

# June Newsletter



June 2006

Issue 10

**June Meeting**  
**Bala Golf Club**  
**June 21, 2006**  
**Reservations 856-365-5600 or [rsvp@broadcastpioneers.com](mailto:rsvp@broadcastpioneers.com)**

**Reception 11:45 a.m.**  
**Lunch 12:15 p.m.**  
**Ratecard \$25.00**

June will bring us as our speaker long time veteran newsman, **Terry Ruggles**, who has just been promoted to co-anchor of NBC 10 News Today (Monday to Friday 5 - 7 am). Terry will continue his reports on NBC 10 at 4, 5, and 6 pm. Terry has covered local politics, the Move, and 9/11 tragedies. He has been around the world covering local angles on international stories since joining the station in 1974. Terry did a tour in the army before getting into television.

All we need is you on June 21 at 11:45 am at the Bala Golf Club. We will sit and eat at 12:15, and the usual rate card prevails, \$25. Please make sure to make your reservations by calling 856-365-5600, or email [rsvp@broadcastpioneers.com](mailto:rsvp@broadcastpioneers.com). It should be a great meeting with the veteran newsman whom we've all been watching for years, and a large group of your fellow broadcasters.



*Terry Ruggles*

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"My father never lived to see his dream come true of an all Yiddish-speaking Canada."

David Steinberg

## *Happenings*

Everyone loved having **Ray Didinger** as last month's speaker. And it seemed that Ray loved being with the Pioneers. He especially noted in his thank you note to the club on how wonderful it was to see **John Roberts** there, whom he remembered from his days at Temple U.

Did anyone ever say **Gene Vassall** isn't a survivor? For the few who don't know, Gene was a salesman at WFIL in the 60's, and had his own agency later. Super salesman, innovator of the 'Boss Chicks' and flat bed truck gogo, he has been

variously described as 'having cement overshoes' following a half million dollar financial misunderstanding with a casino, or locked in a witness protection program, or, as they say, whatever. A recent email indicated he has now a rep company in the Atlanta area. He says his WWII Marine Regiment of South Pacific veterans is having a reunion in Bransome, MO in October. Gene wrote to discover how many are left from the 3rd Battalion, full strength 5000, now 39 survivors, the only other from his platoon died early this year. He got a plaque from the

WWII Memorial Association in Washington, DC. His name and pix are enrolled at that shrine. He says he thinks of **Phil Sheridan** very often, as Phil did him a lot of favors. Say what you want...he's a candidate for something.

Please note that membership renewals will be mailed during the summer, and on that form, the club will now offer membership the option of receiving the newsletter electronically via email. The option will begin in September. It will be the exact same letter that has been delivered via US Mail.

**John Rose** writes that he is now working at KYW 1060 Newsradio as an Editor. (At the editor's desk....)! He says he had three great years as an assignment editor at WPHL-TV (WB17) for the 10 o'clock news. You'll remember the staff of 30 was "outsourced" to NBC-10 back in December. John says he loves being back in radio after 12 years of TV, and wants friends to know where he is, and to update his B.P. bio. Congratulations John.

## More Happenings

**Herb Clarke** emails that **Vince Leonard** and **Al Meltzer** have reported that **Bill Kuster**, long-time weathercaster at Channel 3 who now lives in Littleton, CO after retirement from KUSA, Denver, is suffering from leukemia and is hospitalized in an isolation ward. The hospital is in Denver. Bill has been suffering for years from a low white cell count. No further word on his condition or prognosis.

It's been a tough month for some notable Pioneer's. **Long John Wade**, famous for his antics on WFIL and WIBG in the 60's, has died. He was 66. All of us who worked with Long John could sit an eve-

## And More

Past President **Marion Lockett Egan** emails that she is just back from three weeks cruising in the Mediterranean, and in Lisbon and Athens. She says the trip was a celebration of retiring from managing Hershey Foods Media for 22 years.

You may have missed the significance of a long story in the Washington Post recently concerning "The Leak." Our own **Les Waas** is the father of **Murray Waas** who, according to the article, has been laboring in the shadows on many major stories, including the Scooter Libby, Dick Cheney story that is breaking all over the news

## And.....

We must say a few words about a loss recently, not of a broadcaster, but of the life time partner of a broadcaster who has been vital to the growth of the industry in Philadelphia. Many of us didn't know **Jane Koehler**, 82, when she died, personally, but felt we did anecdotally by the comments **George Koehler**, long time General Manager of Channel 6. She was a true partner in every way in his life, one felt, and knowing that we extend the condolences of his many fans, and employees, and pioneers from the golden years of television in Philadelphia. We feel your loss,

ning over dinner with stories of this bright, engaging, fellow. We'd never run out. He was like a meteor lighting up wherever he went. What a guy! His bio is on the [www.broadcastpioneers.com](http://www.broadcastpioneers.com) website. But if you want insight into LJ, ask someone who worked with him for his favorite Long John anecdote.

Another great pioneer from the 50's, 60's and 70's has died. **Mary Ritts** who was with WCAU-TV passed way a month before her 96th birthday. Multi-talented Mary was an artist, musician, and familiar television performer for many years. She was a fashion illustrator for Bonwit Teller,

channels and elsewhere. Justifiably Les is a proud Dad. The article points out that Murray may be very like his dad in his desire to do his job quietly but with great efficiency. Murray says if he is the story, he can't get the story. The Waas family are real contributors, and maybe Les could get Murray to tell us some stories sometime. Like his dad.

Speaking of newspaper writers. Two of our favorite broadcasters offer husband and wife columns in the Advertising Communications Times. In the most recent edition, **Ed Harvey** reflects on the tapes he has of

and you are in our prayers.

Another wonderful article was sent to the newsletter from The Villages Daily Sun, FL where apparently a lot of Philadelphians now reside. It details the life as a teen and thoughts of **Marian Shaffer-Spotz** who danced on the original 'Bob Horn's Bandstand' in the early 50's. The article details the forerunner of that show, the **Grady-Hurst** 950 Club, and the fall of Bob Horn. There are some great stories in Philadelphia broadcasting history and Bob Horn is certainly among them. You could write a

John Wanamaker and Stetson Hats. Her work appeared in Vogue, and Harper's Bazaar. In the early 1950's, she and her husband Paul created the Ritz Puppets for "In the Park," a weekly national television series on CBS broadcast from WCAU-TV. She appeared with Jerry Lewis in movies, Lionel Hampton and George Shearing in music, and the Tonight Show. Thanks to Gerry Wilkinson for the 'heads up' and the wonderfully complete obituary on our website, [www.broadcastpioneers.com](http://www.broadcastpioneers.com)

Sometimes, when I look at my children, I say to myself - "Lillian, you should have remained a virgin."

Lillian Carter (Jimmy's mother)

old shows gathering mildew in a barn. Ed, arguably, started the talk show format, and his career goes back mumble mumble...60+years. Ed recalls one he now has on CD of a Good Friday show with Norman Vincent Peale, and Billy Graham, guests that **Ronnie Snowdon** managed to get for him. On another page, Ed's wife, **Marge Wieting Harvey**, talks about **Les Waas** and his Procrastinator's Club.

**Leila Brenner**, **Gene McCurdy's** long time right arm, is home after surgery to replace her left knee. She says she'll have plenty of time for emailing between rehab.

book. A number of criminal charges brought Horn down, and maybe the full story has never been told. He left town, went to Texas and died at age 50. Dick Clark took over when Horn went down, and there is a whole lot more history there.

## Newsletter

Please note

that all of the items in this month's newsletter are based on emails, calls, and letters to Paul Norton, 205 Ocean View Blvd., Lewes, DE 19958, 302-645-8910, or email [nanort@comcast.net](mailto:nanort@comcast.net). If you're not here, it's on you. See you in September.