Feminism: Now and Then

BY ANNE AND KATIE ROIPHE

Silurian Anne Roiphe was one of the most powerful and best-known feminist writers of the last century. Her daughter Katie Roiphe is one of the most prominent of this new generation. The New York Times, Harper's, Slate, Power Notebooks. She has also written for The New York Times, Harper's, Slate, The Paris Review, and other publications.

Katie Roiphe:
I wrote a piece for The Guardian on finding out that my male colleagues were paid more than me. When they got their job offers from the university they negotiated and asked for more money for their work. Have you ever asked for more money for your work? Do you think this is a feminist issue?

Anne Roiphe:
The format is Katie interviewing her mother about how things have, and haven’t, changed.

Anne, a former member of the Silurian Board of Governors, is the author of Up the Sandbox, 1185 park Avenue, Epilogue and 15 other novels and non-fiction books. She has written for New York Magazine, The New York Times, Ms., Elle, Vogue, Cosmopolitan and a variety of other publications.

Katie is the director of the Cultural Reporting and Criticism program at New York University. She is the author of The Morning After: Sex, Fear, and Feminism, The Violet Hour, and the forthcoming The Power Notebooks. She has also written for The New York Times, Harper’s, Slate, The Paris Review, and other publications.

Katie Roiphe:
I do think this is a feminist issue or at least a problem for feminists. I would never dream of asking for more money and I am sorry to say that I probably never dream of asking for more money.

Continued on Page 5

A WOODSTOCK MEMOIR

BY JACK DEACY

On the sunny morning of Friday Aug. 15, 1969, motel owner Jack Besterman and I walked up the driveway of the Pine Motel in White Lake, New York where it meets Route 17B. What we saw amazed us. As far as our eyes could see, the roadway was a vast sea of cars. All abandoned. The only things moving on the road were the drivers and passengers who had abandoned them, all walking slowly west toward their destination five miles away: the Woodstock Music and Art Fair. In this pastoral setting, for at least a few days, the human foot would overtake the combustion engine.

Besterman, an elderly Jewish man who once ran a grocery store in Brooklyn, kept staring at the human sea as he offered me a cup of coffee. “All this for a concert? Who’s playing, Frank Sinatra?”

I never seen nothing like this before,” he said to me. “All this for a concert? Who’s playing, Frank Sinatra?”

So began my five-day odyssey covering the 1969 Woodstock Festival. The country seemed to be spinning out of control. But it was a newspaper reporter’s dream.

At the time I was writing a Daily News column three times a week that covered music, politics, sports, government and city characters. I was 25 years old and my cup runneth over.

In late May I began receiving releases and materials from promoters of a three-day concert in upstate New York. It was going to feature some of the biggest names in rock and folk music: the Grateful Dead, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Jimi Hendrix, Crosby Stills Nash and Young, The Band, Janis Joplin, The Doors, Janis Ian, Bob Dylan, and Paul Simon.

And what a year 1969 was for news.

MARCH 2019

Society of the Silurians
EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM AWARDS GALA
The National Arts Club 15 Gramercy Park South
Wednesday, May 15, 2019
Drinks: 6 P.M. - Dinner: 7:15 P.M.
Meet old friends and award winners
Alleen.jacobson@gmail.com
The #MeToo movement has had me thinking about my own mis- conhecions of the world. When I arrived in Tokyo to head The New York Times bureau there, I'm not talking about transgressions on the order of a Matt A. with Moonves. My sin was to have entered the country as a pornogra- pher—in the eyes of the Japanese authorities anyway.

We first need to back up to 1979. I was in New York co- ncluding the New On People column for the Times with a veteran colleague, Albin Krebs (who died in 2002). Ours was a collection of mini-stories on the famous and not-so-famous, half a dozen of them on a typical day. The column resembled the work of Cindy Adams or Liz Smith about as much as Donald Trump resembles a real president.

One item of mine spun off a Playboy interview with Dennis Kucinich, known then as “the boy mayor of Cleveland,” before he went on to Congress and his failed presidential races. After the column ran, a wholesaler in the Times put all my old magazines in an apartment and forgot about it. I was not a Playboy reader. (“Yeah, yeah,” I now hear you saying disbeliefingly. But it’s true.)

Fast forward to early spring 1983. As I was getting set to leave for Tokyo, the doors descended on my apartment like movers descended on my apartment like Japanese ways could be. The customs authorities had rummaged through all my stuff, and happened upon the Playboy, which carried plenty of photos of women who were fully and frankly nude. That prepared me for another early lesson, this one in Japanese attitudes on what was obscene and what was not.

It turned out I qualified as a pornog- rapher. Despite having provided the world with its share of erotic art, in 1983 Japan had strict rules governing what exactly could be depicted. Shots of genitalia, female or male, were taboo. Even a glimpse of pubic hair was not allowed. In 1970, for example, 90 Picasso prints were dropped from an exhibit in Tokyo being criminally obscene, even though it’s often tough with a Picasso to distin- guish one body part from another. Hisako Ueno, who works in the Times Tokyo bureau these days, tells me that some restrictions have been eased; pubic hair may now be shown. But in my day it was out of the question.

One June day in 1983, the bureau’s editorial assistant, Yasuko Kamizumi, informed me that the customs authorities had rummaged through all my old magazines, and said, “I need to send it back to the United States, or (c) leave it out of the question.”

The feeling of his presence ran through his life, his entire life, and seemed blessed to have been with him.

Les Hinton worked for Murdoch for more than 50 years as a reporter, editor and executive. Author of a recent autobiography, An Untidy Life, about his life and work, Hinton spoke on Jan. 19 at a Silurians lun- cheon. Excerpts:

I was shoulder to a shoulder a lot of the time with the man who became the world’s most notorious, and I guess the most notorious, media mogul of them all. He was on the phone. Walking into my office. inviting me to breakfast and dinner. And the phone was never off his private line. And to weekends on his yacht.

And however some of that makes it seem, it wasn’t always an easy life.

There was an unreliable rhythm to life with Rupert. Sometimes he called several times a day, asked you to lunch, laughed at your jokes, seemed fascinated by everything you had to say. Sometimes I wouldn’t hear from him for weeks. I still have fond memories of those weeks.

It was the way Rupert operated. He was like a visiting comet, and the mysterious astronomy of Rupert made it impossible to know when he would appear and how long he would stay…

Maybe News Corp was a person- ality cult. It didn’t occur to me when I worked there, which might be the proof itself. Certainly Rupert’s attention was the drug of choice for some needy exec- utive. He could also be a tyrant, but big business has never been short of tyrants. I’ve not seen many who earned the intense devotion he did.

The feeling of his presence ran deepest in the places he built from the ground up. In Australia and Britain, he felt a closeness to his businesses, an emo- tional ownership that was not always the same everywhere. His charismatic authority was an aura in these places. Old hands were his agents, undaunted loyalists spreading the word of their wonderful lives with Rupert, recall- ing small moments in his presence and seeming blessed to have been victims of his ire. They had tales of his furies and mistakes, but for them every transgression faded away in the burning light of his cleverness and energy.

Like many driven people, he could be hell to work for — I can vouch for that. … No doubt, he’s a driven businessman with heavy boots who bruised a lot of people. At times, he has deserved a kicking. And he did it all to take care of his best friend — and his best friend has been the business.

As a boss, he could be hands-off or autocratic, charming or irascible, forgiving or fierce, and sometimes just a comprehensive pain. But he also imbued his companies and his people, with a fantastic sense of possi- bility — and got big results.
Joplin, the Jefferson Airplane, the Who, shot the scene, catching the irony of pavement eating sandwiches. DeMaria men and women who were sitting on the came across several long haired young

In front of the Ritz Barber Shop we to join me at the festival. We met in the

THEM GROOVE.”

ARE MAX’S COWS. PLEASE LET eating grass or reclining in it: “THESE

near meadows where Max’s cows were following day several signs appeared to me. “I just hope they leave my cows think it’s going to be just fine,” he told

tall, pleasant 49 -year-old dairy farmer whose big black eyeglasses gave his 60-acre farm, including a sloping hillside where history would be made. I didn’t camp out in the mud with the realities, but stayed in the Pine Motel with Besterman and his wife Gittel, sweet, gentle people who had no idea what was about to hit them. On Thursday morning as the traffic on 17B began to increase, I drove to the festival site, where a stage and two adjacent towers for speakers were under construction. I interviewed two young promoters, Art Cornfeld and Mike Lang, who assured me that all their preparations were on schedule and they would be ready when the program got underway on Friday afternoon. But on the site, carpenters and electricians told me the stage was woefully behind schedule. Other workers were busy installing fencing, building ticket offices, clearing the parking area and setting up 600 portable toilets.

I also caught up with Max Yasgur, a tall, pleasant 49-year-old dairy farmer whose big black eyeglasses gave his face the look of a human raccoon. “I think it’s going to be just fine,” he told me. “I just hope they leave my cows alone. There are 600 of them, mostly Guernseys. They’re great milkers.” The following day several signs appeared near meadows where Max’s cows were eating grass or reclining in it: “THESE ARE MAX’S COWS: PLEASE LET THEM GROOVE.”

Earlier that day the Daily News dispatched photographer Paul DeMaria to join me at the festival. We met in the one-street town of Bethel near the site. In front of the Ritz Barber Shop we came across several long haired young men and women who were sitting on the pavement eating sandwiches. DeMaria shot the scene, catching the irony of all the flowing young hair in front of a barber shop. It was the front-page photo said. “No big deal.” Then came Friday morning and all bell broke loose. Route 17B was backed up solid for 17 miles, as were the several other routes leading to White Lake. The New York State Police had to close the Harriman and Newburg exits on the New York State Thruway to stop more cars from heading for White Lake. Many of the acts that were to perform Friday evening were stuck in the traffic. Helicopter shuttle flights were hastily organized to get performers onto the site. As the crowds kept pouring in, fences were trampled down. There were not going to be any ticket takers. The size of the crowd had overwhelmed the site. And so from the stage on Friday afternoon came the announcement: “This is now a free festival.” The crowd roared.

From my spot near the stage, I was absolutely dumbfounded by the size of the crowd covering the hillside. The stage was finally ready about 5 p.m. and out came Richie Havens and the Grease Band and played a fabulous set. Then the sky grew dark and a thunderstorm with on and off torrential rain showers rolled through the site for three hours. But the music staff scrambled to cope with the crowd. Engineers dug four wells on the farm so there would be a sufficient supply of water. Tens of thousands of sandwiches were shipped in, including 5,000 made by the good people of Bethel and White Lake. Police cleared traffic lanes for emergency vehicles. Dozens of doctors flew in to supplement the small staff of onsite doctors and nurses. The Red Cross was on the scene. Extra security staff were recruited from three surrounding counties. And the Daily News frantically sent two more reporters.

Friday night’s program, interrupted briefly by rain showers, ended at 2 a.m. when Joan Baez, six months pregnant, finished her 65-minute set. She asked everyone on the hillside to light a match. They responded and the hillside shimmered magically. Saturday broke sunny again and the music started at 12:15 p.m. It then went on for 19 straight hours, winding down at 9:40 a.m. Sunday morning when Jefferson Airplane finished their set. The sound of the festival was the smell of the music and the “chak a chak” of helicopters ferrying acts to and from the site. The smell of the festival was the smell of marijuana. Police had decided early on they would not make any pot arrests. “If we started to arrest people for smoking marijuana, there would not be enough jail space in the six surrounding counties to hold them,” one of the deputies said.

On Sunday morning the hillside was a muddy mess and the high spirits of the massive crowd started to wane. By 2 p.m. Joe Cocker was on stage with the Grease Band and played a fabulous hour and a half set. Then the sky grew dark and a thunderstorm with on and off torrential rain showers rolled through the site for three hours. But the music

resumed at 6:30 p.m. with Country Joe and the Fish. I held on until The Band finished their set at 11 p.m., but the music would go on all night and into the morning. Wet and muddied, I drove back to the motel which by now had become an encampment for those who did not make it to the site. In fact, many small unofficial Woodstock festivals sprang up all weekend along 17B, gatherings featuring young people singing and playing guitars, harmonicas, tin whistles, violins, saxophones, and makeshift drums. People danced, smoked marijuana and drank.

After eating and showering, I caught several hours sleep.

When I returned to the site at 8:30 am. all had changed. The city on the hill was gone. Only about 40,000 now remained to hear Jimi Hendrix and his band play the final set. Just past 11 a.m. Hendrix ended his set with his bizarre version of the Star Spangled Banner. The music stopped. Woodstock was now a legend. It had been an amazing few days. Three people had died, two from overdoses, the third a young man in a sleeping bag who was accidentally run over by a tractor. Only about 100 medical cases were reported, including bad LSD trips, cuts, ankle sprains and a woman in labor. The police had made only 75 arrests, most for possession of major drugs like LSD. But the most amazing things about the weekend were the good natured crowd and the absolute lack of violence. Not one incident had been reported over three days in the pop-up city of 400,000. It had indeed been three days of peace and music.

And Max Yasgur’s cows came through it all just fine.
I
t started at the very beginning of our nation: The Declaration of Independence flat-out stated that certain truths are self-evident. The first among them was that all men are created equal. That particular truth wasn’t so evident until much later. After all, we had to fight a civil war over slavery, and are still grappling with the chasm between our aspirations and our realities of race and gender. We live in a post-truth world. What is the lifespan of a fact? Many among us, notably most journalists, complacently believe that objective, provable facts are true, and that they must be accepted by any rational, thinking person. But that would be laughably wrong. As President Donald Trump’s spokesperson Kellyanne Conway so piquantly expressed it just after the inauguration, it is altogether possible to embrace alternative facts. And, as Rudolph Giuliani, one of the president’s lawyers, enthused, Truth isn’t truth. It’s somebody’s version of the truth. As he later expanded, sometimes further inquiry can reveal the truth; other times it doesn’t. In a classic he-said-she-said situation, where can we find the truth?

In recent books, anthropologist and philosopher Bruno Latour and professors of logic Cailin O’Connor and James Owen Weatherall try to puzzle out why so many dismiss evidence was overwhelming. Even as it never mentioned them. “The connection, even though the scientific consensus, was that cigarettes and cancer could not be connected, even though the scientific consensus was that smoking and cancer could not be linked, even though the scientific consensus was that the wall on the southern border will keep the ocean of lies at bay. So, millions of people were lulled into believing there was no proven link between human actions and glaciers melting. In the world of journalism, dozens if not hundreds of people are fact-checking Trump’s false assertions, adding the nuance of context to outlandish statements, as if the huge collection of facts will stop the flood of lies. If that weren’t so sad, it would be funny. In this, journalists are much like Trump. He states that a wall on the southern border will keep the caravans of Central Americans from invading the United States. We believe the mountain of facts will keep the ocean of lies at bay. But, truthfully, just how important is the truth anyway? How much does it matter? A recent Broadway play tangentially reflected on current events, even as it never mentioned them. “The Lifespan of a Fact” was based on the real-world experience of an intern assigned to fact-check a published author’s essay. The dialogue supplied by playwright Jeremy Karen, David Murrell, and Gordon Farrell was consistently interesting and often funny, but I watched in dismay as the fact-checker and the essayist wandered into the land of conflicting extremes. The intern eventually focused on whether something was eight or nine seconds long, and the author screamed that his truth was more important than any facts. In memory, as in an essay, for example, certain facts may be blurred. In the play, the author character is firm that he is not a journalist, but an essayist. Certainly that can provide some cover: Who is to say what is right or wrong about someone’s memory of an event? On the other hand, when facts are verifiable, they should be respected, even in an essay or opinion piece. If news coverage states how a person was killed, then the writer shouldn’t change that because if the reader can’t trust the verifiable facts, why would he or she suspend disbelief about other aspects of the story?

What was lost, in the chaos on stage, was that facts do matter. In the end, Lifespan set up straw men but got me thinking about our current world. If all it takes for fake news to spread is to sow doubt, then we are in deep trouble: advertisers have long been doing it, politicians are doing it, foreign adversaries are doing it. All the fact-checking in the world won’t save us.

Tony Schwartz, ghost author of The Art of the Deal and the Silurian’s guest speaker on Feb. 20, finished up his prepared remarks, he paused to make a statement, and as he did so he choked up. Recovering, he said he has made a series of speeches since Trump was elected President “in the service of absolution. I carry so much shame about what I did and this audience is the one I feel most ashamed in front of.” Excerpts from Schwartz’s searing assessment of the man he helped make President: The inescapable truth is that I will forever be known not for any substantive journalism I ever wrote but for an act of casual complicity in which I created a largely fictional character who America ultimately chose to elect President.

In our very first interview [to gather material for Art of the Deal] Trump got impatient within three minutes… It was impossible to keep him focused on any topic for more than three minutes. He had, as you well know, a stunningly short attention span and virtually no capacity to reflect on his past…

More than any human I’ve ever met, or you are likely to meet, Trump had the ability to convince himself that whatever he’d say at any given moment is true, or sort of true, or at least ought to be true. Lying is second nature to Trump, just one more way to gain advantage. For him facts are whatever he deems them to be on any given day. When he’s challenged, as he demonstrated last week in the fight over the wall, he simply doubles down, utterly unfazed by the fact that what he just said is demonstrably false… From early in life Trump concluded that the best way to stay safe was to take no prisoners. He treated every encounter as a contest he had to win because the only other option was to lose which was equivalent to him of being obliterated…

When he looks out today even as President he sees a jungle filled with predators he must defeat to survive himself. This is why he admires autocrats like Putin and Kim Jong un, who seem to have an invulnerability he knows he does not…

There is no question in my mind that Trump has committed a huge number of crimes in the course of his career and the period running for president and as President. He has only one way out of that, to discard the system that would hold him responsible. …What I expect to see [in the next year] is a war, and we’re already seeing it and it will escalate…

Tony Schwartz on Donald Trump
new york times about her own relation

Leslie Jamison wrote a great piece in the conversation about feminism is anger.

arguments along the way, despite all the

reflected in your granddaughters' gen-

almost unimaginable to you at their age.

grandchildren live with would have been

your lifetime. Change has been rapid:

transformation in women's rights over

important. And to be so angry that you

stein as they were about a colleague

Rebecca Traister wrote about feminists

I would also never drive without of

The answer is no.

Most

in the members' parlors on weekdays

and may order drinks, nibbles and bites

dining room of the National Arts Club

have weekday lunches in the members'

Club servers also get

in rural Pennsylvania and the subject was

Friends went to Puerto Rico, to a doctor

(That fee is not a gratuity but is kept by the

have to take advantage of this bene

How to take advantage of this bene

sourced lists of men accused of various

form of harassment and bad behavior? For

instance, there was the men-in-media list

and there were several copycat lists

at various universities. I have obviously

gone on the record with my concerns

of several of these sorts of lists but

what do you think of them with histor-

ical perspective? One thing that bothers

me is the collapsing of a whole range

behaviors (like "leering" and creepy
direct messages) on the media list, along

with more serious charges. Another is

the eeriness of anonymous accusations

and often second-hand rumors ruining

people's careers.

Why not? Because the staff in clubs

like the NAC are paid a high hourly rate,

and many generous people believe that

survive on tips alone.

You will then be allowed to

up mirroring Trump supporters with their

own Twitter mobs and ideological

conformity. Anyone who disagrees with

a certain rigid set of assumptions is

automatically an enemy. So: I think the

movement could benefit from a true and

open exchange of ideas, which we do not

at the moment have. Many younger

feminists, in particular, really don't

believe in freedom of expression. The

conversation is very stunted by people's

one-sided perspectives. It's as if they

are more interested in shutting each other

down than in thinking about new ideas.

And that was among young women

with access to funds and an underground

the standard to ourselves. What do you

think about this anger? Is your own

empowerment always what you desire,

never feel you are being exploited or

celebrate anger the way we seem to do

now?

Anne: There has always been anger in femi-

nism and why not? It came out in hurri-

 cane strength in the first years of Second

Stage Feminists of the 1960s. The Red Stock-

ing feminists were on fire with the desire to

provoke, to blow up traditional marriage,

question all the ways women had been

brought to believe in certain rigid assump-

ions. The future was better. The divorces

were many. This stage of anger was

about prior repression and exclusion.

Women were suddenly given permission

to screen and I think they still are. That

is not a bad thing.

Kate: Obviously feminists, including a

younger generation, are definitely ener-

gized by Trump. But reproductive rights

do not seem to be a huge focus of younger

feminists. In a sense I think people have

forgotten what life was like before Roe v.

Wade. The idea of abortion being illegal

is very abstract to them, impossible to

visualize or relate to. Even for my gener-

ation, it feels like ancient history and, as

bad as things are, we can’t quite imagine

it happening again. With Trump’s influ-

cence in an inch or so, though, maybe this

is a mistake. Do you think younger women

should be more afraid of losing access to

safe and legal abortion?

Anne: I don’t know all the facts here but what

seems clear is that forcing Fra n k e n

out was a mistake that Demo crats

inflicted on themselves. It is as if the

Greeks killed Achilles without trial or discov-

ery and so weakened themselves. In this bleak

time of Trump we need Al Franken. His ques-

ions and his energy would have helped

the Democrats in his home state of Min-

nesota. It is as if the

Democrats inflicted on the movement

the cruelties we see every day in this
country.

Katie: What do you think of the idea of

feminists circulating anonymous crowd-

To Tip or Not to Tip at The National Arts Club

Now that Silurians are permitted to

have weekday lunches in the members' parlors on weekdays from 2:00pm - 5:00pm, the question of tipping arises. Should you tip the servers when you dine at the club? The answer is no. Most

clubs, whether the National Arts Club, the University, the Iveys, the Union, Lo-

tos, or the Century, do not allow tipping.

Why not? Because the staff in clubs

like the NAC are paid a high hourly rate,

and many generous people believe that

survive on tips alone. Club servers also get

substantial holiday bonuses.

NAC members pay a significant amount of tips (18%). It is not a hardship to those who

survive on tips. The club engages part-time

staff whose income is tied to the tips they earn, and there is an 18% administrative fee

on all food and drinks. You will also be paying the 18% administrative fee when you dine at the club. (That fee is a necessary part of the club to offset the high operating costs.) As

a result, you see the same faces year in and

year out when you visit most clubs. These

are worth good workers who

You should also know that you are getting the
daylight use of one of New York’s grand

and glorious institutions for a bargain. And

we are proud to be part of this grand

feast.

Achilles without trial or discovered and

so weakened themselves. In this bleak time

of Trump we need Al Franken. His ques-
i ons and his energy would have helped the Democrats in his home state of Min-
nesota. It is as if the

Democrats inflicted on the movement

the cruelties we see every day in this
country.
St. Patrick’s Day Through the Ages

BY GARY PAUL GATES

DURING my childhood in Michigan, I was surrounded by Irish relatives who were fiercely proud of their Celtic heritage. So, inevitably, I was exposed, at a tender age, to the dubious charms of St. Patrick’s Day. Such as: the obligatory wearing of the green, the sight of grown-ups getting tipsy on whiskey or beer and the lusty singing of sentimental ballads that, in my case, were often accompanied by ruckus and barroom brawls. This, I was assured that joy lusted singing of sentimental ballads that, getting tipsy on whiskey or beer, the sight of grown-ups of the midwesterner edge of Europe. So, inevitably, I was exposed, at a tender age, to the dubious charms of St. Patrick’s Day. But through the years that followed the heyday of the Head, we kept running into each other at social occasions of one kind or another, and in time became friends. Along with his other friends, I rejoiced in the glori- ous success of Angela’s Ashes. Published in 1996, it attracted a tidal wave of rave reviews and went on to become an international best seller.

Although McCourt had spent two decades teaching creative writing at the elite Stuyvesant High School, this was his first book, and what made that literary triumph all the sweeter was that it came at a time when Frank was rather long in the tooth. I ran into him shortly after the book was awarded the Pulitzer Prize and I asked him a teasing question: “So tell me, Frank—what’s it like being an overnight success?” McCourt grimaced at the memory of it all, and went on to say that he considered the book a “first draft” that had to be revised. He paused to let the wonder of that sink in, and then reiterated with more emphasis: “In Tokyo! Just imagine that!”

I suggested that perhaps Tokyo had decided to honor St. Patrick because he drove the snakes out of Japan. “Yes, I’m sure that’s it,” Frank agreed with a smile. “And isn’t this a grand world we’ve got for ourselves now?”

“I have known McCourt, who died in 2009, since the early 1970s, when the two of us were among the regulars who gathered at the Lion’s Head, a lively Greenwich Village saloon that, at the time, was a haven for raffish journalists, aspiring literati and sundry hangers-on. To the faithful, the nightly parishioners, it was known as “the watering hole for aspiring literati and sundry hangers-on.”

In those days, Frank and I had little more than a nodding acquaintance— I gravitated to one clique, he to another. But through the years that followed the heyday of the Head, we kept running into each other at social occasions of one kind or another, and in time became friends. Along with his other friends, I rejoiced in the glori- ous success of Angela’s Ashes. Published in 1996, it attracted a tidal wave of rave reviews and went on to become an international best seller.

Although McCourt had spent two decades teaching creative writing at the elite Stuyvesant High School, this was his first book, and what made that literary triumph all the sweeter was that it came at a time when Frank was rather long in the tooth. I ran into him shortly after the book was awarded the Pulitzer Prize and I asked him a teasing question: “So tell me, Frank—what’s it like being an overnight success?”

“I have known McCourt, who died in 2009, since the early 1970s, when the two of us were among the regulars who gathered at the Lion’s Head, a lively Greenwich Village saloon that, at the time, was a haven for raffish journalists, aspiring literati and sundry hangers-on. To the faithful, the nightly parishioners, it was known as “the watering hole for aspiring literati and sundry hangers-on.”

In those days, Frank and I had little more than a nodding acquaintance—I
told him that my wife, Phyllis, and I had recently returned from a vacation in Mexico and there, even in February, they were making plans for a lavish St. Patrick’s Day celebration. “Well, at least Mexico is a Catholic country,” McCourt noted. “So it makes some sense there. But I was reading the other day in the Irish Times that they’re going to have a St. Patrick’s Day parade in Tokyo.”

He paused to let the wonder of that sink in, and then reiterated with more emphasis: “In Tokyo! Just imagine that!”

I suggested that perhaps Tokyo had decided to honor St. Patrick because he drove the snakes out of Japan. “Yes, I’m sure that’s it,” Frank agreed with a smile. “And isn’t this a grand world we’ve got for ourselves now?”

“Oh, ‘tis,” I replied. “‘Tis.”

And for that, I was rewarded with an appreciative chuckle from the man who chose that terse rejoinder as the title for his second volume of memoirs, Teacher Man.

Over a span of five decades, Silurian Gary Paul Gates worked at CBS News and other journalistic venues, in both print and broadcasting. He is also the author or co-author of five books focused on the worlds of media and politics. A graduate of Notre Dame, Gates will in April receive the university’s Rev. Robert F. Griffin Award “in recognition of his outstanding achievements as a writer and producer.”

Society of the Silurians Officers 2018-2019

President DAVID A. ANDELMAN
First Vice-President MICHAEL S. SERRILL
Second Vice-President JOSEPH BERGER
Secretary LINDA AMSTER
Treasurer KAREN BEDROSIAN RICHARDSON
BOARD OF GOVERNORS: BETSY ASHTON JACK DUFFY BILL DIEHL ALLAN DODDS FRANK TONY GUIDA CYLDE HABERMAN MYRON KANDEL BERNARD KIRSCH THOMAS M. KENNEDY AILEEN JACOBSON CAROL LAWSON DAVID MARGOLIC BEN PATRUSKY STAN RUGOFSKY MORT SHEINMAN

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS:

Awards: JACK DEACY Constitution and Bylaws: ALLAN DODDS FRANK

Awards Dinner: GENE JACOBSON

Futures: ALLAN DODDS FRANK

Membership: MORT SHEINMAN

Nominating: BEN PATRUSKY

Silurian News: MICHAEL S. SERRILL, Editor

Website: BEN PATRUSKY, T. STEVEN SHEINMAN, Co-editors

Webmaster: FRED HERZOG

Social Media: BILL DIEHL

SILURIAN CONTINGENCY FUND BOARD OF TRUSTEES: STEVEN MARCUS, CHAIR

Society of the Silurians,
PO Box 1195
Madison Square Station
New York, NY 10159
212.532.0887
www.silurians.org
Then, “out of the blue,” Jones got a call from The New York Times’ Harrison Salisbury, who asked him to join the Times as a national correspondent based in Detroit.

“I’ve received compliments for hiring women, but the fact is women did it themselves.”

When a position was open, he’d turn to another hire, Beverly Cranford, the first woman reporter in the Washington bureau. He would say to her: “We need a good editor, Beverly. Do you know anyone good like you?” And she’d recommend her talented friends. The numbers of women at the Times grew based on the caliber of the people. Many of his hires went on to influence the news for years to come: Carolyn Lee became the first woman on the Times masthead; Cornelia (Cory) Dean rose to science editor.

From 1987 to 1997, Jones served as editor of national editions, which meant he was in charge of making the Times a national newspaper. (In 1989 he was also made as acting chief in 1983. For all that, Jones suggested “the four Fs.” While he was national editor, one important decision was giving women the freedom, a civil rights demonstration in Washington. Jones went on to edit coverage of the 1968 presidential election, a prelude to his next job. National editor Gene Roberts asked him to come back to New York as assistant national editor. Jones had first met Roberts in Detroit, where Roberts—who was working for the Detroit Free Press—was considered “the best reporter.”

“He persuaded me—but not with money. I decided that I was better equipped temperamentally to be an editor. I’d have more influence on what was covered and how.”

When Jones was named national editor in 1972, the Washington Post was making waves with its explosive reporting on the Watergate break-in. “It was awful getting our ass kicked,” he says. “It started out as a police story and we didn’t have reporters covering the police in D.C. They picked it up, and we were slow to recognize the significance.”

Soon, the Times picked up in pace. Jones was named managing editor of the Times in 1979, and he worked as an editor at The New York Times magazine, she was in the makeup room, while his wife was working as an editor at The New York Times. For all that, Jones suggested “the four Fs.” While he was national editor, one important decision was giving women the freedom, a civil rights demonstration in Washington. Jones went on to edit coverage of the 1968 presidential election, a prelude to his next job. National editor Gene Roberts asked him to come back to New York as assistant national editor. Jones had first met Roberts in Detroit, where Roberts—who was working for the Detroit Free Press—was considered “the best reporter.”

“He persuaded me—but not with money. I decided that I was better equipped temperamentally to be an editor. I’d have more influence on what was covered and how.”

When Jones was named national editor in 1972, the Washington Post was making waves with its explosive reporting on the Watergate break-in. “It was awful getting our ass kicked,” he says. “It started out as a police story and we didn’t have reporters covering the police in D.C. They picked it up, and we were slow to recognize the significance.”

Soon, the Times picked up in pace. Jones was named managing editor of the Times in 1979, and he worked as an editor at The New York Times magazine, she was in the makeup room, while his wife was working as an editor at The New York Times. For all that, Jones suggested “the four Fs.” While he was national editor, one important decision was giving women the freedom, a civil rights demonstration in Washington. Jones went on to edit coverage of the 1968 presidential election, a prelude to his next job. National editor Gene Roberts asked him to come back to New York as assistant national editor. Jones had first met Roberts in Detroit, where Roberts—who was working for the Detroit Free Press—was considered “the best reporter.”

“He persuaded me—but not with money. I decided that I was better equipped temperamentally to be an editor. I’d have more influence on what was covered and how.”

When Jones was named national editor in 1972, the Washington Post was making waves with its explosive reporting on the Watergate break-in. “It was awful getting our ass kicked,” he says. “It started out as a police story and we didn’t have reporters covering the police in D.C. They picked it up, and we were slow to recognize the significance.”

Soon, the Times picked up in pace. Jones was named managing editor of the Times in 1979, and he worked as an editor at The New York Times magazine, she was in the makeup room, while his wife was working as an editor at The New York Times. For all that, Jones suggested “the four Fs.” While he was national editor, one important decision was giving women the freedom, a civil rights demonstration in Washington. Jones went on to edit coverage of the 1968 presidential election, a prelude to his next job. National editor Gene Roberts asked him to come back to New York as assistant national editor. Jones had first met Roberts in Detroit, where Roberts—who was working for the Detroit Free Press—was considered “the best reporter.”

“He persuaded me—but not with money. I decided that I was better equipped temperamentally to be an editor. I’d have more influence on what was covered and how.”

When Jones was named national editor in 1972, the Washington Post was making waves with its explosive reporting on the Watergate break-in. “It was awful getting our ass kicked,” he says. “It started out as a police story and we didn’t have reporters covering the police in D.C. They picked it up, and we were slow to recognize the significance.”

Soon, the Times picked up in pace. Jones was named managing editor of the Times in 1979, and he worked as an editor at The New York Times magazine, she was in the makeup room, while his wife was working as an editor at The New York Times. For all that, Jones suggested “the four Fs.” While he was national editor, one important decision was giving women the freedom, a civil rights demonstration in Washington. Jones went on to edit coverage of the 1968 presidential election, a prelude to his next job. National editor Gene Roberts asked him to come back to New York as assistant national editor. Jones had first met Roberts in Detroit, where Roberts—who was working for the Detroit Free Press—was considered “the best reporter.”

“He persuaded me—but not with money. I decided that I was better equipped temperamentally to be an editor. I’d have more influence on what was covered and how.”

When Jones was named national editor in 1972, the Washington Post was making waves with its explosive reporting on the Watergate break-in. “It was awful getting our ass kicked,” he says. “It started out as a police story and we didn’t have reporters covering the police in D.C. They picked it up, and we were slow to recognize the significance.”

Soon, the Times picked up in pace. Jones was named managing editor of the Times in 1979, and he worked as an editor at The New York Times magazine, she was in the makeup room, while his wife was working as an editor at The New York Times. For all that, Jones suggested “the four Fs.” While he was national editor, one important decision was giving women the freedom, a civil rights demonstration in Washington. Jones went on to edit coverage of the 1968 presidential election, a prelude to his next job. National editor Gene Roberts asked him to come back to New York as assistant national editor. Jones had first met Roberts in Detroit, where Roberts—who was working for the Detroit Free Press—was considered “the best reporter.”

“He persuaded me—but not with money. I decided that I was better equipped temperamentally to be an editor. I’d have more influence on what was covered and how.”

When Jones was named national editor in 1972, the Washington Post was making waves with its explosive reporting on the Watergate break-in. “It was awful getting our ass kicked,” he says. “It started out as a police story and we didn’t have reporters covering the police in D.C. They picked it up, and we were slow to recognize the significance.”

Soon, the Times picked up in pace. Jones was named managing editor of the Times in 1979, and he worked as an editor at The New York Times magazine, she was in the makeup room, while his wife was working as an editor at The New York Times. For all that, Jones suggested “the four Fs.” While he was national editor, one important decision was giving women the freedom, a civil rights demonstration in Washington. Jones went on to edit coverage of the 1968 presidential election, a prelude to his next job. National editor Gene Roberts asked him to come back to New York as assistant national editor. Jones had first met Roberts in Detroit, where Roberts—who was working for the Detroit Free Press—was considered “the best reporter.”

“He persuaded me—but not with money. I decided that I was better equipped temperamentally to be an editor. I’d have more influence on what was covered and how.”

When Jones was named national editor in 1972, the Washington Post was making waves with its explosive reporting on the Watergate break-in. “It was awful getting our ass kicked,” he says. “It started out as a police story and we didn’t have reporters covering the police in D.C. They picked it up, and we were slow to recognize the significance.”
When Leo Meindl was treasurer of the Silurians, back in the fall of the last century and the first few years of this one, his bookkeeping methods were a virtual homage to analog methodology. Leo not only paid all our bills, he also collected the annual dues, which were for a long time mailed directly to his Brooklyn home. He did this without a computer or a cell phone. He did not own an answering machine. Somehow, however, the bills got paid and the dues were recorded.

Ten years ago, when he was 89, Leo stepped down as treasurer of the Silurians, but remained on the Board of Governors. The club’s financial records that he bequeathed to his successor consisted primarily of several large shopping bags stuffed with scraps of paper, including the backs of old envelopes and whatever else might have been at hand. Each dog-eared slip was covered with scribbled notations and numbers that, together, added up to a fiscal portrait of the Silurians. Leo’s monthly reports to the Board of Governors were breathtakingly brief. He would proudly announce, “We’re still solvent,” and promptly sit down.

Leo was born in Vienna on Jan. 28, 1920, moved to Brooklyn as an 8-year-old, saw Army service in Europe during World War II, met his future wife in Belgium, and was a reporter at the now-defunct Island Press for more than 30 years. A gregarious, peppy fellow, he was known in the newsroom as “Mr. Fix-It” because he handled such details as getting Working Press badges and NYP license plates for his colleagues. He often arranged tours of the L.P. Press building for local school kids. He also wrangled the copy boys, from archery to wrestling, from Breslin. After the paper folded, Leo became an aide to Queens District Attorney John J. Santucci. As a Silurian, he was a constant presence at our dinners, along with his wife, Berthe, to whom he was married for 68 years.

When Berthe died in 2014, Leo, then in his 90s and himself in declining health, left Brooklyn and moved to Fairfield, Conn., to be near his son, Albert. During his time in Fairfield, copies of the Silurian News were regularly sent to him. On Dec. 10, 2018, the November issue was returned with the word “expired” scrawled on the envelope. Leo Meindl, it turns out, had died — on Jan. 26, 2017, almost two years earlier in his 97th birthday. Brief notices provided by a local funeral parlor had been published back then in a couple of community newspapers, but even though Leo’s association with the Silurians was cited in those short obits, no one ever notified us. For two years following his death, not a single piece of mail sent to him from the Silurians was returned, so there was no reason to assume he was gone. This, of course, is our fault for not recognizing of who he was. As it said on the membership cards once issued to every member of this organization: “A Silurian is never forgotten.” So long, Leo. You’ll always be remembered.

Mort Sheinman is a contributing editor at Commonweal magazine as well as a freelance writer whose work appears in numerous other news outlets, especially the Daily Beast. He was a reporter at the Associated Press from 1980-1984. He then joined Newsday, where he was City Hall bureau chief. He left the AP in 2001, and taught journalism at Brooklyn College until 2017.