel out as a transit arbitrator, further scapegoating him for generous raises won by municipal workers.

When Tribune first announced plans to sell the paper in late 1981, Kheel jumped back into the conversation. He excitedly proposed the News unions buy the newspaper through an ill-fated ESOP, an employer stock ownership plan. Most of us thought it glib, impractical and at best a bargaining chip.

Next, Kheel's old nemesis, Murdoch, came calling. George McDonald, the Mailers Union Local 6 president and head of the Allied Printing Trades Council—also Kheel's closest ally—met publicly with Murdoch at Automation House, even as talks were continuing over the paper's future. The Post publisher insisted he wasn't trying to undercut Allbritton. Nor did he come as an owner who once coveted the bigger-selling News and had proposed a joint operating agreement. Instead, he said he wanted both the News and Post to survive and told McDonald his basic position was whatever relief The News got, The Post should get it, too.

At a news conference Murdoch kept a straight face when he said he was “not in any way trying to undo Mr. Allbritton's deal. I feel passionately that The News ought to survive and The Post ought to survive, too.”

Trump Looking In

On the outside looking in was Trump. The developer, a year away from the opening of Trump Tower, fancied himself a press lord when he made a bid to acquire The News around the same time as Allbritton. Despite the good press he enjoyed as a man about town and developer, he had few fans in the business. Told of The Donald's interest in the paper, columnist Jimmy Breslin wrote: “As this newspaper, the Daily News newspaper, was under the control of hicks from Chicago, a place which raises people who are as stupid as steers, here came a young builder named Junior With a Big Ego, who let it be known that he was going to buy the newspaper. His civic responsibility in the past consisted of getting tax abatements.”

There was furthermore a power struggle for control of the Tribune Company following the dissolution in 1975 of the McCormick-Patterson Trust. The trust, created in the early 1930s by the two daughters of legendary

newspaperman Joseph Medill, was the holding company for the two newspapers run by their sons—Joseph Medill Patterson, the former Socialist firebrand and war hero who founded the tabloid News in 1919, and Robert McCormick, the Chicago Tribune's self-described “Old Right” editor and publisher for 40 years. Both papers prospered for decades in their respective home towns and were one-two nationally in circulation. A year after Patterson's death in 1946, News circulation reached a peak of 2.2 million daily and 4 million Sunday. But the times changed and the Tribune Company that supplanted the McCormick-Patterson Trust in '75 was ostensibly a partnership of Chicago and New York interests. In fact, the new company not only ended the autonomy of The News, but stacked decision-making in the Chicago team's favor.

The internal warfare between Tribune Tower and News officials did not end until eight years later when the Tribune Company, then headed by the blunt and aggressive Charles T. Brumback, forced News management to take a violent five-month strike in 1990-1991. The unions, striking against an out-of-town landlord, had the support of every major elected official plus the influential archbishop, John Cardinal O'Connor. Brumback ended up surrendering the paper and loads of cash to British publisher Robert Maxwell.

Chicago, it's clear, did not realize the enormity of the News labor problems—not just the cost of existing contracts and unfunded pensions, but the millions in payments owed printers and stereotypers with guaranteed lifetime contracts, in the event of a newspaper shutdown. In a crazy way, that may have been Trump's contribution. Allowed to examine the News books as a potential buyer, he dispatched Vincent McDonnell, former chairman of the state mediation board, who was horrified by what he found. If the paper closed, he told Trump, the liabilities could run to \$300 million and up. And that was in 1982 dollars—some \$755 million today.

Tribune did not make a deal with

Allbritton. It did not make a deal with Murdoch. It did not make a deal with Trump, though The Donald seemed to believe he was still in the running. He complained about Tribune's procrastination in searching for a savior, telling The Times, “they lost all the momentum Allbritton had given them.”

Tribune did, however, come to an understanding with the unions. Kheel and McDonald, plainly worried about the fate of union jobs after the Allbritton imbroglio, had communicated through back channels with Robert M. Hunt, the new News publisher. Hunt, who was Cook's second-in-command, became News publisher in 1979, the first publisher in 63 years without a history with the paper. Hunt was so eager for a labor agreement that he offered to send a helicopter to a Catskills convention to fetch McDonald for a sitdown. McDonald declined the offer, but he and other union leaders did come around to make critical concessions. “The Tribune obtained \$50 million in givebacks from the Daily News unions, and made the most of these concessions in its prospectus for the company's transition to becoming a publicly held firm.” Richard Vigilante wrote in *Strike, The Daily News And The Future of American Labor*.

The saga has a kicker. Some time later, Jerry Nachman, future editor of The Post, but at the time a police reporter and columnist, pulled me aside at a social event and playfully needled me that the news stories I and others had written about the negotiations missed the real headline. For strategic reasons, Tribune “couldn't afford to let go of The News,” he explained. “My father-in-law said they (Tribune) needed the (News) cash flow” even if it was losing money. Father-in-law? Weird as it was, the late Nachman knew more about the issues in the News-Tribune-labor triangle than anyone at The News, certainly a lot more than Allbritton. That's because he was married at the time to Nancy Ann Cook, the tall, blond daughter of Stanton Cook. And this raises a question: Was Allbritton all along simply the unwitting stalking horse of Tribune Company?

OBITUARIES

Gabe Pressman

A pioneering newsman who practically invented street reporting on television and whose career as a reporter stretched for more than six decades, Gabe Pressman died on June 23. He was 93, a longtime Silurian, and winner of the 1988 Peter Kihss Award. An affable man whose collegiality toward his fellows extended even to reporters from rival news organizations, he was ferocious when it came to holding politicians' feet to the fire and relentless where the First Amendment was concerned. Along the way, he established a reputation for honesty and integrity, and a passion for getting the story and getting it right that remains unmatched. Hypocrisy and bully-boys and crooks and phonies got his juices flowing and he was always ready to nail them for it.

Bill O'Dwyer was the mayor when Pressman started covering City Hall for the World Telegram & Sun in 1949 and he hasn't stopped shooting questions at all the mayors since then. Some wouldn't dare start their press conferences unless he was there. He moved into radio in 1954 at WRCA (now WNBC) as the station's first "roving reporter," and then to television in 1956. With the exception of eight years at WNEW-TV in the 1970s, he was with NBC ever since. He never retired, but held the title of senior correspondent for WNBC-TV and kept reporting until he died.

Reviewing the scope of his coverage is like reading a history of our times: the sinking of the Andrea Doria, all the New York City blackouts, the tumultuous Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968, civil strife and transit strikes, riots in Newark and New York, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, endless campaigns for mayor and governor and president. In addition, there was all that reporting from Israel and the specials about the homeless and the hungry and the mentally ill that brought him an avalanche of awards: 11 Emmys, an Edward R. Murrow Award, a Peabody Award, a Deadline Club award and many, many others. He was the man with the microphone and, as one of his obituaries said, it seemed as though he was always there.

—Mort Sheinman



Gabe gets Marilyn to confess: she's marrying Arthur Miller 1956



Gabe takes notes April 2, 1956



Gabe meets a first lady in Queens September 9, 1999

Gabe: A recollection

In December 1965, a frightfully cold winter as I recall, I was assigned to NBC News for my one-week off-campus internship from the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. One day I spent in the company of David Brinkley, co-anchor of "The Huntley-Brinkley Report," who I recall only as being immensely tall. But my most memorable day was in the company of Gabe Pressman, then at his height as the best-known and most accomplished local television street reporter of his era, and indeed, as it would turn out, of many eras. Gabe, as everyone from the most obscure doorman or cop on the beat to the mayor, governor and beyond knew him — intimately, they believed — since he came into their living room every night before dinner, was the voice of the voiceless, the heart of so many in this often cold and heartless city. But I recall particularly his modus operandi. For Gabe would not content himself with a single story on each evening's newscast. His goal was to dominate the broadcast. So, Gabe piled himself into a network crew car, complete with cameraman, soundman, driver, himself and, on this one memorable day, yours truly. Off we went, tethered to the assignment desk at 30 Rock by a two-way radio nestled next to the police scanner. We hit at least four locales that day—four stories from the Battery to the Bronx. At each spot, Gabe shot interviews, scribbled frantically in his notebook, polished off a standupper, just as a motorcycle messenger rolled up to snatch the rolls of film and roar off back to the office. There, Gabe would wind up every day — ready to script, track and help edit all his contributions that by then had been "souped" (developed) and were ready to roll. It was a Herculean task, repeated the very next day and on and on. An inspiration indeed to this fledgling hack.

—David A. Andelman

PETE BOWLES

Pete Bowles, a veteran Newsday reporter and part of a team that won a Pulitzer Prize for Public Service in 1974, died of a heart attack on April 20 at Brooklyn's Methodist Hospital. He was 79. Bowles was with Newsday from 1968 until 2005, when he retired. He was one of the Newsday reporters and editors whose 32-part series, "The Heroin Trail," won the Pulitzer. The series traced illicit drug traffic from Turkey to France to the New York metropolitan area.

HERBERT DORFMAN

Herbert Dorfman, a television news writer, producer and director, and a veteran Silurian, died on June 22. He was 88. Following graduation from Brooklyn College in 1951, Dorfman went to Norway on a Fulbright Scholarship in journalism. When he returned to the U.S., he worked for several television organizations. He was executive producer of the Emmy-winning "Channel 2 Eye On" and was a head writer at ABC's "Good Morning America."

CHARLES DELAFUENTE

Charles DeLaFuente, a veteran writer and editor whose law degree helped him become an expert in libel law, died on Aug. 18 at the age of 71. Although he retired from The New York Times in 2013, he continued to write for the paper until this year. He had joined The Times as a copy editor in 1998. Earlier, he worked at many New York newspapers, including The Post, The News and Newsday as well as at UPI, the Albany Times-Union, and The (Troy, N.Y.) Record, where he was editor in chief.

RITA HENLEY JENSEN

Rita Henley Jensen, who founded Women's eNews, an independent news service she launched in 2000, died at home in New York on Oct. 18. She was 70. A former senior writer for the National Law Journal and columnist for The New York Times Syndicate, Jensen guided Women's eNews to almost 50 journalism awards, including the PASS Award from the National Council on Crime and Delinquency and the Rosa Cisneros Award from the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Western Hemisphere Region. She also was cited by The New York Daily News as one of the 100 most influential women in New York and, most recently, was named the 2016 Iconic Thought Leader for the Decade in Media by the Women Economic Forum, based in India. Jensen stepped down as editor-in-chief of Women's eNews in May 2016, when she was accepted as a research associate at the Five College Women's Studies Research Center, where she explored racial and gender inequities through her research project, "Jane Crow."

“Mr. Markel” and Times Gone By

Continued from Page 1

and leave their julienned pieces on the floor. For this he needed an audience, and for reasons that would be numbingly twopenny Freudian to speculate upon, it had to be a female audience. Which was me.

He abused all the men, but his favorite target was the picture editor, the late Rick Fredericks, who stuttered. At the first meeting I attended, Rick presented his choice of photos for the stories we were working on.

“You call this a picture?” Markel held it ostentatiously away from his face, as though it smelled. “It’s the stupidest picture I ever saw.” He grinned around the table, warming up. “What’s this? *What is this?* For God’s sake,” checking the date on another photo, “this is *last year’s picture!*”

Rick said, “B-b-but...”

“Don’t but me. Here’s the date. Can’t you read? And what does it have to do with the story?” Silence. “*I want you to explain to me what this picture has to do with the story.*”

“I-I-I...”

“What do you call yourself? You call yourself a picture editor?”

Rick sat twitching. No one else moved. Markel was red and near-apopleptic, working his way up to nirvana. “*Answer me. You call yourself a picture editor?*” And he took the pile of glossies, ripped them up, and flung the pieces into Rick’s face. Meeting adjourned.

Soon his secretary came to my desk. “He wants to see you,” she said.

My neighbors came to attention. In that bullpen, everyone could see and hear everything, and I felt eyes following me toward Markel’s office.

He sat at the far end of a ballroom, his desk deftly angled for sunlight to blind approaching visitors. I blinked my way toward him. He peered at me through his steel-rimmed specs. Finally he spoke: “Well? How was I?”

“I beg your pardon?”

“In the meeting. How was I? What did you think?”

I do not know if I understood back then what my assigned role was. Many young women in journalism, as elsewhere, were in certain ways dumb about gender things

until the women’s movement, exploding just a few years later, smartened us up. But certainly I understood that I *had* an assigned role, and that this was some sort of game. I did a fast review of my position. He might fire me, but I was single, not responsible for anyone else, could afford to be brash. Besides, I wanted to be brash. His behavior had outraged me.

“Mr. Markel,” I said, “you were awful.” And saw instantly that, despite myself, I’d hit paydirt.

He pounded his desk and harrumphed. “Why? Why was I awful? What do you mean?” But he was beaming.

So I gave him the scolding he wanted: how he’d *savaged* poor Fredericks and how *terrible* it was to treat people so brutally and so on, and he kept nodding and saying “Hm? Hm?”, and never stopped beaming.

Our contacts expanded. Sometimes he would take me to lunch at Sardi’s, and elicit my lecture du jour. He didn’t try to hide these meetings—half The Times had lunch at Sardi’s, effectively the corporate dining room—and in fact there was nothing to hide. For all the psychological toesies, there was never any sexual move. Sexual would have been normal. This was creepy. But what it did for me was to make the ogre vulnerable, even pitiable, and I was never able to feel for him the unmitigated hatred that many of my colleagues felt.

In those days, The Magazine had great cachet. It carried the bylines of immensely important people who could not necessarily write. It was read (scanned, at least) by everyone in New York and Washington who wanted to be able to work the room, and it was a bore. (“I made Barbara Ward rewrite that piece three times,” Markel boasted to an editor of the daily paper, who said, “Yes, and you ran all three.”) It was not much fun but it was *good* for you, and this was because Lester Markel had one true mission in life: to educate the reader as to the meaning of events. The daily should merely *report* the news, he said; the Sunday should *explain* it. And when the daily showed the *chutzpah* to run an interpretative piece, he raised hell.

Other publications didn’t matter. At

some point, when yet another Surgeon General’s report had come out, he wanted me to do an article on smoking. I said, “Mr. Markel, everyone’s done it.” Big mistake. “I don’t care who’s done it,” he screamed. “It hasn’t been done until *we’ve* done it.”

He was a superb line editor because he insistently asked all the dumb questions that an uninformed reader might ask. “*Explain.*” It was his mantra. “What does it mean? *Explain.*” If he read a complex sentence, he would say, “This thing is for the Partisan Review,” the worst epithet he could use. He’d keep gnawing on copy, demanding more work, more work, often forcing the music out of the prose. But usually the piece ended up with greater clarity.

All that editing was especially hard on Gilbert Millstein, a staff writer who specialized in complex sentences. He would appear at my desk and say, “What do you think of this lede?”, and read me an essay, an architectural marvel of a sentence, two pages long and not a clause left dangling. Years later, Gil recalled, “You’d break your ass on a piece. Markel would say, ‘This is no damn good.’ You’d do it over and over. Still no good. It would end up better, I must say. The miserable bastard was usually right. But what he put you through... You’d want to kill yourself. You’d want to kill *him.*”

Millstein tried. Each winter, when Markel flew south for a brief vacation, Gil would check the flight time. At the moment of the airline’s scheduled departure, he would whip out a paper plane, set it afire and voodoo-like send

it soaring over the bullpen, to wild applause. “Unhappily,” he said, “it never worked.”

Markel was kicked upstairs in 1964, and finally pushed into deeply reluctant retirement in 1968. He then took a small office at Columbus Circle, where he wrote long, inflamed memos to various editors and writers about what they were doing wrong and how to fix it. Few answered.

I was by then married, living out-of-state and writing on contract for The Magazine. I think because he so hungered for contacts, and so few were available to him, he stayed in touch with me. We would have lunch when I was in town, and he would rage against the powers.

Our last meeting was about a year before his death. He was recovering from a stroke. He was as meticulously dressed as ever—dark suit, shirt white enough to blind you and a collar starched sufficiently to choke you—but the left side of his mouth drooped and spittle dripped when he spoke. He carried on about a columnist to whom he had sent a 16-page memo outlining *exactly* what was wrong with his work, and hadn’t even gotten an *acknowledgement*, the *nerve* of the man... on and on, his voice rising, his color too. You tend to get nervous when someone who has had a stroke turns that color. So, trying to calm him, I said, “Now, Mr. Markel...”

He held up an arm for silence. He leaned in close, a ribbon of saliva on his chin. He gripped my wrist. “Call me Lester,” he said.

New Members

William Borders retired from The New York Times in 2006 after a 46-year career as a foreign correspondent and a senior editor. His overseas stations included London, New Delhi, Montreal, and Lagos, Nigeria. He was also an editor on various desks, including deputy foreign editor, senior news editor, and editor of The Week in Review, a section since renamed Sunday Review.

Lynn Brenner has been writing about business and personal finance in Newsday for more than 25 years. Her weekly “Family Finance” column bowed in 1990 and since 2009, she’s been writing the weekly “Ask the Expert” column on personal finance. She is also a Reuters contributor and a contributing editor to AARP magazine.

Jerry Edgerton writes the Cars and Money blog for CBS’s MoneyWatch.com. His career goes back to the early 1960s, when he was hired by The Associated Press and then by Newsday. In 1969, he joined the Washington bureau of BusinessWeek magazine, leaving in 1975, when he was named a senior writer at Time Inc.’s Money Magazine. He remained at Money Magazine until 2001, then became a freelance until joining the CBS MoneyWatch website in 2011.

Adelaide Perry Farah is the former editor-in-chief of Beauty Fashion magazine. Prior to that she was special projects editor at Health magazine. She is currently a freelance editor.

Ari L. Goldman was a reporter at The New York Times, where he focused on writing about religion, but also covered New York State politics, transportation and education. He joined The Times as a copy boy in 1973, becoming a reporter two years later. He left in 1993 to join the faculty of the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University, where he is a professor of journalism and director of the Scripps Howard Program in Religion, Journalism and the Spiritual Life.

Katherine Heires is a freelance reporter who for more than 20 years has focused on risk topics and emerging technologies and their impact on corporations, financial institutions, professional investors and individuals.

Joanna Hernandez is a former reporter and editor who is currently Director of Diversity Initiatives at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism. She has held various editing and reporting positions at such news organizations as The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Record, and Newsday.

Sissel McCarthy is Director of the Journalism Program and a Distinguished Lecturer at Hunter College. Earlier, she was part of the journalism departments at NYU and at Emory University. Before entering the fields of academe, she spent 1992 to 2004 reporting business news from New York, London and Atlanta.

Susan Mulcahy started as a copygirl at The New York Post and went on to become the editor of its Page Six column. She also worked at N.Y. Newsday and was editor-in-chief of Avenue magazine before switching to digital media, as vice president of Starwave, Paul Allen’s early web content company. As a freelancer, she’s been widely published.

Yvette Romero of Bloomberg News has served as a reporter and researcher, and as editor of the company’s Rankings Team, an internal resource that analyzes, organizes and illustrates data in categories ranging from business, economics and politics to lifestyle.

Spencer Rumsey, now a freelance writer and editor, was with New York Newsday, where he was assistant news editor from 1987 to 2008, and The Long Island Press, where he was a senior editor from 2010 to this year, writing extensively about politics and policy in his blog, “Rumsey Punch.”

Irena Choi Stern is an educator/journalist. From 2004 to 2014, she was the Assistant Dean of Alumni Relations at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism as well as managing editor of the school’s alumni publications. She’s also been a contributing writer for the Westchester section of The New York Times.

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