

Silurian News

Published by The Silurians Press Club, an organization of veteran New York City journalists founded in 1924

Live and In-Person!

THE SILURIANS
PRESS CLUB
AWARDS DINNER

National Arts Club

June 15, 2022

Cocktails 6 PM

Dinner 7 PM

JUNE 2022

Honoring the Best of the Best

BY JACK DEACY
AWARDS CHAIR

A powerful 18-month long investigation by Newsday into policing on Long Island that uncovered abusive treatment of detainees by law enforcement and discrimination against black applicants for police jobs, and an incisive New York Times series that reported how the pandemic has devastated the New York City economy, were both awarded the President's Choice Medallion, the top prize in the Silurian Press Club's 77th annual Excellence in Journalism Awards.

The Times led this year's winners with six first place Medallions winning the President's Choice Award and awards for Breaking News Reporting, Investigative Reporting, Arts and Culture Reporting, Editorials, Commentary and Public Service, People Profiles and Feature Photography. Newsday was close behind with five winning Medallions, capturing The President's Choice Award, and awards for Business and Financial Reporting, Breaking News Photography, Sports Photography and TV Feature News.

But far smaller and younger news outlets performed nimbly in the Silurians contest as well. Type Investigations, a nonprofit news-

room dedicated to independent investigative journalism, won two Medallions, one for Feature News Reporting, the other for Science and Health Reporting. THE CITY, another online nonprofit news site, won the Medallion for Minority Affairs Reporting. In the remaining categories, Fortune magazine won for Environmental Reporting, ESPN for Sports Reporting and Commentary, WABC-TV for TV Breaking News and 1010 WINS Radio for Radio Breaking News.

Runners-up in each of the prize categories were honored with Merit awards. The Times won five, Newsday and THE CITY won three and Streetblogs NYC, a nonprofit news website, won two. The New Yorker, The Record/northjersey.com, Type Investigations, Gothamist/WNYC, Foreign Policy, CUNY's Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism, the USA Today network, City Limits and the News 12 Network each won a Merit award.

The Medallion and Merit awards will be presented at a dinner Wednesday, June 15, at the National Arts Club. Silurian Press club president Michael Serrill announced that, for the first time since 2019, when the Covid-19 pandemic emerged, the awards ceremony would be held live in-person rather than streamed virtually by Zoom.

The Silurians Press Club, established in 1924 as The Society of the Silurians, is an organization of more than 300 veteran and retired New York journalists. Early members included William Randolph Hearst, Lincoln Steffens and Nobel Prize winner John Steinbeck. In addition to sponsoring the Excellence in Journalism awards annually since 1945, the Silurians host monthly luncheons featuring prominent speakers and also provide educational grants for local journalism students and relief for journalists in financial trouble.

Following the police killing of George Floyd, Newsday decided to take a close look into whether police on Long Island were conducting themselves responsibly and treating people fairly, whatever their race. The investigation by Newsday reporters James Baumbach, Paul LaRocco, Sandra Peddie and David Schwartz, and video producer Jeff Basinger, focused on the police forces of Nassau and Suffolk Counties, two of the country's largest suburban counties.

The judges that honored Newsday with a President's Choice Medallion found that the newspaper's shoe-leather reporting and data and document mining revealed a culture of police secrecy that downplayed how members of both forces had wrongfully subjected Long Islanders to losses of liberty and serious injury and death, without meaningful consequences for the officers involved. "Policing On LI", as the series of reports was titled, also documented evidence that both departments systematically engaged in employment practices that limited the number of Blacks and other minorities hired. The investigation found that since 2012, the two departments together had hired just 67 Black officers out of a pool of 6,539 Black applicants.

Like departments across New York State, the Nassau and Suffolk forces have monitored themselves for almost a half century under a law that sealed virtually all records related to police internal discipline. Despite



The Medallion for Photography, Breaking News, went to Steve Pfof of Newsday for "A Father and Son Reunion." Pfof's entry depicts the moment on Feb. 9, 2021, when Sukhdev Singh (left) was reunited with his father, Balbir, at his New Hyde Park home after learning he could stay with his family on Long Island. He had been held for eight months by U.S. Immigration officials and threatened with deportation to his native India. The challenge for the photographer was to show the emotion coursing through both men even though they were wearing masks. Pfof did it by focusing on the son's hands intensely gripping his father's shoulder and arm, and positioning his camera so that their shining eyes remained visible. A caption wasn't necessary to inform the viewer that this was no casual embrace.

the repeal of that law and new legislation mandating the public disclosure of police disciplinary records, both Long Island departments responded to Newsday Freedom of Information law requests with recalcitrance or outright rejections, forcing Newsday to file lawsuits aimed at establishing the public's right to know. The suits are pending.

The investigative team scoured court files, obtained confidential documents, burrowed through the limited information produced by the departments, assembled accounts of victims and witnesses, gathered videos recorded by private security cameras, and solicited the judgments of criminal

justice experts. Newsday published seven case histories of wrongful conduct by police officers, the repercussions they experienced and the harms they inflicted, including permanent brain damage in one case, intestinal disabilities in another and the lasting trauma of being shackled in an isolated jail cell for a week.

A partnership with USA Today produced one of those case histories, the murder of a 24-year-old woman named Jo'Anna Bird. The investigation detailed how more than a dozen Nassau officers enabled an obsessed former boyfriend to torment the mother of

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Newsday photographer Thomas A. Ferrara won the Medallion for Sports Photography with this image of Garden City High School midfielder Ian Bailey heading the ball in a Nassau County semi-final soccer match against Mineola High School.

Cartoonist Sorel: Becoming the Artist He Hoped to Become

BY DAVID MARGOLICK

Early on in his profusely illustrious career, Edward Sorel neatly captured in a semi-autobiographical cartoon strip — it contains nine separate self-portraits — a brilliant artist's eternal dilemma.

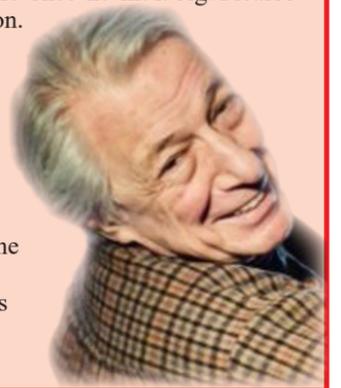
In it, he ponders why so many of the painters he so admires were schmucks away from the canvas. Rembrandt was a deadbeat and embezzled from his own son. Degas was an anti-Semite. Matisse looked sweet but dumped his wife once he hit it big. Picasso abandoned his friends during the Occupation. And on and on.

"Let's face it ... I'll never be a great artist," he finally concludes. "I'm just too nice a guy."

Forty years or so have passed since Sorel drew that cartoon for the Nation. And in all that time, his work has appeared, and continues to appear, in an astonishing array of publications — everything from the New Yorker, the Atlantic, Vanity Fair, and the New York Times Book Review to Screw. And in various public places, including the walls of the Waverly Inn.

Asked during his virtual appearance before the Silurians on February 16 where on that spectrum — from master to

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President's Report

Hail & Farewell

Dear Silurians,

Our June 15 awards dinner, which you may be attending at this moment, marks the end of my strange yet fulfilling two years as President of the Silurians Press Club. When I took over from the esteemed David Andelman in June 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic had already been in full flower for six months. We had moved our luncheons and the awards dinner to Zoom, and the very character of the club had been altered, really for the first time since it was founded in 1924 — just a few years after the last global pandemic. No more hugs and cheek kisses for present or former colleagues. No more schmoozing around the lunch or dinner table. Just flickering images on the computer screen.

Our awards dinner at the National Arts Club is our third attempt to move beyond the strictures of the mighty virus and re-establish our in-person presence. Our first attempt, a Lifetime Achievement dinner honoring ex-Times photographer Chester Higgins (our newest Board of Governors member) was a big success. Our second, a May luncheon, attracted only 50 or so of you, as older members continued to exercise extreme caution in the face of a new surge of the disease.

Yet despite the difficulty of maintaining our usual routines, most of you remained loyal. Our membership, after an initial dip, remains at about 275, not far from the 300-plus we boasted at our peak. And our finances have remained solid and will remain so — in part due to generous bequests from the late member Rosalind Massow and her husband Naf-tali. We will use some of that money to establish a Rosalind Massow Scholarship for promising young journalists-to-be.

As we try to regenerate after Covid, nothing is more important than the Excellence in Journalism awards we have given for superior local reporting since 1945 and that take up most of this issue of Silurian News. Plaudits to Awards chairman Jack Deacy for organizing the applications and judging of the contest this year and for the past several years. It is a lot of work and Jack, with help from Ben Long and others, has handled it all with diligence and aplomb.

There are 17 awards categories this year that Jack will get to deliver, plus two President's Choice awards. I am proud to bestow the President's Choice awards on The New York Times, for a compelling series of stories, graphics and videos on the huge economic impact the Covid-19 virus has had on the New York City region, and Newsday, for its shocking series disclosing abuses by the Nassau and Suffolk county police departments.

The Times' series, anchored by Nicole Hong, Matthew Haag and Patrick McGeehan, looked at Covid's damage from up, down and all around. They wrote about how remote work would change everything from pizza prices to office rents to traffic patterns, then took a close look at how one building — the Empire State Building — would be impacted. When the building's owner wouldn't cooperate, they contacted dozens of tenants to get their take on how Covid had changed, well, everything.

The Newsday series was an eye-opener. Even as the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis was inspiring a virtual anti-police uprising around the country by citizens of every background, Newsday's reporting, anchored by James Baumbach, Paul LaRocco, Sandra Peddie and David Schwartz and video producer Jeff Basinger, found in Nassau and Suffolk a long



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two before fatally stabbing her. Police were recruiting the boyfriend as an informant.

Punishment in most of the cases of abuse was strikingly light. In the Jo'Anna Bird case, the department deducted four hours worth of pay from the detective deemed most culpable. Today, he leads the Nassau Police Department's burglary squad.

The other President's Choice Medallion went to the members of the Times Metro Desk's economic team: reporters Nicole Hong, Matthew Haag and Patrick McGeehan. They produced a series of well researched articles which outlined how the pandemic had devastated the city's economy and reshaped it, and they explored the economic prospects for the city's future. Around the one year anniversary of the pandemic, the reporters took the first in-depth look at the future of remote work and its implications for the Manhattan economy.

To narrow the scope, they reported what the pandemic had done to the city's most iconic office tower — the Empire State Building. When the developer decided not to cooperate, the reporters made a painstaking and time consuming effort to reach as many tenants as possible, resulting in a stunning piece of interactive journalism. The team also focused on how the steep decline of foreign tourists had battered Manhattan's Soho and had erased Lower Manhattan's financial rebound in the 20 years after the 9/11 attack.

The reporters took an exhaustive look at the future of outdoor dining in New York, one of the more promising developments during the pandemic. And as inflation, partly attributed to the effects of the pandemic, took hold, their reporting showed its negative impact on a uniquely New York phenomenon — the dollar-a-slice pizza industry.

The judging panel remarked that "these stories are examples of the kind of deep reporting and smart and elegant writing and insightful contextual analysis that helped readers understand the economic fallout from the biggest public health crisis of the last century."

The resignation of Governor Andrew Cuomo was the biggest local political story of the year and its coverage resulted in Medallions and Merit awards for breaking news.

When Cuomo resigned, 10 days after the release of a damning report by the state attorney general, the Times formulated a coverage plan that endeavored to capture the enormity of his decision, how it came about, and the political aftermath that would pave the way for the state's first female Governor. Ten Times reporters contributed to this coverage including Luis Ferre-Sadurni, J. David Goodman, Katie Glueck, Matt Flegenheimer, Maggie Haberman, William K. Rashbaum, Danny Hakim, Shane Goldmacher, Dana Rubenstein and Jeffrey C. Mays.

The runner up Merit Award went to a team of staff reporters for THE CITY for their coverage of Cuomo's resignation. On a day that shook the state, THE CITY captured the historic turn of events while calmly offering insight into Cuomo's legacy and the long wake of his departure in disgrace.

In the Feature News reporting category, Saki Knafo of Type Investigations, working in cooperation with The New Yorker, won a Medallion for what judges described as a solid and thorough exploration of the obstacles to good relations between the cops and the neighborhoods they patrol.

David Brand of City Limits captured a Merit Award for explaining how the pandemic worsened what was always a hard road for homeless New Yorkers with health problems to obtain permanent housing.

"Profiting Off The Homeless" by Amy Julia Harris of the Times uncovered hidden aspects of New York City's huge system to house the homeless, gaining the Medallion for Investigative Reporting. Diligent document digging and numerous interviews by Harris revealed pervasive profiteering and



Desiree Rios spent four months following an undocumented immigrant and her family. Her sensitive photos showed a picture of love and sheer survival. For her photographs in the New York Times Magazine, Rios won the Medallion for Feature Photography.

conflicts of interest involving some of the city's most powerful and politically connected landlords.

Jesse Coburn of Streetsblog NYC won an investigative Merit for his article "Ignored, Dismissed," a first-of-its-kind analysis of city data on more than 26 million reports to the city's 311 complaint line about driver misconduct. The article revealed that the NYPD closes thousands of such reports impossibly fast each year and that officers routinely submit false official responses to complaints.

The federal government's Economic Injury Disaster Loan program was supposed to help small businesses cope with the pandemic. But as James T. Madore's dogged

reporting for Newsday found, the money was often going to fraudsters. He uncovered shocking examples of sloppy or even non-existent oversight of the program run by the U.S. Small Business Administration. Eventually a top federal prosecutor labeled the loans "catnip for criminals."

For his work, Madore won the Medallion for Business and Financial Reporting. There were two Merit Awards in this category, one to Jean Rimbach, Albert Koloff and Scott Fallons for their reports in the The Record/northjersey.com that many of New Jersey's private colleges and universities were in financial distress. Susan Antilla's "The Dangers of Working While Black on Wall Street" for Type Investigations, a project conducted in collaboration with The Nation, won the other Merit Award.

Liz Donovan and Muriel Alarcon of Type Investigations shared the Medallion for Science and Health Reporting for their poignant and persuasive exposé of the exploitation of workers in the burgeoning home health care industry. Their exhaustive research, conducted during their year long tenure as postgraduate fellows at Columbia University Investigations' Global Migration Project, also documented the failure of federal and local officials to enforce labor laws that should have protected the workers. Newsday's Faith Jessie, Alejandra Villa Loarca, Jeff Basinger and Arthur Mochi won a Merit Award for "Back Inside the Red Zone", their account of how a resurgence of the Delta variant almost overwhelmed the medical staff at Mount Sinai South Nassau Hospital in 2021.

Reporters Jeffrey Rothfeder and Christopher Maag of Fortune magazine won the Medallion for Environmental Reporting for their article, "Nuclear Down." This narrative, which judges described as deeply reported and masterfully crafted, brought fresh insight, new clarity, rich historical perspective and renewed public attention to bear on a broad sweep of issues surrounding the ongoing decommissioning of the nation's

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He Bombed the Nazis, Outwitted the Soviets and Modernized Christmas



The Medallion winner in the People Profiles category is Laurie Gwen Shapiro of The New York Times for her portrayal of Si Spiegel, a man whose capacity for exceptionally creative thinking earned him dual legacies:

First, as a heroic bomber pilot who flew dozens of dangerous missions over Nazi Germany during WWII.

Then, as the man who became famous as "The King of the Artificial Christmas Tree."

An excerpt from the profile:

As part of the Allied raid on Berlin, his bomber had dropped its payload over the German capital, but he'd been hit with flak and would almost certainly not make it back to the base in England. No pilot wanted to get shot down over Nazi Germany, especially not a Jewish pilot.

Mr. Spiegel had essentially bluffed his way into the cockpit as a skinny teenager from Greenwich Village, trusting he'd figure it out as he went. This was no different.

He told his crew they were headed for Poland; they could get their parachutes ready, but were not to bail out unless he gave the order. They would attempt an emergency landing.

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aged-out nuclear power plants.

The judging panel awarded two Merit Awards, one for “Can the Nation Solve its Nuclear Waste Problem?” by Adrian Heden and Thomas C. Zambito for the USA Today Network, and Elizabeth Kim’s report for Gothamist/WNYC on why one street in Queens has flooded for years.

Extensively researched, tellingly detailed and stylishly written, articles by Michael Paulson of The New York Times captured the human toll of Broadway’s closing during the pandemic and the joys of its reopening and won him the Medallion for Arts and Culture Reporting.

The judges divided the Merit Awards in the arts category between Sophie Haigney’s “The Challenge Of Making an Archive of the Climate Crisis” for The New Yorker and J. Alex Tarquinio’s “Josephine Baker: First American to Enter France’s Pantheon” for Foreign Policy magazine.

The story behind a black-and-white photograph taken on April 18, 1946 in Jersey City earned the Medallion for Sports Reporting and Commentary for William Weinbaum, a producer and digital journalist at ESPN. The photo shows Jackie Robinson crossing home plate after hitting a home run and being greeted with a welcoming handshake from a white ball player. Weinbaum’s words vividly brought the photograph to life.

Two Times journalists won Merit Awards in this category, Amanda Fairbanks for “Defying a Shock to the System,” a portrait of a woman who lunges into the frigid Atlantic to cope with her inexpressible grief, and Sam Anderson’s profile, “Kevin Durant and (Possibly)The Greatest Basketball Team of All Time” for the New York Times Magazine.

Although the Rikers Island jail complex has long had a reputation for shoddy treatment of detainees, reporters Jan Ransom and Jonah Bromwich of the Times spotlighted the stunning degree of routine dysfunction that most residents of the city had not been aware of and captured the Medallion for Editorials, Commentary and Public Service. The two reporters uncovered evidence that, despite Rikers Island costing more than any other jail complex in America — more than \$400,000 per inmate per year — there were not enough guards to keep order. As a result, inmates roamed the hallways, slashed and stabbed other inmates, set fires, even answered guards’ telephones. Whole sections within the prison were ruled by gangs and some inmates were not fed or administered essential medications.

The Times stories led City Council members, state lawmakers and members of Congress to demand explanations for the inhumane treatment of inmates.

Greg B. Smith of THE CITY garnered a Merit Award for his powerful exposé of how the New York City Housing Authority had failed to report cases of lead poisoning in its buildings, which house more than 400,000 New Yorkers.

In winning the Medallion for People Profiles, Laurie Gwen Shapiro of the Times sketched a colorful portrait of Si Spiegel, now 97, who flew an astonishing 35 successful bombing missions during World War II, returned home to face anti-Semitism and become a multimillionaire by inventing the artificial Christmas tree. Alex Vadukul’s profiles of New Yorkers for the Times won a Merit Award as did Simi Horwitz, who for Streetsblog NYC wrote “The Ultimate Obit: The Real Unabridged, Authorized Warts-and-All Saga of Brooklyn Trolley King Bob Diamond.”

In a series of stories, THE CITY news site revealed that at the height of the pandemic in January 2021, when vaccines first became available, members of minority communities hardest hit by the virus, many of them essential workers, had difficulty getting vaccine shots. When THE CITY exposed the situation, Governor Cuomo and city officials took action to correct the problem. For this, reporters Josefa Velasquez, Ann Choi, Will Welch and Claudia Irizarry Aponte won the Medallion for Minority Affairs Reporting.

Seven student reporters at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY won a Merit Award in the same category for “On The Waterfront,” their deeply researched reports on the growing middle and upper class developments planned for the largely impoverished Hunts Point and Mott Haven sections of the Bronx.

Newsday photographer Steve Pfost won the Medallion for Breaking News Photography for his “A Reunion of a Father and Son.” His image captured the moving moment when Sukhdev Singh, who was released from Immigration custody, hugged his father Balbir, after arriving at his New Hyde Park home. Singh, who had spent months in immigration jail under threat of deportation to India, was allowed to live with his Long Island family while his legal case winds through the courts.

Another Newsday photographer, J. Conrad Williams, Jr., added a Merit Award for his “A Hero’s Farewell,” which documented the funeral service of Nassau County Police Officer Matthew Perlungher, who died on Aug. 4, 2021 from brain cancer. His illness was linked to the toxic dust and air he was exposed to following the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center.

Photographer Desiree Rios spent four months following an undocumented immigrant who lost her job at the beginning of the pandemic. Not eligible for government assistance, the woman struggled to feed and find housing for her family in the South Bronx. Through sensitive photos and evocative prose, Rios created a picture of love and devotion, resourcefulness and sheer survival, a truly eye-opening and compelling feature. For her photographs in the New York Times Magazine, Rios won the Medallion for Feature Photography.

The Times made a clean sweep of the category with two Merit Awards, one for the 15 freelance photographers who spent the month of May 2021 documenting how New Yorkers were beginning to emerge socially from the isolation of the pandemic. The other Merit Award was for “These 115 Workers Helped Keep New York Alive During Its Darkest Months” in the New York Times

Bridging the Divide Between the Police and the Policed

Excerpt from Saki Knafo’s article for *Type Investigations* and *The New Yorker* on tensions between the police and the policed, for which he was awarded the Medallion for Feature News:

Brownsville is one of the poorest neighborhoods in New York. When the coronavirus pandemic began, the unemployment rate there was five times higher than the city average. Many residents had jobs that exposed them to infection. Dozens of public-housing tenants died in their apartments. As the weather warmed, people throughout the city began gathering in crowds and drinking outdoors. (Alicka) Ampry-Samuel urged (Craig) Edelman to give Brownsville residents some space. “So many people lost their mothers and fathers and sisters,” she told me. “This was not the time to be enforcing low-level offenses.” She recalled urging Edelman, “Just ignore the Hennessy bottle.”

According to Ampry-Samuel, Edelman replied that public alcohol consumption was against the law, and that if it went unenforced the drinking could lead to shooting. “He could not let anything lie,” Ampry-Samuel said. By early May, the Brooklyn District Attorney’s office reported that forty people had been



arrested in Brooklyn for social-distancing violations; thirty-five of them were Black, and nearly half the arrests took place in the Seven-Three. Eric Gonzalez, the District Attorney, released a statement warning that the arrests would undermine “trust in our criminal justice system.”

That month, Ampry-Samuel stopped by a housing complex to hand out masks and talk to residents about how to stay safe. Just as she was getting ready to leave, a police car pulled up. Edelman stepped out onto the street. “You could feel the tension as soon as he got out of the car.”

Magazine, portraits of workers by photographer Todd Heisler accompanied by profiles written by David Gonzalez.

Newsday photographer Thomas A. Ferrara won the Medallion for Sports Photography for his photo, “Using His Head.” It captured the exciting moment when Ian Bailey, a star midfielder for Garden City High School, fought for control by heading the ball in a Nassau County semi-final soccer match against Mineola High School. Newsday’s J. Conrad Williams, Jr. won the Merit Award for “Wave Runners,” his photo of a surfer on his way to the water.

Among the television awards, WABC TV’s Eyewitness News Team won the TV Breaking News Medallion for its special coverage of the resignation of Governor Andrew Cuomo. The coverage showcased how quickly a team of experienced, knowledgeable correspondents and anchors can assemble a comprehensive picture of a significant

breaking story.

Newsday’s video documentary staff combined with its news staff to produce a moving documentary that won the Medallion for TV Feature News. Relatives of Jo’Anna Bird were filmed describing how she was pursued and ultimately murdered by a harassing former boyfriend whose repeated assaults were downplayed by police. The documentary explained how neglect and bad policing by the Suffolk County force contributed to her death.

Walt Kane, Anthony Cocco and Karin Attonito won a Merit Award for their excellent “Justice Denied” feature for the News 12 Network. They reported that, for decades, a powerful New Jersey sheriff raped children in the county’s youth shelter. County officials were made aware of the abuse and chose to do nothing. The county is still fighting to ensure the dark chapter in its history never comes to light.

Finally, WINS 1010’s broadcast and reporting staff won the Medallion for Radio Breaking News for their comprehensive round-the-clock coverage of Storm Ida and the massive flooding and damage it inflicted on the metropolitan area.

Cuomo Resigns

The Medallion for Breaking News went to Luis Ferre-Sadurni and J. David Goodman for their New York Times story on Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s resignation, Aug. 10, 2021. The following is an excerpt:

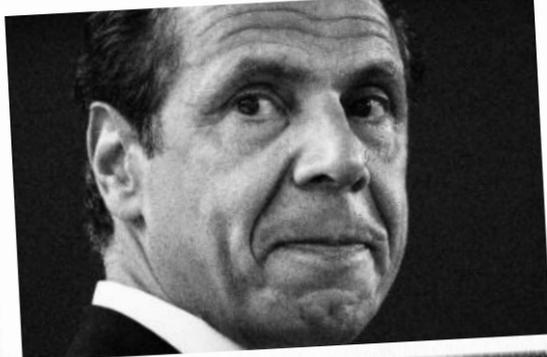
From the start, Mr. Cuomo’s tenure in office was a study in vivid contrasts, marked by a head-spinning scale of accomplishment — the passage of marriage equality, raising the minimum wage, the construction of bridges and train stations — and political scandals, such as his decision to shut down a panel investigating public corruption before its work was completed.

His demise stunned Albany, where Mr. Cuomo had governed with an outsize presence for more than a decade, wielding the State Capitol’s levers of power with deft and often brutal skill, both alienating allies and keeping them in check. Most politicians — Democrats and Republicans — welcomed Mr. Cuomo’s decision and offered Ms. Hochul their support. Few thanked Mr. Cuomo for his years of service. Some could barely contain their glee.

“It was past time for Andrew Cuomo to resign, and it’s for the good of all New York,” said Mayor Bill de Blasio, who has been repeatedly attacked and disparaged by Mr. Cuomo over the years.

Mr. Biden took a different tone, saying he respected the governor’s decision to resign and praising his accomplishments. “I thought he’s done a hell of a job,” he said, mentioning infrastructure, voter access and “a range of things.”

“That’s why it’s so sad,” Mr. Biden added.



Broadway Comes Back From its Longest Intermission

The Medallion for Arts & Culture Reporting went to Michael Paulson for his three-part series in *The New York Times*, capturing the complicated, costly challenge of reopening Broadway after the pandemic forced all 41 theaters to go dark. Here is an excerpt:

Broadway is back. Or so it hopes. Broadway’s reopening is a high-stakes gamble that theater lovers, culture vultures and screen-weary adventurers are ready to return—vaccinated and masked—to these storied sanctuaries of spectacle and storytelling. But it comes at a time of uncertainty.

Up and down Broadway, where theaters have been gathering dust since they were forced to close on March 12, 2020, design teams and stage crews have been burnishing dirty fixtures, replacing dead batteries, re-fireproofing safety cloths, and testing automated devices, trying to make sure everything still functions.

As hundreds of performers return to Broadway, among the first tasks for many is reconditioning their bodies, their voices, and their minds.

The act of re-rehearsing every Broadway show, first in studios and then in theaters, has proved costly—\$1.4 million to \$4 million per show.

The industry’s recovery is enormously important to New York City, for symbolic as well as economic reasons.



Silurians Dress Club

2022 SILURIAN MEDALLION AND MERIT AWARD WINNERS

PRESIDENT'S CHOICE AWARD: "The Future of the New York City Economy"

By Nicole Hong, Matthew Haag and Patrick McGeehan
The New York Times

PRESIDENT'S CHOICE AWARDS: "Policing On LI"

By James Baumbach, Paul LaRocca, Sandra Peddie, David Schwartz and Jeff Basinger, Newsday

BREAKING NEWS REPORTING

Medallion: "Coverage of Governor Andrew Cuomo's Resignation" By Metro Staff Reporters, The New York Times
Merit: "Coverage of Governor Andrew Cuomo's Resignation" By Staff Reporters THE CITY

FEATURE NEWS REPORTING

Medallion: "Bridging the Divide Between the Police and the Policed" By Saki Knafo, Type Investigations (With The New Yorker)
Merit: "Pandemic Worsens Hard Road to Housing for Homeless New Yorkers With Health Needs" By David Brand, City Limits

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

Medallion: "Profiting Off the Homeless" By Amy Julia Harris, The New York Times
Merit: "Ignored, Dismissed" By Jesse Coburn, Streetsblog NYC

BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL REPORTING

Medallion: "Fraud Costing Billions" By James T. Madore, Newsday
Merit: "The Precarious Financial Situations of New Jersey's Colleges and Universities" By Jean Rimbach, Albert Koloff and Scott Fallon, The Record/northjersey.com
Merit: "The Dangers of Working While Black on Wall Street" By Susan Antilla, Type Investigations (With The Nation)

SCIENCE & HEALTH REPORTING

Medallion: "Low Pay, Loneliness and a Booming Industry" By Liz Donovan and Muriel Alarcón, Type Investigations (With The New York Times and The Columbia University Journalism Investigations' Global Migration Project.)
Merit: "Back Inside the Red Zone" By Faith Jessie, Reporter; with Alejandra Villa Loarca, Photographer; Jeffrey Basinger, Video Editor; Arthur Mochi, Producer. Newsday

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING

Medallion: "Nuclear Drawdown" By Jeffrey Rothfeder and Christopher Maag, Fortune
Merit: "Can the Nation Solve its Nuclear Waste Problem?" By Adrien Hedden and Thomas C. Zambito, The USA Today Network
Merit: "Why One Queens Block Has Flooded for Decades" By Elizabeth Kim, Gothamist and WNYC Radio

ARTS & CULTURE REPORTING

Medallion: "The Road Back To Broadway" By Michael Paulson, The New York Times
Merit: "Josephine Baker: First American to Enter France's Pantheon" By J. Alex Tarquino, Foreign Policy
Merit: "The Challenge of Making an Archive of the Climate Crisis" By Sophie Haigney, The New Yorker

SPORTS REPORTING & COMMENTARY

Medallion: "A Handshake from a White Teammate Signaled Jackie Robinson's Arrival in America's Game"
By William Weinbaum, ESPN (Undeclared, an ESPN media platform)
Merit: "Defying A Shock To The System" By Amanda M. Fairbanks, The New York Times
Merit: "Kevin Durant and (Possibly) the Greatest Basketball Team of All Time" By Sam Anderson, The New York Times Magazine

EDITORIALS, COMMENTARY & PUBLIC SERVICE

Medallion: "Dysfunction at Rikers Island" By Jan Ransom and Jonah Bromwich, The New York Times
Merit: "The Toll of the NYC Housing Authority's Lead Lies" By Greg B. Smith, THE CITY

PEOPLE PROFILES

Medallion: "He Bombed the Nazis, Outwitted the Soviets and Modernized Christmas" By Laurie Gwen Shapiro, The New York Times
Merit: "Lives of New York" By Alex Vadukul, The New York Times
Merit: "The Ultimate Obit: The Real Unabridged Authorized Warts-and-All Saga of Brooklyn Trolley King Bob Diamond" By Simi Horwitz, Streetsblog NYC

MINORITY AFFAIRS REPORTING

Medallion: "No Fair Shot at Vaccinations" By Josefa Velazquez, Ann Choi, Will Welch and Claudia Irizarry Aponte, THE CITY
Merit: "On the Waterfront" By Student Reporters of the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY Moses Bustos, Patrick Elliott, Jason Gonzalez, Griffin Kelly, Harry Parker, Natalie Peart, Connor Zaft, New York City News Service at CUNY

BREAKING NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY

Medallion: "A Father and Son Reunion" Steve Pfost, Newsday
Merit: "A Hero's Farewell" J. Conrad Williams, Jr., Newsday

FEATURE NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY

Medallion: "It's Not Enough: Living Through a Pandemic on \$100 a Week" Desiree Rios, The New York Times Magazine
Merit: "N.Y.C. Wakes Up" 15 Photographers, The New York Times Magazine
Merit: "These 115 Workers Helped Keep New York Alive During Its Darkest Months" Photos By Todd Heisler / Text by David Gonzalez, The New York Times Magazine

SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHY

Medallion: "Using His Head" Thomas A Ferrara, Newsday
Merit: "Wave Runners" J. Conrad Williams, Jr., Newsday

TV BREAKING NEWS

Medallion: "The Cuomo Resignation" WABC TV Eyewitness News Team, WABC TV News

TV FEATURE NEWS

Medallion: "He's going to kill me - Jo'Anna Bird's Story" Newsday Video Documentary and News Staffs. Producer, Writer, Reporter: Pat Dolan; Investigative Reporter, Producer: Sandra Peddie; Producers: Robert Cassidy, John Keating. Reporter: Jim Baumbach. Anchor: Faith Jessie. Newsday
Merit: "Justice Denied" Walt Kane / Karin Attonito News 12 Networks

RADIO BREAKING NEWS

Medallion: "Coverage of Storm Ida" WINS 1010 'Broadcast and Reporting Staff Anchors: Lane Bajardi, Sonia Rincon Editors: Beth Reardon, Jim Maloney, Sara Mille Reporter: Carol D'Auria Producer: Matt Blezow, Dempsey Pillot. WINS 1010 Radio

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— Heard at the Silurians' Events —

Photographer Chester Higgins Tells Dinner of his 'Front Row Seat to Society'

BY ELAINE LOUIE

Since 1969, the Silurians Press Club has given its Lifetime Achievement Award exclusively to wordsmiths of every kind. Walter Cronkite, the CBS news anchor, was the first recipient. The sports writer Red Smith won. So did Pete Hamill, Judith Crist, Mike Wallace, Frank Rich and Gay Talese.

In March, the award went for the first time to a photographer, Chester Higgins Jr., who worked for 39 years on the staff of The New York Times before retiring in 2014.

In his career at the paper, he literally “changed the institution,” as Dean Baquet, the executive editor of The New York Times, said at the annual Silurians dinner at the National Arts Club that was attended by almost 100 people.

In 1975, when Higgins was interviewed for a job at the Times by A.M. Rosenthal, then the managing editor of the paper, he told Abe — as everyone called him — exactly how he planned to work. “I told him that decency, dignity and virtuous character were lacking in the portrayal of my people in the American media,” Higgins said. “I want to change that.”

So he did. Last year’s tribute to him and his work in The New Yorker pointed out that “His eye is trained on moments of calm, locating an inherent grace, style and sublime beauty in the black everyday.”

His portrait of Amiri Baraka and Maya Angelou dancing at The Schomburg Center in Harlem captures pure joy, two brilliant artists getting down. He photographed Joyce



Chester Higgins became the first photographer to earn a Lifetime Achievement Award when he was honored by the Silurian Press Club earlier this year.

Dinkins gently straightening the tie of her husband, David Dinkins, before he left their home to be sworn in as the mayor of New York City.

Although Higgins may not be an international war photographer, he has photographed civil disobedience in New York City, like protests by Act Up, and is alert to violence. He is a product of the segregationist South. He grew up in the hamlet of New Brockton, Alabama, with a population of 1,000, of which two-thirds were white, and one-third was Black. As Higgins said in a five-minute video shown at the dinner, “My grandfather

enhanced the number of blacks who could vote, and his reward was to have his house burned down.”

What 39 years of working at the Times gave him, Higgins told the dinner guests, “was a front row seat to society.”

“I was able to not only see and experience, but to make a statement about people on all different levels — from the lowest to the highest,” he said. “That access was quite amazing and I tried to make sure that I made the most of it and produced images that were worthy of those opportunities.”

What others got from Higgins was

exceptional generosity and encouragement. Michelle Agins remembered working in Chicago in 1969 when an editor told her that she was a good photographer, but that she’d be even better when she met Chester Higgins. Twenty years later, in 1989, Agins was at the Times and was a nervous wreck as she was about to hit the city’s streets for the first time on assignment. Higgins gave her the simplest, most basic piece of advice, she said, at the dinner. “He said, ‘just be cool.’”

Higgins sends texts to his friends, urging calm and alertness during dire moments. Sandra Stevenson, a former photo editor at the Times, who is now a photo director at CNN, spoke at the dinner of how Higgins texted her a note of encouragement a week before. He knew she was watching the televised confirmation hearings of

Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, who became the first Black woman to be appointed a Supreme Court Justice, and might have been affected by how harsh and rude some Republican Senators were towards her.

Higgins knows how to manage anger. Being a Black man in the United States makes you politicized and alienated, he said. But in Africa, where he has traveled more than 40 times, he feels normalized. He says it’s cheaper than therapy. “My sense of self is never questioned,” he said.

“The deeper I go into myself, the better I understand the people in front of the camera,” Higgins said. “I accept people.”

To Cokie, With Love

BY DAVID A. ANDELMAN

For 53 years, Steve Roberts was Cokie’s biggest fan.

He was also her husband and, at times, writing partner and traveling companion. They also became, for each of them, mutual sources of ineffable inspiration.

That’s the message that comes through in the 272 pages of “Cokie: A Life Well Lived” and that was conveyed across nine time zones by her husband, Steve, to the many friends and colleagues who dialed in on Zoom for January’s lunchtime talk.

I knew from the day I met her what an extraordinary person she was.

— STEVE ROBERTS

It was a lifelong love affair — from their first meeting at their respective ages of 19 and 18, Steve a budding journalist on The Crimson at Harvard, Cokie at Wellesley. They were only rarely apart for the next five decades, hopscotching through their years together from Washington to California to Greece and back to Washington.

Steve outlined the start of Cokie’s career, from her earliest stint as a journalist, stringing for CBS News as tanks rolled through the streets of Athens in a landmark coup d’état (with Steve in Cyprus unable to return), to Cokie’s first big breaks on NPR, then ABC, dogged in those far-off days by the burden of being a woman in the man’s world of jour-

nalism. Her death, in 2019, of complications of breast cancer, cut short their half-century romance.

“I knew from the day I met her what an extraordinary person she was,” Roberts told the Silurians.

When they met during their college days, it was the 1960s, and while Steve had a golden pathway from the Harvard Crimson to the Washington bureau of The New York Times, this was not the same avenue available for a young woman, even one as talented and with as sterling a Washington pedigree as Cokie (whose parents, Hale and Lindy Boggs, were longtime members of Congress).

So, for the first years of their marriage, it was Cokie who would follow Steve as his career path took him from Washington, to Los Angeles, to Athens and back to Washington again.

From the beginning, Cokie “had an avivistic devotion to newspapers,” Steve recalled, “and an enormous talent” for journalism. She first demonstrated her gift in 1974 when Steve had flown off to Cyprus to cover the Turkish invasion for The Times, leaving Cokie behind in Athens where a Greek coup suddenly erupted. All alone, Cokie found herself in the midst of the biggest news story of the day and rose to the occasion, filing for CBS Radio, though she’d never written a radio story before in her life.

Then suddenly her parents received a phone call from the CBS Broadcast Center. Did they have a photo of Cokie? They panicked, but were quickly reassured she’d not been killed. Rather, her radio piece would be leading the CBS Evening News with Wal-



Steve and Cokie Roberts.

Image via New York Times.

ter Cronkite that evening and they needed her photo for a slide while the radio piece played.

Cokie followed Steve back to Washington, though she was reluctant to give up the life of a foreign correspondent at that point — quite aware of the deep-seated male domination of the news business. That was when she stumbled upon, many would say effectively created, the “old girl network.” When The Times’s Judy Miller suggested Cokie reach out to Nina Totenberg, that led to a job, and eventually a starring role at NPR. As Steve observed, “It was the first time I saw women be able to help each other the way men have always been able to help each other.”

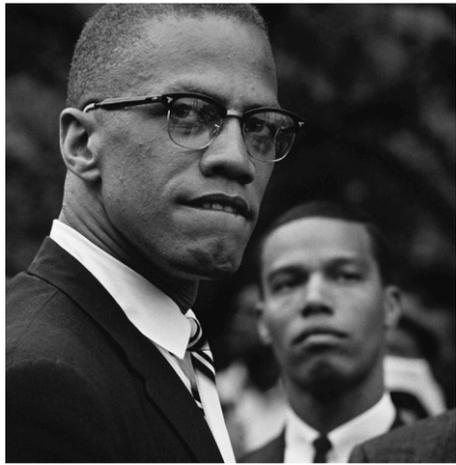
NPR in turn led to a guest panelist slot in October 1987 — essentially a tryout —

at ABC, side-by-side with Sam Donaldson, George Will and David Brinkley, three of the giants of the news business. But she pulled it off because, Steve told the Silurians, Cokie “had a special quality that you don’t teach.”

While she was waiting to go on the set that first day, Cokie was talking with the show’s young producer, Marc Burstein. “There are three things you need to know about me,” Steve quoted Cokie as telling him boldly. “I’m married to the same man for 20 years. I live in the house I grew up in, and I go to church every Sunday. And if you love those three things about me, we’re going to get along fine.”

Years later, Steve recalled, Marc told him, “The only thing that has changed in that whole introduction was the number of years you were married.”

The Morgue in the Time of Coronavirus



A 1963 image of Malcolm X and Louis X, who was later implicated in the activist's murder.

BY JEFF ROTH

Close down The Times Morgue in plague-time? Never. There were cabinets to shift, files to refile, treasures to reveal. And, of course, the daily non-digital work of helping reporters and editors.

In late March of 2020, when words came from on high to evacuate midtown, I just shrugged my shoulders and came in my usual everyday way, through the loading dock. The guards, mailroom, cleaning crew, engineers and tradesmen were all here. Toilets had to work, mail still came in and I had to water the plants on the second and fourth floors. (I felt bad for them).

No one on the railroad, only bums and nuts on Seventh up to 40th, no cars, no cops. Odd and invigorating. "So this is what the

end looks like. I think I'll go to work with the mail clerks."

In a dark and empty newsroom, I started playing YouTube trailers for the old Vincent Price and Charlton Heston flicks, "Last Man on Earth" and "The Omega Man." There was a simpatico understanding of maintaining routines for that return to normalcy

Okay, new project. I'm going to loosen up thirteen hundred too tightly packed photo file drawers because it hasn't been done in 40 years and it needs to be done. Why? For the future. 100 lbs. x 1,300 drawers = 130,000 lbs. Keep in shape and keep busy. Our "corporate clipping" files, a hundred year history of American business, need tending and re-ordering. The Morgue's books on Foreign Policy, "Wars in the Caucasus," "Britain and The Crimea," "Russia and its Colonies...." need attention.

The projects were endless and yet tactically finite. The daily work of gathering clips, books and photos for the newsroom went on as usual. But now I was scanning and emailing clips and whole books (ones not available online) to reporters stuck in their homes or vacation retreats. Since there was no-one manning the photo lab, I did my part, scanning and captioning. Continuity was the mantra. One drawer, one folder then the next, and another and the next. The unknowns being revealed. Fiat Lux! Here are a few.

1. "WE STAND CORRECTED" I was going through the clip files of Allan Jones,

the tenor of "Night at the Opera" and the song "Donkey Serenade," and there was a reference to this correction. No, Mr. Shubert [J.J. Shubert, producer and a founding brother of the Shubert theater empire] did not want his final scene of "Cyrano" to have 20 nuns dressed in pink." But we did say that.

2. Besides Albert Pinkham Ryder, "The Mahatma," Louis Eilshemius was one of America's great mystical painters. He was also a crank sending long letters to The Times, Sun and Herald proclaiming himself the world's greatest poet, painter and inventor and a prolific pamphleteer. Within his clip file are broadsides and notices of gallery shows from 1918 on which The Times' great art critic, Edward Alden Jewell, probably filed. Very rare and very special.

3. I was putting in order some of the "Subject Clippings" files when I dipped into the "Internment Camps" folders. Many gems. Japanese diplomats interned at the swanky Greenbrier Resort, German and Italian nationals rounded up and interned, and this terrible episode in Italy from May, 1946. Jewish Communists and Ukrainian Anti-Communists (Vlasov Brigade men who fought for the Reich) are interned in the same camp. What could go wrong? The Communists raise the red flag for May Day, a fight breaks out and one of the Jews is killed and more are wounded. The Ukrainians are removed without arrests and the Jews protest and the Italian guards shoot and kill another Jew and wound others. A completely forgot-

ten report that today would loom extra-large and yet, in 1946, it was one of too many broken-world tales.

4. On one of those Covid-quiet afternoons in the Morgue, I had a hankering to look through the byline folders of one of our best, Bill Farrell, a legendary and beloved beat reporter, foreign correspondent, columnist and editor. One clip, ink-stamped in red stood out. "Killed First Edition." It was a sizeable story with a photo attached about a Grand Central Terminal "Redcap" who ministers to all in between his shift times. Since only the "Late City" is the microfilmed record, "Early Editions" are lost in the ether. They only exist in the clip files. Of course, I was curious as to what ran in the "Second." Alas, a neutered story sans byline and photo. Only our deceased copy editors, now getting out those editions, as Mike Berger once wrote, "in asbestos or samite and gold" would know why.

5. While shifting the thirteen hundred drawers of photos, I spent time organizing Malcolm X's folders, contact sheets and negatives. One strip of negatives is almost Shakespearean in its gloss of impending doom. It's a Nation of Islam rally, Lenox and 115th St on June 26th, 1963. There's Malcolm X, foreground with an intense gaze and behind him is "Louis X," better known as Louis Farrakhan with the icy stare of a man implicated by speech (he has admitted at least that) and, some say, action (never charged) in Malcolm's murder in 1965.

Cartoonist Edward Sorel drawing people together with works of heart

Continued from Page 1

— he'd position himself, Sorel replied with his twin trademarks: honesty and astringency.

"Well, I certainly don't place myself very high in the nice guy category," he said. "I've done selfish things in my life. But for the 20th Century and even for the 21st, I'd rate myself very highly as a cartoonist, as a caricaturist. I did become the artist I hoped to become."

Sorel, 93, jokes that he's now famous enough to be modest. But leafing through his new book, "Profusely Illustrated: A Memoir," and beholding the extraordinary range of figures he's honored (some) and skewered (far more) in the past seven decades, it's clear that in his case, modesty is simply inapt. By any standard he's one

of the most important illustrators of his era, someone who, along with David Levine, Al Hirschfeld, and a handful of others, helped resurrect and preserve a cherished tradition of naturalistic, exaggerated portraiture dating back to 19th Century France. "He is our Daumier, our Thomas Nast," E.L. Doctorow once said of him.

But success, he told the Silurians, did not come easily — first he had to unlearn everything he'd been taught in art school — or early. "I was in my late 40s before I did drawings I like," he said. "It wasn't until the 90s that I became the artist that I wanted to become." And with the slow death of print journalism, he said, there's no way he could make it today. "The kind of work I do already looks kind of 19th Century," he said. Sorel writes that he did the book for

two reasons: first, to spare at least a few of his works from the oblivion that awaits most protest art and magazine work, and second, to document how, in his own mind, 12 consecutive Presidents helped lead to the "racist thug" who occupied the White House until January 20, 2021.

Oddly enough, for someone who thrived on Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, Sorel did not go after Donald Trump very often

— for a variety of reasons. There was despair — a lifelong belief that in the end, work like his really doesn't help. And the belief that Trump was too dangerous to be funny. And a feeling that his style was insufficiently savage — that only a German Expressionist, like George Grosz or Otto Dix, would be up to the task.

And partly, it was that someone else — Barry Blitt of the New Yorker — was already on the case. Blitt's Trump covers for the magazine were so brilliant, Sorel said, that he stopped doing them himself. "I couldn't compete with him," he said. "I didn't know how to be funny about Trump. I couldn't understand ... I mean ... he was so transparently a fraud."

And, finally, it was partly because he was too busy working on "Mary Astor's Purple Diary," his illustrated chronicle of a Hollywood starlet's sex scandal in the 1930s that he called "my first grownup book." "I wasn't going to sacrifice that book to Trump," he explained. "It was pure selfishness on my part."

"I saw her when I was ten years old in 'The Prisoner of Zenda' and I just couldn't believe anybody could be that beautiful," he said of Astor. He described the book as "a biography written by a poor, lovesick old man." But in the musical based on it now

in the works, he added, he and Mary Astor live happily ever after.

Nixon, whom he called "every cartoonist's joy," was his favorite target. "The most untalented caricaturist could do Richard Nixon," he said. "He was too easy. And he was so despicable." But "Profusely Illustrated" is stuffed with stars as well as scoundrels. The drawing he's proudest of is actually one of Edward



Sorel's take on Citizen Kane appeared as part of a series of film caricatures in Esquire Magazine.

G. Robinson. "If I were a pharaoh, I'd ask to have it buried with me," he wrote in the book.

Sorel, who was born and grew up in the Bronx, started drawing early. "I was a very promising nine-year-old," he said. But at the High School of Music and Art and Cooper Union, he ran headlong into the prevailing artistic fashions of the day, abstraction and Cubism. It took him years, he said, to recapture his original instincts and learn how to draw. He confessed to stealing from a lot of artists — sometimes, quite literally — until he'd honed his craft.

But never, he said, did he let himself believe his art actually changed minds. "I always knew that I couldn't make a difference," he said. "People like Jules Feiffer and I know that nobody's going to listen to us. The only comfort the political cartoonist has is that it reassures the people out there who think exactly the way he does that they are not alone."

He then described a cartoon he'd done for Horizon magazine of Barry Goldwater, sitting backwards on a horse and clad in armor Attila the Hun might have worn. "I thought it was devastating," he recalled. But after it ran, he learned Goldwater had inquired whether he'd sell him the original. He wouldn't.

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NOTABLE MOMENTS FROM OUR REPORTERS' NOTEBOOKS



Veteran broadcaster Bill Diehl has been covering entertainment news since the mid-1980s. In his latest book, "50 Years of Celebrity Chatter (Or The Time I Interviewed a Porn Star Naked.*)" he recounts conversations with stars including l-r Ed Asner, Tom Hanks, Marilyn Chambers, Alan Alda, Bernadette Peters and Jane Fonda.

50 Years Turned On, Tuned In To Hollywood

BY BILL DIEHL

My career as ABC Radio's chief entertainment correspondent was accidental.

I had been a newscaster on the network beginning in 1971, covering the whole smorgasbord of news stories. But in 1982, I was sent to Los Angeles to cover the Academy Awards. Why me? Someone noticed that I had been doing occasional celebrity interviews for a number of years, and so launched my long career leaving the news business for show business.

I wrote a book about my radio career in 2017 — "Stay Tuned: My Life Behind the Mic." Then a few years later, I was rummaging through a closet and found a stash of cassettes with old interviews of prominent entertainers. A tech colleague at ABC retrieved some even older reel-to-reel tapes that had been gathering dust in a basement storage room on West 66th Street, their quality still intact. Thus was born my recent book, "50 Years of Celebrity Chatter (Or The Time I Interviewed a Porn Star Naked.*)"

MARILYN CHAMBERS

It was the noted porn star, Marilyn Chambers, who was naked — not me. Chambers had recently turned up as the (fully dressed) young woman holding a baby on an Ivory Snow box. Now she was using that fact in a (anything-but-fully-dressed) press conference in order to gain some attention for her new career as a porn star.

It was at the Pussycat Cinema in Times Square in 1973 where I and a bunch of other eager reporters did what for me was a rather "historic" interview. A Reuters photographer took a photo of me with Chambers. Fast forward a few years and I got to interview Chambers again, this time fully clothed, as she tried to launch a mainstream acting career. But her porn days, notably 1972's "Behind the Green Door," kept following her, and she finally returned to the adult film industry.

TOM HANKS

Tom Hanks talked about his first film role called "He Knows You're Alone." "It was what they called a knife rack movie. A woman would be washing dishes and noticed a knife was missing from the rack next to the sink." I told Hanks he was often cast in roles because he had that boy-next-door look. "Yeah," he said "but sometimes the boy next door is Ted Bundy."

BERNADETTE PETERS

In my interview with Bernadette Peters, I reminded her of a song she had sung on Saturday Night Live called "When You're Making Love Alone." Peters said the NBC censors were worried, feeling it might not be appropriate because it could be interpreted as being about masturbation. Finally, they relented and she sang it.

Peters once posed for Alberto Vargas, the famed pin-up illustrator for Esquire and Playboy. "He was 84, but I asked him to do a Vargas Girl portrait of me," she told me. It became the cover for a 1981 album.

DICK CAVETT

Dick Cavett has been described as The Thinking Man's Johnny Carson. But Cavett

also had a lot of Jack Paar in him. Paar hosted the Tonight Show in the late 50's and early 60's when Cavett was honing his comedy chops. Cavett told me he went to NBC and found Paar walking down the hall. "I've got some jokes for you," he said. Paar said

ED ASNER

Ed Asner famous for playing Lou Grant on "Mary Tyler Moore," told me "I think acting for me was therapy. I wasn't crazy about the person I was and when I started acting, I thought I could become somebody I liked better."

There's a rumor they thought of Cary Grant to star? "Yeah, but totally unrealistic. The budget wouldn't have paid for Grant's airfare."

KATHRYN CROSBY

Bing Crosby's last wife told me: "Bing had a thing for 19-year-olds." When they were dating, Bing was more than 30 years her senior. Kathryn said her parents had said "Bing, he's just a baby." But Kathryn Crosby told me "I was a mature 19-year-old." Bing wanted her to be a stay-at-home mother. "When I decided to do some acting, he was impossible and we fought a lot. I destroyed a lot of furniture." In the end, she said Bing did change more than she did and came to enjoy her acting. "It was really a fantastic, exciting marriage."

SIGOURNEY WEAVER

I interviewed Weaver (best known for the "Alien" films) several times, the last in December of 1999 when everyone was worried about Y2K. Was Weaver concerned? "I'm just worried my laptop won't crash and everything will be all right." Asked about her hopes for the next century. "So many challenges ahead. I hope we find the secrets of so many medical problems and the secrets of aging. I also hope we'll meet creatures from another planet and their arrival will bring us and other cultures together. And that the aliens will have one head, two arms, two legs and no tail."

HUGH HEFNER

IN a 2000 interview, Hefner and I talked about his creation of the Playboy magazine empire and how he thought about being remembered? Did he make a difference in how we view sex. "I think I made a difference, and I had an awfully good time doing it."

REGRETS

I often asked celebrities if they had any regrets. Jane Fonda, long tagged "Hanoi Jane," said "I'll go to my grave regretting that photo of me sitting on an anti-aircraft gun in North Vietnam." Alan Alda? "I wouldn't change anything if given a chance to start over." Tony Bennett, when he was in his 80's (he's 95 now, suffering from Alzheimer's) said no regrets. "I never look back. I like living right now. I love my life, I like to paint." Joan Rivers: "You only regret the things you didn't do. Anything I've done, I've done it, I tried."



Diehl says he met many interesting and delightful people during his 50-year career, among them entertainer Dolly Parton.

thanks and took them. That night on the Tonight Show, Cavett said, Paar used one of his jokes. "Have you heard about these pirates hijacking cruise ships? Can't you hear on the ship PA system 'This is your pirate speaking.'"

RODNEY DANGERFIELD

Dangerfield lived on Manhattan's Upper East Side near his nightclub, Dangerfield's. Rodney became well known in the neighborhood for walking his dog out on the sidewalk in a bathrobe. His monologues often contained dog jokes. "He keeps barking at the door. He doesn't want to go out. He wants ME to leave." In my interview, Dangerfield said he was having a good day "because I got a dial tone."

CHRISTOPHER REEVE

Sometimes in an interview, a star can make a revelation that later haunts you. In 1993, Christopher Reeve talked about a sport he loved, horse jumping. He told me it could be dangerous, but he relished it and thought he was well trained. Two years later, he took a fall in a horse jumping exhibition in Virginia and ended up paralyzed from the neck down.

STEPHEN KING

"How will you be remembered?" I asked. "Oh, probably as a hack who wrote some good books that will still be read, because horror has some amazing staying power," he said. I told him someone once compared his writing to McDonald's food — "It's very tasty but doesn't hurt anybody."

"I'm not serving cordon bleu," he replied. "It's moron food, but sometimes it sure does taste good."

SEAN CONNERY

Asked about his first Bond film, 1962's "Dr. No," "I never thought it would be as successful as it was, and nobody else did."



A stint covering the Oscars led Diehl to a career as a celebrity reporter.



Bill Diehl and Jane Fonda.

Exactly Who Gets a Times Obit?

BY DAVID A. ANDELMAN

For 16 years, Bill McDonald has served as a gatekeeper for the powerful, the famous, the quirky or the just plain interesting as they exit the world where they plied their trade or exercised their talents. He is the obituary editor of The New York Times. And for our first in-person lunch at the National Arts Club in nearly two years, he regaled our membership with yarns of life and immortality beyond the grave.

Take the fellow who was the (hardly competent) lookout for the Watergate burglars. “We would always write about Watergate people,” McDonald said. “They’re just catnip for our readers.” Even if, as was the case for this one, he’d been dead for two years. There have been a few other notable cases among the long-dead. Like Donald W. Duncan, green beret turned anti-war leader and editor of Ramparts, a leftist magazine of the Vietnam war era, who Jeff Roth, Silurian and custodian of The Times morgue, uncovered. When fellow Silurian, Robert McFadden, the paper’s leading obituary writer, began to research this obit, he discovered that Duncan, too, had been long dead. “We did the obit,” McDonald observed. “It was a great story and no one else had done it. So, we got a lot of good reaction.”

Silurian board member David Margolick, himself the author of a not inconsiderable number of obits for McDonald, observed that “Bill’s pages are the primest real estate for journalists in the world. There are few assignments that are better than writing for

him and telling peoples’ stories. He keeps coming up with Hasidic rabbis who were 103 years old, and there seems to be an endless supply of them.” (Joe Berger, who co-hosted the questioning with Margolick, seems to have made a specialty of these rabbis.)

McDonald pointed out that there are some 1,900 advance obits in the bank, though occasionally the desk is caught off guard — more often than not by rock stars who “die too young.” Like Michael Jackson, whose premature death mobilized every resource of the paper within hours. “It was one of those cases where The Times showed up and really did what it can do best,” said McDonald.

But then, Margolick touched a nerve when he asked, “How do journalists get in there — not only Times people — and what are you looking for in order to separate those of us who are worthy from those of us, who aren’t?”

“It’s the toughest call to make because there is an emotional element to this, to colleagues who are grieving, in effect, for someone they knew and really want that person to be remembered,” McDonald observed. “We try to apply the same standard to those people, to our own colleagues, as we would to anyone else. So, if you did something in journalism, maybe you won a couple of Pulitzer prizes. Maybe you broke some amazing story.

Maybe you ran a newspaper... You have to have, I won’t say made news, but contributed to the field in such a way that it sits above and beyond what most people do.”

But beyond journalists, McDonald was quite eloquent in describing just what makes it into the narrow space each day for obituaries — who does and who does not make the cut. “You recognize a good story when you see one,” he continued. “If it’s a combination of a good narrative, tale, yarn, certainly fame is a criterion, and we do those automatically. We have raised the bar above people who maybe had worthy lives. We don’t judge their worthiness as human beings, but their newsworthiness.”

There was, for instance, a woman who played music on drinking glasses in the Woody Allen film, “Broadway Danny Rose.” Another who made plaster casts of the genitals of male

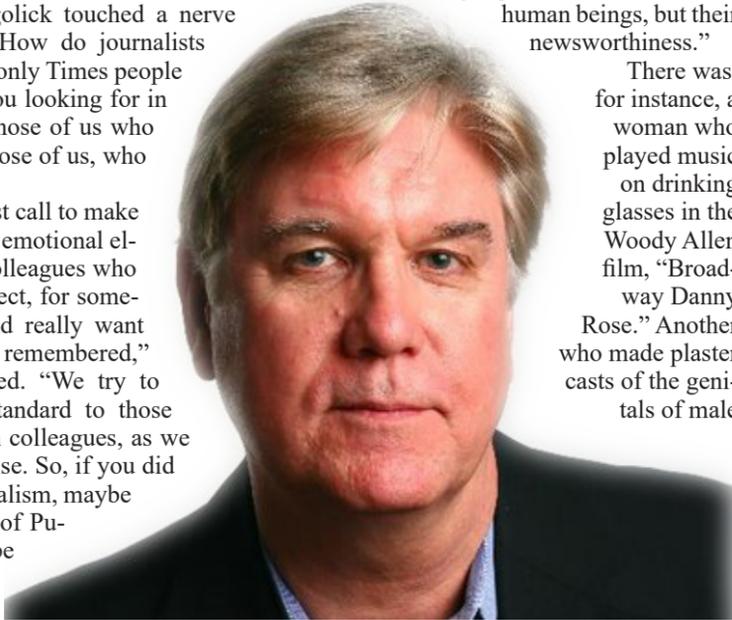
rock stars. “Both of those women made an impression on our world, so to speak,” McDonald continued, as laughter swept the room. Of course, there’s also the inventor of kitty litter or the designer of pink flamingos, whose passing was chronicled on Page One by “Margalit Fox, one of our great obit writers.” As for the writer of obits, “You have to have a good storytelling style, a good narrative skill — being able to spin the story and decide, what’s the narrative thread,” while at the same time, “bringing to life the era they lived in — the context and sense of history.”

In response to a question from The Times’ former publisher Arthur Sulzberger Jr. dealing with the globalization of the paper, McDonald observed that he’d like to see obits become even more of a global, even online, product: “I think I’ve always thought The Times could capitalize on this franchise a little more than it does, but I don’t make those calls unfortunately.”

Still, in the end, there is rarely a slow day in obituaries. “The supply is unending,” McDonald concluded. “As a former deputy used to say, ‘The Lord will provide.’ And that’s true.”

But it was left to Joe Berger, our incoming Silurian president, to add his appreciation to Bill McDonald: “I’m just glad that we have you as obituary editor because you’re a calm, steady cool presence dealing with this massive subject, and a wise one.”

Bill McDonald, calm, steady, cool and wise hand at helm of The Times’ obit’ desk.



Obituaries

Lawrence Malkin, Seasoned Economics Correspondent, 91

Lawrence Malkin, an award-winning correspondent for Time magazine, the International Herald Tribune and Associated Press who authored a book about a clandestine Nazi plot that deployed concentration camp inmates to counterfeit British pounds, died April 19 at his home in Manhattan. He was 91.

The cause was kidney failure, his family said.

Malkin, better known to friends and colleagues as Larry, reported on the Six-Day War in the Mideast for the Associated Press and the 1978 revolution in Afghanistan for

Time magazine. Economics was his specialty and he won a 1967 Overseas Club award for his reports on the decline of the British economy. He later covered Wall Street for the International Herald Tribune.

In 1987, he wrote “The National Debt,” a critique of the policies of the Ronald Reagan Administration that had doubled the national debt to \$2 trillion. He warned that the burgeoning debt would reduce the standard of living for most Americans, and a Times reviewer said the “thoughtful” book “makes a persuasive case.”

His second book, published in 2006, was “Krueger’s Men: The Secret Nazi Counterfeit Plot and the Prisoners of Block 19,” that chronicled a little known chapter of World War II: a Nazi scheme to damage the British



Lawrence Malkin wrote economics for the ordinary man.

economy by producing millions of counterfeit British pound notes. The counterfeiters were 140 Jewish prisoners ordered to do so by the SS.

The books have been translated into seven languages.

Malkin was born July 30, 1930 in the Richmond Hill neighborhood of Queens, the

son of David and Jennie Malkin.

He received a B.A. from Columbia University in 1951 and was drafted into the US Army during the Korean War, emerging as a decorated veteran.

Malkin is survived by his wife Edith, his daughters, Elisabeth and Victoria, and three grandchildren.

Malkin once told an interviewer that he was dedicated to explaining economics “in plain language that ordinary people, often desperate to understand, will be able to follow and actually enjoy reading.”

“I write by describing events in terms of the people who make them happen, with some wit and irony, because things never happen in quite the way people foresee,” he said. “Therein lies the drama of this subject.”

Hail & Farewell

Continued from Page 2

history of police abuse of suspects that continues through the present day. Most surprising was the departments’ historical and continued failure to hire minority officers — the people most likely to curb casual abuse by their white colleagues. The two departments hired just 67 black officers out of more than 6,500 black applicants since 2012. How does this kind of discrimination happen in the year 2022?

Congratulations to all the winners of this year’s contest. We were especially pleased to honor some very young journalists — reporters working for outfits like The City, TYPE Investigations, Columbia University Journalism Investigations, and the CUNY Newmark Graduate Journalism School. The latter did a fine report on the impact of new middle and upper-income housing developments on the lower-income neighborhoods of the South Bronx.

I promise you will lose nothing under the aegis of my successor, Joe Berger, one of the finest writers and reporters The New York Times ever employed. Joe has also written a bunch of books and is working on another. Good luck, Joe.

And thank you and farewell to all of you who helped make my tenure as president so enjoyable.

Yours sincerely
Michael Serrell
President

Pat Fenton, Offbeat Writer, 80

BY JACK DEACY

Pat Fenton, a distinctly unconventional journalist, author and playwright, died on January 5, in Massapequa, Long Island. He was 80 years old.

For 26 years — most of his adult life — Fenton was a freelance writer, doing his writing at night or on weekends because he needed a steady civil service job as a New York corrections officer to support his family.

His first job as a cargo handler at JFK actually led to his first writing break in 1973 when New York Magazine published his piece, “Confessions of A Working Stiff.”

Fenton had also worked as a cab driver, bartender and radio host. Over the years his work appeared in The New York Times, the Daily News, Newsday, Irish-America magazine, the Irish Echo and other publications. Fenton’s writing has also been published in numerous anthologies including “The Irish, a Treasury of Art and Literature” and the “Book of Irish Americans.”

Last July, Heliotrope Books published Fenton’s “Searching for Harry Chapin’s America,” a book about the inspirations for Chapin’s songs and writings. Fenton went on the road to discover the places Chapin

visited across America, from far flung bars, barber shops and bowling alleys, to hotels, coffee shops, diners and nightclubs. Fenton had worked on the book on and off for nearly 20 years.

In reviewing the book, novelist Peter Quinn wrote: “A portrait of an age as well as an artist. Chapin was an American original, combining Walt Whitman’s lyric realism with Woodie Guthrie’s passionate truth telling. Fenton’s blend of sympathy, honesty and insight give us the man in full. Fenton’s talents as a master storyteller have never been on better display.”

His first play, “Jack’s Last Call: Say Goodbye to Kerouac,” had two successful runs in Jack Kerouac’s hometown of Lowell, Massachusetts, and, after appearing at the Boston Playwright’s Theatre, was selected as one of the best New England plays of 2008. Recently, the play has been released on CD as a radio drama. It has been heard on over 70 public radio stations across the country and was nominated for an Audie Award, an annual award given by the Audio Publishers Association.

Another play, “Stoopdreamer,” about Windsor Terrace, the working-class Brooklyn neighborhood where he grew up, ran in an



Pat Fenton was hailed as a “master storyteller.”

Off Broadway theater in 2015. Beside Fenton, Windsor Terrace and neighboring Park Slope turned out many fine journalists and writers over the years including Pete Hamill, his brothers Dennis, John and Brian and his sister, Kathleen Hamill Fischetti, Joe Flaherty, Tim Lee, Billy Powers, Charlie Monahan, and Robert Murphy.

Fenton is survived by his wife, Patricia, a son Patrick, a daughter Kelly and several grandchildren.