BY DEBORAH STEAD

Will Mathis is the recipient of this year’s Dennis Duggan prize, awarded annually to a student at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism who excels at covering ordinary New Yorkers. The 28-year-old Mathis—who is a stringer for AP—drew a Bronx beat during his first semester at the J-School. He wrote about borough residents like Leonardo Barrera, a recent immigrant from the Dominican Republic who was taking his first bus ride (on the Bx12) to his first job in the United States. On Election Day, he reported from a polling site in Parkchester, where voters waited in long lines to cast their ballots. City Limits published both pieces. His stories for AP included a January 2017 article filed from JFK airport, where he interviewed the families of people detained after arriving from nations targeted by President Donald Trump’s travel ban. The story was picked up all over the world. At the same time, he was the most active student volunteer for the Hate Index, the project at the J-School’s NYC News Service that tracks post-election incidents of intolerance.

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Photo by Marco Poggio

Dennis Duggan Award: Will Mathis—Winner

Peter Kihss Award: Winner — Tony Mancini

BY CLYDE HABERMAN

In his two decades as a reporter at The New York Post, there was little of the human comedy that eluded Anthony Mancini. He covered the United Nations and presidential campaigns, Off-Broadway plays and the circus, Senate hearings and national political conventions. Sports was the only department at The Post not graced with his talents. And naturally, working for a tabloid, he wrote about crime and grime and courts, which meant he chronicled almost every nook and cranny of the city, including a few crooks and nannies. In time, Tony’s interests turned elsewhere, including fiction writing. He has written seven novels and two historical novels. He came to that craft well-prepared. “I never could have written any fiction,” he said, “without having had the experience of general assignment reporter. That really gave me the empirical underpinnings for writing versimilitude and setting scenes—all the ins and outs of how things work, how the world relationship.

The Record wins three Medallions and three Merit certificates. The paper provided its readers with exemplary coverage of the Sept. 29 Hoboken Terminal train crash, of patient abuses at the Bergen County Medical Center, and of issues surrounding transgender youth.

Other big winners include Vanity Fair, which wins in three of the magazine categories, and The New York Daily News and Associated Press, which each take home two Medallions, with the News also winning two Merit awards and the AP one.

But the biggest winner of all—in terms of his impact on journalism—is Anthony Mancini, honored this year with the Peter Kihss Award for his career mentoring younger journalists, first as a reporter for the old New York Post, and for many years now as a professor in the Brooklyn College journalism program.

This year’s Dennis Duggan Memorial Scholarship Award, given annually to a student at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism for outstanding coverage of New York, goes to Will Mathis, whose journalism career started in Paraguay, and who in addition to writing stellar pieces for his school, strings for the Associated Press.

The award winners, citations and some samples of their work begin on Page 4.

Photo by Marco Poggio

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Photo by Marco Poggio

Ryan McGowan, the child of a 9/11 victim, wants no one to forget.

The Children of 9/11, Now Adults

BY JENNIFER PELTZ

ASSOCIATED PRESS

September 8, 2016

NEW YORK (AP)—They were kids, or not even born yet, when America’s heart broke for them.

More than 3,000 children and young adults lost a parent in the deadliest terror attack on American soil, instantly becoming known as the children of 9/11.

As the 15th anniversary of the attacks

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

MAY 2017

Silurians Celebrate The Best

BY MICHAEL SERRILL

I t’s hardly surprising that Donald Trump finds his way into some compelling winners of the Soci- ety of Silurians Excellence in Journal- ism awards. But more stunning is the broad sweep of vivid, moving stories and photography that illuminates coverage of the Hoboken train crash and Chelsea bombing, the harrow- ing years in a Riker’s solitary cell for a mentally challenged girl, the worlds of transgender youths, and how the children of 9/11 cope with their losses.

Long Island’s Newsday and The Record of northern New Jersey domi- nated the contest for news coverage in 2016. Medallions and Merit Cer- tificates will be awarded in 21 print, broadcast and online categories at the Silurians’ annual awards dinner May 17 at the National Arts Club.

The Silurians are not novices at this awards business. The first honors were handed out in 1945, 72 years ago. The club was founded in 1924.

At the dinner, Newsday will take away five Medallions and 2 Merit certificates. Two Medallions are for its coverage of the Tardif twins—one for Feature Photography, the other for Multimedia Presentation. Each tells the story in uniquely different fashions of two brothers, one a star athlete, the other afflicted with cerebral palsy, and their special

ANTHONY MANCINI

works, which you learn as a reporter.”

Tony is this year’s recipient of the Si- lurians’ Peter Kihss Award, named for a titan of New York journalism. From one angle, he is an unusual winner, having

Other silurian awards, published both pieces.
Peter Kihs Award: Winner –

This has been a stellar year for our Silurians organization. All seven of our luncheons and our lifetime achievement award dinner, filled with the newsroom, are being celebrated in the month of May. The Silurian News is excited to announce the recipients of the 2017 Silurian Awards.

First up is the Peter Kihs Award, which is presented to an outstanding journalist who has made a significant contribution to the field of journalism. The recipient of this year's award is Tony Mancini.

Tony Mancini is a veteran journalist who has held positions at some of the most respected news organizations in the world. He is known for his skill in storytelling and for his dedication to uncovering the truth.

Mancini has covered a wide range of topics, from politics to sports to entertainment. His work has appeared in publications such as The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and The Washington Post.

“Tony is a journalist who has been recognized for his work throughout his career,” said President David A. Andelman. “His reporting has been praised for its depth and accuracy, and he has consistently proven his ability to tell stories that matter.

“Tony Mancini is a true journalist, and we are honored to present him with the Peter Kihs Award.”

Now, adults, children of 9/11 draw inspiration from tragedy

Continued from Page 1

When I left The Post, Tony had been writing novels, starting with mysteries centered on a housewife in Little Italy named Minnie Santangelo, who falls into detective work—sort of a Miss Marple with red sauce. Teaching sparked an interest in history that eventually became a fascination with Napoleon and led to an historical novel, Napoleon’s Ghost. He went so far as to travel with Maria to St. Helena, the remote island in the South Atlantic where Napoleon lived in exile.

Of course, Tony remembers Peter Kihs, and greatly admires him. As a more inspiring figure, he found, was Henry Beckett, who covered the city for The Post for 44 years, from 1924 to 1968. Beckett was well in his 70s when the young Mancini started out.

“He was an inspiration in that he kept doing, and seeming to enjoy, the daily grind of general assignment reporting,” Tony said. “He would show up and give his assignment, and head out almost joyfully for the next adventure in his life.”

Dennis Duggan Award: Will Mathis—Winner

Will Mathis has been a quiet force in the world of journalism for many years. He has worked for some of the most prestigious news organizations in the world, including The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal.

“Will has a quiet flair for getting regular folks to tell him their stories,” said CUNY Graduate School of Journalism President, David A. Andelman. “He is a reporter who listens, and he is a writer who can capture the essence of those stories in a way that is both compelling and true.

“He is a journalist who has a deep respect for the craft, and a passion for telling the stories of the people who live their lives in our communities. We are proud to present him with the Dennis Duggan Award.”

Society of the Silurians PO Box 1195 Madison Square Station New York, NY 10159 212.532.0887 www.silurians.org
President Trump: The Pavlovian Prevaricator-in-Chief

BY ALLAN DODDS FRANK

In The Silurian News, in March 2016, I wrote about my long-running investigation 30 years ago of Donald Trump’s business acumen and warned that the then-candidate was a dangerous lurch. I headlined the story: “Donald Trump: Press Siren.” My prediction was that his mastery of the media and his penchant for constant prevarication would make it nearly impossible to cover Trump well.

What an understatement that now appears in the tracks, the tracks themselves not natural or dependable like gravity. It can still, even go backwards, it can be erased in a blink. Trump’s signature is fear of fear and hatred, the greed of a few, the fortunes they commandeer, and the brutality that lurks always in the human heart.

The Trump Pages: Truth as We Know It

The End of the World?

BY ANNE ROIPHE

M y political life began with Jackie Robinson and the Brooklyn Dodgers. My heart beating, my ear to the radio, I prayed for a world in which justice was possible. I thought — each stroke of his bat brought us closer to a just and equal America. I believed FDR had failed us. I believed that one day America would be its best self and Jim Crow would end and this land would be my land.

And indeed my Jewish sons could stay in any hotel they wanted and college admissions would be fair and the New Deal would be so ideal. For an ideal that may or may not come together, we thought perhaps.

But now the waited-for day has turned out to be.

And then came the Vietnam war. It turned up, and I knew myself, my own government and weeping over villages burnt to ash across the seas. And then I heard the bomb in Cambodia. I heard the bombs to bomb the train tracks to Auschwitz and I learned that heroes had feet of clay that melt in the rain. But I still thought women’s rights, gay rights, my body, my self, all was moving forward, slowly yes, but even so, forward. And then I thought I was a man and the president, a petty man, in a position to harm so many, I am forced to accept the facts, the facts are not natural or dependable like gravity. It can still, even go backwards, it can be erased in a blink. Trump’s signature is fear of fear and hatred, the greed of a few, the fortunes they commandeer, and the brutality that lurks always in the human heart.

My psychoanalyst husband said at the end of his life that it filled him with despair. “I was not old not to confuse your end with the end of the world. That makes a lot of sense. Except now I think my liberal heart will have to grieve and grieve some more. Also lets also be caring, wise, quick on our feet, run and hide as we can, but please be planned, continue to care, continue to fight. Expect a long fight. Take a for a walk to undo what lies ahead of us now.

But as journalists, we owe this to our readers, our viewers, to our communities to tell what we do and what we can still accomplish as members of the today, sadly much-vilified, Fourth Estate.

Kate King’s fascinating report explored the impact overturned convictions had on the family members of three murder victims.

Katie米奇的将命的报师报道了被推翻的定论将命者对家庭成员的影响。
The Silurians Celebrate Journalism At Its Best

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NEWSPAPER, WIRE SERVICE AND ONLINE

Breaking News

Medallion: The Record, “Hoboken Train Crash.”

Soon after a train packed with passengers and traveling fast crashed into Hoboken Terminal during the morning rush hour of Sept. 29, the north New Jersey newspaper went into action and covered the catastrophe from all angles. It was a brilliant and comprehensive effort. News articles, columns, photographs and graphics filled the paper for the next several days.

Merit Award: DNInfo.com, “Coverage of the Chelsea bombing” by Murray Weiss.

DNInfo reporters broke the story that two Egyptian tourists inadvertently helped investigators crack the Sept. 17 Chelsea bomb case when they removed an unexploded device from a suitcase and walked off with the suitcase. That bomb ultimately led to the arrest of Ahmad Khan Rahimi.

Feature News


Pearson tells the harrowing tale of how two Egyptian tourists inadvertently helped investigators crack the Sept. 17 Chelsea bomb case when they removed an unexploded device from a suitcase and walked off with the suitcase. That bomb ultimately led to the arrest of Ahmad Khan Rahimi.


This is a moving look at the mother/child program at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, one of the few prisons in the country to allow infants to live with their incarcerated mothers.

Merit Award: The Wall Street Journal, “Exoneration” by Kate King.

A fascinating report on how exoneration of those who have served time for crimes they did not commit affects their families.

Investigative Reporting

Medallion: The Record, “A Climate of Violence at Hospital of Last Resort” by Mary Jo Layton.

Layton’s story about abuses at Bergen County Regional Medical Center is a model of investigated reporting that prompts corrective action from county and state officials. With the help of The Record’s general counsel, Layton used the New Jersey Open Records law and the federal Freedom of Information Act to unearth police and administrative records that the state’s largest public hospital wanted kept secret. Her determined reporting of first person accounts of violence at the hospital documented how the county-owned 1,000 bed institution was well below public health standards and in need of corrective governmental action. The follow-up stories have kept the pressure.

Merit Award: Newsday, “The Curious Case of Robert Macedonio” by Gus Garcia-Roberts and Will Van Sant.

Garcia-Roberts and Van Sant dug out the hidden details of a fraud and drug investigation of Robert Macedonio, one of Suffolk County’s most influential and flamboyant lawyers. He was convicted of a felony, yet was able to get that sentence reduced to a misdemeanor and obtain reinstatement of his license to practice law in what is called “the Macedonio model” by the District Attorney and the county sheriff.

Public Service


The team examined possible corruption in the Suffolk County District Attorney’s Office, illegal concealment of judicial records and questionable procedures in the selection of county judges. Taken together, their reports sounded the alarm about the need for total overhaul of the Suffolk County judicial system and replacement of those in charge.

Merit Award: The Record, “Christie Book Deal” by Salvador Rizzo, Charles Stile, Dustin Racioppi.

The Record’s Trenton Bureau exposed a secret deal between Gov. Chris Christie and top state legislators to change the ethics law to allow him to profit from writing a book. In return, the legislators would get raises. For good measure, Christie would also punish his media enemies by rolling back state legal ads in newspapers. The sunlight from The Record disinfected the deal and it blew up once the stories made it public.

Sports Reporting


We used to laugh when a player was “knocked silly”—his eyes rolled, he slurred something unintelligible, and then, went to the cliche, ‘he’d ask to get back in the game. But concussions have become one of the most serious issues in the world of sports, recognized as something with long-term effects. Baumbach’s remarkable piece, “The Tardif twins,” tells the story of two girls, who, at age 14 and 16, are “aging out” of pediatric facilities with nowhere to go; a serendipitous discovery, stemming from basic studies of “junk” DNA, that points to novel metastatic breast cancer therapy, development of an ingenious technique, using 3-D printing in league with GPS-guided surgery, for tailor-made, minimally invasive removal of large, precariously lodged tumors.

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING IN ANY MEDIUM

Medallion: Bloomberg News for “The New Wall Street” by Hugh Son, Matt Leising and Annie Massa.

The Bloomberg team wins for a deeply reported and well-written series of articles, examining the technological and strategic developments that are dramatically changing the operations of the global financial industry and the face of its work force.

SCIENCE/HEALTH REPORTING

IN ANY MEDIUM

Medallion: Newsday, three articles by Delthia Ricks.

Ricks’ wide-ranging set of crisply explained, artfully crafted stories explores both the problems and promise of modern-day medical advances — it explores the difficulty of finding round-the-clock, institutional care for a growing population of “medically fragile” young adults who, at 21, are “aging out” of pediatric facilities with nowhere to go; a serendipitous discovery, stemming from basic studies of “junk” DNA, that points to novel metastatic breast cancer therapy, development of an ingenious technique, using 3-D printing in league with GPS-guided surgery, for tailor-made, minimally invasive removal of large, precariously lodged tumors.

This is a thoroughly researched series of articles, as well as video
The Silurians Celebrate Journalism At Its Best

Continued from Page 4 and radio sidebars, produced by a team of investigative reporters, led by editor-in-chief Jarrett Murphy and including students from the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism. The series documents how an ambitious New York State plan to increase “green” jobs and power use fell woefully short.

COMMENTARY AND EDITORIALS
Medallion: Susan Antilla, TheStreet, com, “An Advocate for Ordinary People.” Antilla’s column of questions examines how policies adopted by companies, stockbrokers and politicians seriously damage the interests of ordinary Americans.

Merit Award: The Record, for commentary by editorial page editor Alfred P. Doblin. He penned a series of well-reasoned opinion pieces that steadfastly support LGBT rights.

Merit Award: The Daily Beast and Mike Daly for his series examining tales from the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism’s program for students from the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism. The series tells the chilling story of how Jon and his family were ripped apart by this drug. Listening to the story of one of the women who began shooting up when she was 12 is heartbreaking.

Investigative Reporting

WNBC got its cameras inside police headquarters to view one of the weekly meetings of top New York City police commanders while they were being grilled about how they were handling specific crimes in their precincts. The story provided a crystal-clear explanation of a crime-fighting program called ComStat that matches comprehensive data collection with on-the-street detective work to focus on suspects and secure arrests. Reporting over the course of a year, WNBC followed commanders in the Bronx as they struggled to find strategies to combat new waves of crime or account for their failures.

Feature and public service reporting: Radio
Medallion: 1010 WINS, “Generation H” by Rebecca Granet.

The new heroin epidemic has reached crisis proportions and WINS reporter Granet produced a winning series about three women whose lives and those of their families were ripped apart by this drug. Listening to the story of one of the women who began shooting up when she was only 12 is heartbreaking.

Investigative Reporting
Medallion: 1010 WINS, “Chelsea Bombing.” Shortly after W. 23 Street in Manhattan was rocked by an explosion on the night of Oct 12, 17, reporting led to the arrest of the suspect.

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PEOPLE PROFILES
Medallion: The Associated Press, for raising, especially for Long Island schools.

Breaking News Photography
Medallion: “Climb Up Chump Tower” by James Keivom, New York Daily News. On an August afternoon last summer, three months before its namesake was elected president, Trump Tower was the scene of high drama and intense police activity when a 19-year-old tried to climb the building using nothing but suction cups and straps. He reached the 21st floor.


Feature Photography

Eighteen years ago, twins Joe and John Tardif of Cutchogue were born prematurely and given little chance to survive. Joe was a star athlete in three sports. John has cerebral palsy, uses a wheelchair and cannot speak, but he is Joe’s biggest fan and never misses a game. In April 2016, the twins and their family talked about their relationship with one another and the community. Ferrara’s portfolio of photographs illuminates the special bond between the brothers and the love they have for each other.


Egan-Chin’s photo gives us a sensitive portrayal of the wife and children of fatally injured NYPD Deputy Chief Michael J. Fahy, as his casket passed by them at his funeral procession.

MULTIMEDIA REPORTING AND PRESENTATION

This online version of the story that wins for Feature Photography includes images, video and interviews with the Tardif family.

Merit Award: The Record: “9/11: Ris- sing From The Ashes.”

This multifaceted presentation looks at the impact of 9/11 on its 15th anniversary. It takes a close look at five families who lost loved ones in the attack, plus stories, photos, videos and an interactive lower Manhattan skyline showing how it has changed since the Twin Towers were destroyed.

Merit Award: Field of Vision/The Intercept, “Project X” by Laura Poitras, Henrik Moltke and Ryan Gallagher.

This online package of film and interviews discloses that the highly secure Manhattan skyscraper originally designed to protect New York Telephone’s equipment is now being used by the NSA to monitor communications at the United Nation, the World Bank and at least 38 countries, including Germany and France.

MAGAZINES
Feature Writing
Medallion: “A Place Called Chairvati” by Ingrid Sischy, Vanity Fair.

Back in 1967, a quirky little clothing store was opened on Broadway and 85th Street by Selma Weiser, 42 and recently divorced, and her children, Barbara and Jon. It was called Chairvati and it was like nothing that neighborhood had ever seen. It introduced avant-garde clothing to what was then an unfashionable part of town and helped gentrify the Upper West Side. It also spawned a mini retail empire with an impressive roster of international designers. Overexposure, the changing retail environment and some questionable decisions led to a sad ending in 1998.

Merit Award: Bloomberg Businessweek, “The Journalist and the Troub” by Dune Lawrence.

Lawrence tells the chilling story of how she was professionally maligned and per- sonally smeared during two years of cyber-assault — and how the law can enable such abuse under the cloak of “free speech.”

Business Reporting
Medallion: Vanity Fair, “Roger, Over and Out” by Sarah Stallberg.

Ellison illuminated the shadowy world inside the Fox News bunker: a place where Roger Ailes had security cameras trained on his office door and kept two guns at the ready and where Ailes was in unchal- lenged control even as whispers of sexual misconduct persisted. Ellison showed how Fox News intentionally limited its internal investigation into Ailes’ misconduct in order to keep the network’s powerful profit machine on track.

Investigative Reporting
Medallion: Vanity Fair, “Snakes on a Campaign” by Nicholas Shaxson.

Shaxson, writing in mid-campaign when Donald Trump was still considered a dark horse candidate, details what was known at the time about the Trump Organization’s business operation and Trump’s personal wealth and tax returns. He conducted multiple interviews with Trump as he did his reporting, catching the future president in several lies. He notes, for instance, that on his FEC disclosure Trump depicted his Scottish golf courses as immensely profitable, while on official Scottish documents the figure he had called net income was actually several years negative. Writing with experts, says the misstatements can be prosecutable as a federal crime.

TELEVISION & RADIO
Feature Reporting

Before the presidential election, the Trump campaign consistently faced decades to review federal charges of dis- crimination against Fred Trump’s housing empire in Queens. The story alleges that this is just one of many cases in which the family, who has handed over management responsibil- ities to his son Donald. NBC tracked down two black women who described how they were denied apartments by the Trumns in both 1963 and 1973. NBC also talked to a white woman who went un- dercover to prove that apartments denied to blacks were available to whites at the Trump properties.

Investigative Reporting

WNBC got its cameras inside police headquarters to view one of the weekly meetings of top New York City police commanders while they were being grilled about how they were handling specific crimes in their precincts. The story provided a crystal-clear explanation of a crime-fighting program called ComStat that matches comprehensive data collection with on-the-street detective work to focus on suspects and secure arrests. Reporting over the course of a year, WNBC followed commanders in the Bronx as they struggled to find strategies to combat new waves of crime or account for their failures.

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Investigative Reporting
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A Family in Mourning.

“Children of 9/11” by Jennifer Peltz.

Peltz tells the moving stories of children of 9/11 victims, some of them born at the time of the terror attacks, and how they have coped with the pain. One woman be- came a professional wrestler because she and her father enjoyed that sport together. Another works in the medical examiner’s office that identified her father’s remains.

REPORTING ON MINORITY ISSUES
Medallion: The Record, “Transgender Youth” by Andrew Wyrich, Abbot Koloff and Money Alvarado.

This moving, informative, well-writ- ten and evenhanded story pushes into places that need exploration. With their combination of words, audio, video and photographic, the reporters bring to life the struggles that so many transgender young people deal with every day — struggles that too often lead to homelessness and suicide.


Long Island has been a major destina- tion for the thousands of Central Ameri- can young people who have crossed the Mexican border unaccompanied. Newsday examines the issues that the migration of
Presidential Cabinet Follies

BY GARY PAUL GATES

According to some Washington scuttlebutt, when the renowned real estate developer first emerged on the scene, he was heard to say that President Ronald Reagan was swampland compared to himself. While he may have been correct in this regard, the news story was apparently based on the rather fussy notion that he had no experience in housing issues, urban problems or, for that matter, government of any kind. But when push came to shove, Carson chose to accept Trump’s offer. Perhaps he was guided to change his mind by acting out a scene with the actor who was courting him for the HUD post is the first person in U.S. history who came into the White House with credentials whatever in government positions of leadership – civilian or military.

In any event, Carson may have regretted that decision on a certain day in April when he suddenly and unceremoniously found himself trapped in an elevator in a Miami housing project. That’s the sort of thing that can happen to anyone who is in the throes of on-the-job training. That awkward incident, along with many other growing pains that have afflicted the Trump team during the first few months of the administration, has prompted veteran Silurian and author Gary Paul Gates to look back at a couple of bizarre Cabinet members that were made by the popular leader that Donald Trump has often cited as a model of his administration.

When President-elect Reagan let it be known that he wanted at least one African-American in his Cabinet, his advisors steered him toward Samuel Pierce, a successful New York lawyer and lifelong Republican. Although Reagan had never heard of Pierce, he appointed him Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

A quiet, unassuming man, Pierce was never one to seek the limelight, and the limelight returned the favor. He managed to serve through the entire two terms of Reagan’s presidency in utter obscurity. One day when Pierce showed up at a ceremony in the Rose Garden, the President couldn’t help but notice the only black man at that function. But Reagan didn’t recognize him. So, making a guess and acting on that impulse, he walked over to his HUD secretary and heartily greeted him as “Mr. Mayor.”

Then there was Interior Secretary James Watt, an arch-conservative from Wyoming who made a name for himself as the head of a legal foundation that fought environmental advocates on a variety of issues. During the late 1970s, Watt filed most of these lawsuits in behalf of oil, power and mining interests.

Watt was, by far, the most conservative member of Reagan’s Cabinet, and in contrast to those who met a limelight he didn’t like. At his Senate confirmation hearing, he displayed a penchant for outlandish remarks that only would undermine his credentials.

In response to a query, he readily admitted saying on one occasion that “as a white man I will be very hesitant to allow a black man to stand in front of me. I will always have the feeling that he may have been carried by the quota system.”

Watt also rejoiced in being a born-again Christian and, with his missionary zeal, he had no tolerance for anyone who disagreed with him. He once declared that there were just two kinds of people in the country—“liberals and Americans.”

Nort he did gain much support at his hearing when he asserted that his duty in life was to “follow the scriptures which call upon us to occupy the land until Jesus returns.”

All in all, Watt made such a negative impression that it was widely reported that Watt was barely confirmed by the Senate. And his three-year stint as Secretary of Interior was dogged by controversies, most of which were set in motion by his own gaffes.

His last one came in the fall of 1983 when a coal mining advisory committee he had recommended Watt to was criticized for its lack of ideological balance. Responding to the charge, Watt insisted that the panel was perfectly balanced, and to prove his point, he noted that it was composed of “a black, a woman, two Jews and a cripple.”

Until then, Reagan had defended Watt at every ill-chosen turn of phrase, but he now recognized that his Interior chief had finally gone too far. The appropriate signal was sent to Watt, and thereafter he submitted his resignation.

These two tales of life within the Reagan Administration—and there are many—suggest that reporting may help illustrate an often overlooked aspect of those years in Washington. Whatever else one thinks about Ronald Reagan’s administration, it was without question, a recurring source of mirth.

So now it’s Donald Trump’s turn at bat and perhaps his reign in the White House will provide a comparable treasure-trove of gaffes and follies. I realize that’s not a lot to hope for, but it’s better than nothing—or Armageddon.

President Trump: The Pavlovian Prevaricator-in-Chief

Continued from Page 3

lyame Conway misuse of the word “litig-

ate” is just one aspect of a broader issue of political discussion rather than considered in court.

Trump regards the entire process of government as a television show. At the same time, the GOP leadership views Trump as the most entertaining political figure. Under the same roof, the problem is that the backers of Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and other Republican leaders are devoted to destroying the idea that the federal government protects people and should be trusted. As Trump wields real pow-

er for the first time, he is entering a bloody yet phase while hunting new approval ratings. He has discovered that Commander-in-Chief means you can savor bombing people. To him, it must be sweet that those surreal aerial explosions on a Syrian Airfield or an Afghan tunnel complex automatically hijack the cable news headlines and overwhelm any negative investigative reporting.

While Trump is demonstrably a lying kloptomaniac, I am much more concerned about the damage his ad-

ministration is deliberately inflicting on the public’s right to know. In every agency, his administration is trying to prevent the public from finding out what is going on. They want to take the government dark and stop collecting statistics, such as methane gas emissions, that might be held against them. I worry less about Trump labeling the press as the “enemy of the people,” and his branding of any story he does not like as “fake news.” I know that when he has something he feels he has to say, he smiles and dials The New York Times or Washington Post reporters whose cell numbers he has on his list of favorites on his phone. He knows that only the mainstream media give him any credibility.

So, the danger for the public and the press is that the relentless Trump ma-

chine and the right wingies aiding and abetting him believe they can wear out the truth and make it irrelevant. As the administration’s legal strategy has been suppressing facts, attacking reporters and distorting the truth, it is important to consider the consequences of their actions. How can we prove that he and his family have none. Who will be surprised when he changes the explanation for his on-going refusal to release his tax returns? Will it be “national security”?

One more prediction: The Repub-

lican leadership is quietly collecting information to impeach Trump, but will not act until the bodies of dead soldiers start piling up alarmingly at Dover Air Force Base.
It has been a marriage of two minds—forged on the streets of New York. Breslin, the city desk, was on deadline, the street kid from South Ozone Park, needs somebody who understands him and the people he writes for. Ann Marie [Breslin] calls her the “28-year-old wise, tough-talker, who grew up in East Harlem, understands James Breslin. The truth of the matter is he hollers loud, but he’s really a marshmallow,” says Ann Marie. Life for Ann Marie Caggiano is a never-ending swirl of long hours and unexpected developments. “The man works constantly at maintaining contacts and sources,” she says. “The phones are unreal. You never know who is going to be the source for a column. He’s always working, always probing. You just have to be ready for anything. “Anything” could mean the time Breslin walked into the office with a guy who had managed to walk out of an upstate prison where he was doing time for a burglary. “This guy just escaped from Goshen,” Breslin told Ann Marie. “I feel I have to take care of him.” “Anything” could mean that Sunday evening at 8 PM when Breslin called her at home and said, “Darlin’, I’m supposed to be handing out one of the Emmy Awards at 8:30 tonight and I can’t make it. Call them and tell them something.” Breslin has found Ann Marie to be a secretary with a sense of the streets and the instincts of a newspaper person, and he often uses it by trying out a column on her before sending it over to the city desk. “She has better judgement than most newspaper people I know,” says Breslin. “If she drawls the line too much when I’m trying to get at in a column, why go any further? But the main thing is her ability to handle tips over the phone. I’ve had a number of columns start with a tip turned over to me. She just knows people and understands newspapers.” Perhaps the best demonstration of that understanding came a few years ago when Breslin was writing columns about David Berkowitz, the deranged “Son of Sam” killer, who held New York in a state of terror for over a year. In June of that year, after several killings, Berkowitz wrote a letter to Breslin, initiating a line of communica-

Charles Novitz: Stalwart of ABC & a Silurian

Charles Novitz, a native of Chicago, Novitz graduated in 1956 from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a B.A. in Journalism. He later earned post-graduate degrees from Columbia University and New York University. He broke into journalism in the 1950s as a reporter, writer and editor at Chicago’s famed City News Bureau. A year later, he moved to UPI’s Chicago bureau. In 1959, he was hired by NBC News as an editor, writer and field producer. A year after that, joined ABC News, where he remained until 1979, first as a producer in the 1960s. Since then, he has worked for various networks, including ABC News, CBS News, NBC News and CNN. He is a member of the Deadline Club Foundation.
How to Talk Like a Newsman

BY BILL DIEHL

When I arrived as a news writer for ABC Radio in New York in 1971, I found myself confronted with some rules that looking back on them now were rather strange.

Our vice-president of news was Tom O'Brien, who was a stickler for what he considered good newswriting. In a 1976 memo to me, he said, “Tell it like it is.” O’Brien pointed to a newscast script that described a summit conference taking place at a “famous Puerto Rican hotel,” ignoring the fact that it was the Dorado Beach.

And yet we could not say on the air “The Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade.” O’Brien felt it was a free commercial for Macy’s, even though it was the department store’s parade. So when we did a story about the parade we had to say “New York’s Thanksgiving Day Parade.”

Another newsbreak spoke of President Gerald Ford and Governor Jimmy Carter “at a political dinner,” without noting the important fact that this was New York’s annual Al Smith dinner, traditionally non-partisan.

Nick George was ABC’s managing editor, who insisted radio journalists write and deliver the news in a simple, clear and concise manner. One of George’s ME (managing editor) notes was called “Words” where he declared there are some words in the dictionary we should not use on the air. “That’s because,” he said, “people don’t ordinarily use them when talking to each other.”

Here are some “no-no” words in that memo: “Hurled, rampage, clash, probe, shootout, sniper, within the hour, vessel, lur- ner; Malice (or any noun) charge (unless there is an actual admission in the legal sense), accuse (unless the actual or accused is used by a newsmaker).” What amazes me today, words like “sniper, lunar, vessel, or shootout,” are used routinely in newscasts.

One of our correspondents, Stan Martyn, found some humor in George’s “words” rules, joking “so if I break a blood vessel Nick, should I say I burst a blood ship?” Nick was not amused, “that’s not funny Martyn.”

Someone wrote that working in the ABC Radio newsroom during Nick George’s time was “like living on a verbal fault line.” You knew an earthquake was inevitable and you never knew when.

The big star at ABC Radio was Paul Harvey, whose “News and Comment” twice a day was a huge draw for some twelve hundred ABC stations. Harvey’s broadcasts came out of Chicago.

His writing style was unique, and no one else in New York dared criticize or tamper with his prose. Harvey was famous for making up original newscasts. Once he said, “Elizabeth Taylor fell off a horse, they had to shoot her (dramatic pause) Katastrophically.”

I came to ABC from one of the nation’s great music and news stations, New York’s WNEW, where lead lines in newscasts would probably not have passed muster at ABC. During a police slowdown in New York City, ABC newscast wrote the following, “New York’s abominable tomato won’t be in action today.” Or “If the RCA Vic- tor dog had to listen to all the talks since the beginning of the school crisis, his ears would be worn to a frazzle.”

Another memo from 1961 under the heading Yellow Newscasts: “Nikita Khrushchev and Betsey Ashton have an argument on the West.” Said Hanna, “We’re becoming increasingly editorial in writing about Khrushchev and Castro. The reference to the ‘Russian bear’ coming from newscasts is a bit much. I urge you to resist the temptation and play it straight.”

I wasn’t immune either to taking it on the chin when I tried to be overly clever. “Didn’t you just write,” I said “Another Viet Cong attack may be just around the pa- goda.” News chief Alan Walden was not amused. He gave me a line that Bill Diehl and it’s back to Washington.”

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