

and Pushkin book royalties, from four Soviet journalistic unions and literary and other societies. It was housed not far from the modern Tass office building in a white, four-story structure in which the pianist Rachmaninoff composed before he expatriated himself to Switzerland and Paris. Novosti's original mandate had the high-sounding purpose of the "Diffusion of Truthful Information for the Benefit of Peace and International Understanding." But from the beginning it was, in large part, propagandistic or informational—depending on your point of view—in somewhat the same way that the United States Information Agency is. It differed from Tass chiefly in that it was set up not to voice government opinion (that is Tass's job) but to voice "public opinion," as Deputy Chairman Georgi Fediashin, puts it. "We are not a government agency," Fediashin explains emphatically.

Novosti's 500 Moscow staff members—augmented by well over a thousand full- and part-time correspondents, photographers, stringers, and ambassadorial staff members all over the world—now publish six newspapers and thirty-two journals. These include, in addition to the new and controversial magazine *Sputnik*, the *Soviet Weekly* in London; *Soviet News* in Norway; *Science and Technology*, in four languages; the bulletin *International Information*, in Russian; and 60,000 copies of the plush, colorful, and excellently edited magazine, *Soviet Life*, which is distributed in the United States in exchange for the USIA distribution in Russia of 60,000 copies of the equally handsome magazine, *Amerika*. Novosti also publishes hundreds of books, including massive encyclopedias, such as innocuous titles as the Japanese-language *Soviet Circus Clowns*, and the Spanish-language *Sports in the U.S.S.R.*, plus such tough-talking treatises as *Crime Against Peace* and *Neo-Colonialism*, *The Bitterest Enemy of the People*.

Internally, Novosti provides largely feature copy and art (Tass is the wire service with the spot news) to 607 Soviet newspapers. Externally, through its North American, Asian, European, Latin American, and African divisions, it contributes to 5,959 newspapers in 105 countries. To help feed its worldwide market, it has standing agreements with some eighty-eight major agencies, including the Associated Press, United Press International, and the huge International Publishing House in Milan. It also has agreements with several magazines, such as *Paris Match* in France, *Stern* in Germany and *Epoca* in Italy. A major U.S. photographic agency is presently negotiating to represent Novosti in North America.

Currently running Novosti is a fifteen-

member "Council of Sponsors," which includes leaders of journalistic and literary guilds, and one of the cosmonauts, who also supervises the considerable material Novosti publishes on space. Most editors are experienced journalists as well as trained propagandists and polemicists, but some come from backgrounds as remote from journalism as the bar and the ballet. Chairman Burkov, at fifty-eight, has thirty years' experience in journalism and is the former assistant to the chief editor of Russia's leading newspaper, the old Bolshevik-founded *Pravda*, from which Tass gets much of the material it distributes. Deputy Fediashin is a jurist by education but spent many years as a Tass expert on Africa. The brilliant editor-in-chief of *Soviet Life*, Yuri Fantalov, still shows up for work in the same type of black sweater he wore when he reported as a student of the

Moscow School of Choreography and as a dancer in the Stanislavsky Theater. He is in charge of twelve editors, many with Stateside experience.

The quartet of Russians which Americans most often deal with is known for its ability—a quality as highly prized in Moscow as in Washington—for cutting through red tape and getting the job done, especially if a commanding number of oval portraits of Andrew Jackson is involved. The deputy editor of the American Section, docile-looking Nikolai Zhiveinov, has written books critical of the "capitalist press," but one thing he has learned from that press is the high value it places on the Gemini of speed and exclusivity. He tries hard to oblige and bills accordingly.

Georgi Bolshakov's TV Section deals in some of the most legal and tender portraits Novosti collects. Since the elec-

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INTERVIEWS FOR SALE

Should Reporters Buy News?

By BILL SURFACE

MY FIRST assignment from a national magazine was to write an article on how Ernie Banks of the Chicago Cubs lived and viewed his life as a Negro athlete in the era of the civil rights movement. Money, not modesty, made him an unwilling subject. Though Banks had just made sports news by being voted the National League's most valuable player and was being paid about \$60,000 a year, he yielded an interview only begrudgingly and then repeatedly interrupted it to: 1) ask, "Are you sure now that I don't get any money for this story?" and 2) excuse himself to make and take phone calls which, I was later told, were to Frank Scott, an agent for athletes, who was trying to persuade my editor that \$200 or more would draw "better" answers from Banks.

It was an appropriate baptism. I soon learned, as a full-time magazine writer, that so many baseball players look upon interviewers as business opportunities that some clubs' managements have quietly ordered their players not to demand \$25 or \$50 in return for telling a reporter that they hope to hit a lot of home runs. But, more recently, it also has become a fact that journalists need not write entirely about baseball players or Russians to be prepared to pay (or refuse to pay) individuals for being interviewed. These demands are not subtle tactics to discourage requests for interviews, as practiced by such diverse

individuals as Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu and Elvis Presley. A growing number of people, ranging from politicians to psychologists, want to make money by selling what qualifies as news.

This trend was made obvious to me while doing research on an idea for an article about the expense of getting elected to political offices. I noticed that the logical source of information was a U.S. Senator who had decried the growing possibility that only multimillionaires could afford to seek Presidential nominations. Upon phoning the Senator's executive secretary, I was told that the Senator "felt strongly" about the subject and therefore I should discuss it with him. But, before leading me into the Senator's office, the secretary interjected: "About the money. How much can the Senator get from this?" Surprised, I replied that most magazines seldom pay a person for being interviewed unless the material appears under the interviewee's by-line. She said that the Senator preferred that the article appear under his by-line. But after hearing my estimate of what certain magazines might pay the Senator, the secretary paused and said that she would have to call me. That was the last I heard from her. About four months later, I did see the same article, under the Senator's by-line, in a magazine

Bill Surface is a former reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Louisville Courier-Journal*. He now is a free-lance writer based in New York. His book *Inside Internal Revenue* was published this spring.

which, an editor said, paid a "higher-than-usual fee."

Selling news appears to be both common and nonpartisan. Not long afterward, while writing about Congressional ethics, I contacted another member of Congress (of different party affiliation) who had campaigned so vigorously for Congressional reform that he almost appeared to be a specialist on the subject. Apparently he thought so, too. "You've come to the right person," he said, hearing of my assignment and request for an interview.

He did not turn out to be the right man even though he stated, quite strongly, that Congressmen should give up their part-time jobs because of possible conflicts of interests, because such jobs may keep members away from Washington, and because they may hamper Congress's overall efficiency. But he also suggested that the article's format be either a "question-and-answer-type story" or "one of those as-told-to stories," then added, "I can't do this for anything like \$200 and get everybody mad at me." Since he then stipulated that none of the material could be used in a third-person (nonpaying) article, I was compelled to write the story under the Congressman's by-line or drop it for lack of new material. I dropped the project after the Congressman refused an offer of \$500, except for what he called a "very watered-down story"—a demand seemingly indicating that Congressional reform was not as urgent for a \$500 fee as it might have been if he had been paid \$2,000.

Some men who hold or have held public positions apparently are not content with courtesy fees and expect substantial funds for elaborating upon news

that they often have made. For example, a recently retired policeman who developed a reputation (while on a public payroll) as the nation's only expert in a certain field of crime eagerly agreed to answer my questions for a brief question-and-answer article; when three days elapsed after my first contact with him, he telephoned to repeat his interest in this "vital subject." Later he was just as eager about his "fee." When told that he would receive a minimum of \$750, a not-inconsiderate amount for an afternoon's work, he shouted "no thanks" and literally slammed down the telephone.

I am not the only one encountering more—and higher—demands for interviewing fees; major news organizations obviously are being forced to quietly pay for "exclusive" interviews or have it appear that they have missed a news event. This was vividly evident last fall when Albert Speer and Baldur Von Schirach, two of the last three major imprisoned Nazi war criminals, were released after twenty years in Berlin's Spandau prison. Predictably, *The New York Times* carried the news on page 1 and NBC-TV's *Huntley-Brinkley Report* had an interview with Von Schirach.

What viewers were not told is that NBC had to pay \$4,000 to Von Schirach for being interviewed. When CBS hinted that it had declined an offer from Von Schirach's agent for a paid interview, someone saw fit to imply that CBS had just paid to interview Gerda Munsinger, the East German playgirl involved in Canada's so-called "sex-and-security" scandal—an accusation that CBS denies. (A CBS executive told me that Gen. Dwight Eisenhower apparently is the only individual it has paid to

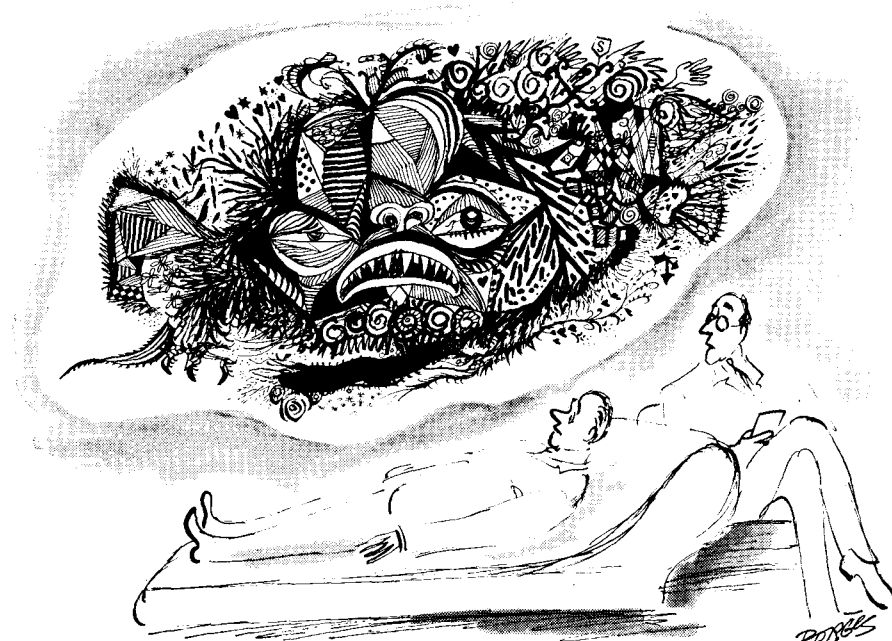
interview—for lengthy sessions connected with a documentary.)

Plainly, journalists and news media must face the question: Should they pay for news? Equally important, they should ponder that, if they do pay, are they obtaining legitimate news or possibly subsidizing someone to manufacture news or make artificial statements? Such a situation arose when CBS-TV's Latin American correspondent was told that, for a worthwhile fee, the network could receive either exclusive film coverage or have its own cameraman accompany a "rebel army" during an invasion of Haiti.

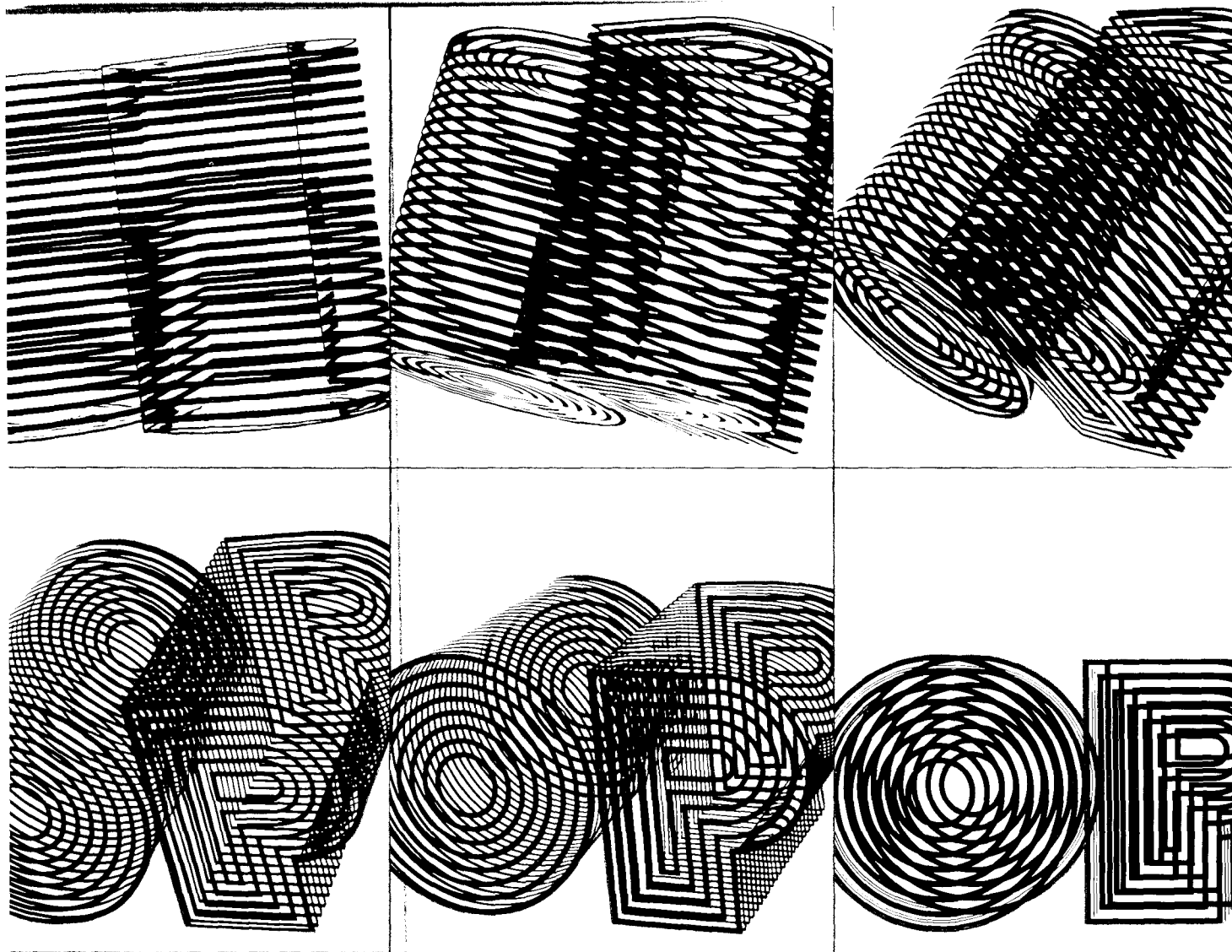
Evidently CBS was interested; it immediately broadcast a report that it had "learned" that Haiti was about to be invaded. The network also is said to have bid about \$30,000 for the film rights to the invasion. Wisely, CBS had second thoughts after sensing that it was not buying coverage of a genuine invasion but financing a group that for \$30,000 would "invade" a virtually unpatrolled Haitian beach, ostensibly slip into a jungle for a long guerrilla war, then re-board a boat and return to Florida. When photo rights could not be sold, there was no invasion.

IF news media will pay for "exclusive stories," they can often buy almost any kind of material, particularly from criminal lawyers who are selling more and more "facts" to be presented as objective news stories. Consider a type of incident that occurs frequently to magazines, ranging from *Argosy* to the *Saturday Evening Post*, that publish articles on adventure and crime. A convicted rapist-murderer so passionately maintained his innocence until he was executed that some responsible publications questioned his guilt. "Yet this man's lawyer voluntarily offered us the man's posthumous confession for \$1,000," says Milt Machlin, executive editor of *Argosy*. "The offer came a few days before the man was executed. We declined."

How many journalists decline offers to buy news? We don't know. We do know that news media not only need ground rules on paying for interviews; they should have the fortitude to follow the rules even at the expense of losing an "exclusive" story. Such policy need not, of course, interfere with buying memoirs, nor exclude payment to someone for lengthy collaboration on a project, or to someone—not a public official—who has suffered a difficult experience from which a reporter's organization might stand to profit should the experience be dramatized. If a public figure demands payment for being interviewed, the potential purchaser might consider whether the views are then really worth presenting to the public at all.



"Describe your dream fully."



What's Op?

Op, or optical, art is one of today's "in" forms of creative expression. Along with pop, happenings and psychedelic painting. They're what's happening in a nation-wide cultural explosion that is now causing once four-square foundations to rock...at times literally.

As focal points for entertainment and information in five major cultural centers, the CBS Owned television stations are "with it," of course. To wit, this Spring they are presenting "Eye on Art," a series of five hour-long color specials reviewing progress and problems in art in their communities. Produced by the stations for consecutive-week showing on all five, "Eye on Art" is a significant survey of cultural trends in some of the nation's oldest, most important patron cities. (Consult local listings for program times and dates.)

The five CBS Owned stations have long maintained a solid record for being up on (or ahead of) the latest, and keeping their audiences up there with them. For example, "Repertoire Workshop," an on-air showcase for newcomers in the performing arts, is a joint project in its fifth season. Another series, the Community Affairs Program Exchange, is in its ninth season. And so on.

This predominant interest in what interests people is one thing which makes our stations so interesting. One reason so many people find it so hard to turn us off. Which is precisely the reason we have always succeeded in turning hip advertisers on. Like our audiences, they know what's up!

©CBS Television Stations

CBS OWNED WCBS-TV NEW YORK,
KNXT LOS ANGELES, WBBM-TV CHICAGO,
WCAU-TV PHILADELPHIA, KMOX-TV ST. LOUIS

We invented the solar battery but brought you the wrong phone

It even amazes us how we can botch up the easy jobs while doing the hard ones so well. But it also distresses us. Installing the right phone in the right place is as important to us as developing the first solar battery, the

first transistor, or the first communications satellite. So as good as our service is most of the time, we'll keep working to make it perfect every time. We may be the only phone company in town, but we try not to act like it



AT&T
and Associated Companies



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tronic journalists started zooming in on Russia in the late Khrushchev era, they have become Novosti's best-paying hard-currency customers. When he was in the Washington Tass bureau, Bolshakov learned a great deal more about American television than the first names of producers, and now prides himself on his ability to speak the lingo, to maintain discretion on plans of highly competitive networks, and to deliver a requested place to put the camera. Novosti's profitable dime store is run by Alexandre Porozhniakov, head of the Photographic Section. From his bank of 170,000 negatives in which more than forty Novosti photographers make regular deposits, he sells requested prints on every subject from Ukrainian miners to ballerinas.

Blue-eyed Yevgeny Ruzhnikov, or "Gene," as he is known to most Americans, is Novosti's Grover Whalen. Although his exact title is amorphous, Ruzhnikov is the initial and often continuous contact man. His whole working style—including jokes in idiomatic English, invariable cheerfulness, strict punctuality, and American-type impatience with shoddy performance—makes him the ideal diplomat and trouble shooter from Novosti's point of view.

All of these men have one thing in common that is uniquely Russian. If it should happen—and it has happened under their predecessors—that a foreign journalist, especially an American, should decide, in the privacy of his home sanctuary, to convert whatever access Novosti has managed to sell him into an exposé-type blast, their heads could figuratively fall overnight. An American, backed up and made bold by big-budget journalism, risks, at the most, expulsion of himself and his corporation.

NOVOSTI's rate structure is based on internal as well as national compulsions. Deputy Fediashin points out frankly that Novosti rates are geared to the ability to pay. "We accept the rates of each country," is the way he puts it. In effect, the United States pays by far the highest rates, and there are many examples of Novosti's sometimes grandiose conception of what the market will bear. Novosti has often been known to settle for about half what it originally requested, but negotiation is especially serious business with them.

The British pay about half of what the Americans pay, even though their requests often penetrate deeper into Soviet affairs. The most privileged Western country, of course, is France, especially since de Gaulle's visit last summer, which flooded Novosibirsk with a planeload of French journalists. *Paris Match* and *Réalités* are now frequent Novosti clients. West European countries pay about one-fourth the U.S. price, and all others are

billed at one-tenth or less. African nations such as Nigeria, which wanted coverage of its students in the Soviet Union, are often billed at the token rate of \$5, or, sometimes, not at all.

Novosti's financial growing pains strike a familiar note in capitalist countries. The rubles that staked Novosti's debut in 1961 are apparently in the form of a loan with the stipulation that Novosti, like AP or UPI, must pay its own way. Says a former Moscow correspondent, "Each quarter they have a sort of mortgage payment to make, and their last-minute scrambling to meet it was often completely transparent. That was a good time to negotiate, although I couldn't avoid a certain sympathy for their problem. It was not only a familiar American dilemma; you also had to admire those boys for sticking their necks out and attempting something that, in the Soviet Union, was revolutionary."

The situation now is not quite so traumatic. Novosti has successfully survived considerable opposition within Russia—including that of *Pravda* and *Tass* traditionalists—and its two legal advisors tell them it is almost solvent. "In fact," a Novosti representative says, "we could pay back our sponsors now, but they don't ask for it. They want us to expand."

Any expansion would undoubtedly be in all areas, but especially in Georgi Bolshakov's three-year-old TV domain. Bolshakov, currently chaperoning about fifteen foreign TV teams a year (and juggling a score of others through correspondence), is now able to earmark about a third of his total production to the initiative of his own staff. (American networks are fighting him about his insistence on using Novosti crews, which they consider not yet up to network standards, but, more important, they resent this additional intrusion of Novosti control.) Bolshakov is expanding his Japanese base, is working with educational TV at the University of Moscow, and is looking ahead to the new Russian-French communications satellite, which has already relayed excellent color TV 4,000 miles.

Porozhniakov's frenetically busy photo lab has something of a Russian monopoly on color and is shifting rapidly to Ektachrome, anticipating a booming business in the reproduction of the works of Soviet artists, which now include some from long-banned abstractionists. Deputy Fediashin says Novosti will rapidly increase its representatives in all countries, especially in South America and Africa.

Some, but not all, of Novosti's future status depends on the continued willingness of well-heeled U.S. media to buy interviews, stories, photographs, films, and the Soviet agency's improving talent for running interference. Partly because

of the nature of the Soviet Union, that talent can seem priceless. Not long ago, for example, a network producer flew to Russia and attempted to work through one of the more established government bureaus, The State Committee for Radio and TV. "It was a nightmare," he reports. "They were hopeless amateurs and susceptible to every little gust of wind in the cold war. Novosti, on the other hand, has a professional approach. They are young and full of enthusiasm. It was too late to switch. When the State Committee project hit bottom, I just packed my bags for home." Novosti deals occasionally hit bottom also, but fewer and fewer Americans now pack up for home, mission unaccomplished.

IN my own case, despite the closed status of Novosibirsk and President de Gaulle's impending visit, Novosti finally came through. My two \$50-a-day Novosti escorts—a photographer with a Nikon F, and an interpreter-arranger—waved me onto an Aeroflot prop jet even ahead of Russian women with babies, who usually get to board first to get the seats which have baby baskets hanging above them. Four and a half hours later, in Siberia, another Novosti man, a legless veteran named Nikolai Kalinin, drove his yellow Volga car right out to the airplane to meet us. For five days, I worked an efficient schedule of interviews with the top scientist at *Akademgorodok* (science city) I had asked to see. The magazine that assigned the article was billed for \$750. Back in the Moscow area, Novosti's "Gene" Ruzhnikov lined up as many space experts as I could pay for. For \$125 he drove me to Kaluga, where a prearranged delegation included the grandson of Russia's "father of rocketry."

As impressive as such treatment may sometimes seem, a nagging thought accompanies such pleasant sojourns. That is the question of whether I, or any journalist, should participate in undertakings which, if practiced at home, we would be the first to criticize. Chairman Burkov stated an unassailable thesis: "The more we know about each other, the better understanding we have." But the fact remains that a purchasable commodity is not necessarily understanding. For one thing, the seller alone has the power of veto.

The other question, that of subtle censorship or possible undue influence, is somewhat moot. If a journalist can get snowed, he can get snowed in Washington or Kansas City as easily as he can in the Soviet Union. A Moscow veteran puts it this way: "When a pleasant Novosti guy emphasizes one thing, I naturally look at another, but I do the same thing at home. If you can't tell the spooks from the trees, you don't belong in this business."

OH, FOR A GOOD AARDVARK STAMPEDE

By JOHN O'REILLY

WHATEVER happened to the humorous, well-written, lengthy news feature story that used to enhance the pages of our newspapers? It delighted subscribers. It brought a closer relationship between the readers on the one hand and the reporters and the paper on the other. Perhaps more important in the long run, its execution was a powerful tool for fashioning writers. It provided an area in which fledgling writers could leave the strict confines of the hard news story and spread their wings.

I'm not talking about the long articles by so-called special writers nor the more or less searching essays concocted by columnists which are the current mode. Nor am I referring to those trumped-up efforts, usually on a special page of features, such as *SCRUB WOMAN TAKES UP ART*—complete with a sample of her painting proving she should stick to her scrubbing—or, perhaps, *MOTHER OF FIVE JOINS CIRCUS*, or even, *SOCIALITE DRIVES TAXICAB*.

The type of story I have in mind ran from 800 to 1,500 words and was found in the straight news section of the paper. Readers became accustomed to searching for these news features because they knew they would be rewarded with a story that not only was fun to read but often delineated some aspect of local life not touched upon in the hard news of the day. I know that skulduggery and mayhem make news, but it seems to me that there is also an obligation on the part of the newspaper to portray the citizens in their less violent moments.

I was first awakened to the possibilities of the news feature in the very long ago when I was a cub reporter on the New York *Herald Tribune*. I admired examples of it in the paper, but then missed my first chance to write such a story myself. I was assigned to cover an Independent Artists' exhibit at which there was a lot of avant-garde material, including some things fashioned of wire and broken crockery. It didn't impress me a bit. With the cocksure wisdom of the cub reporter, I informed the city desk that the story was not worth much. I wrote three paragraphs and considered myself generous.

John O'Reilly was for many years a feature writer for the New York *Herald Tribune*.

The next morning, while reading *The New York Times*, I came upon a beautiful, adroitly written story of the Independent Artists' exhibit. Rich in detail and subtle humor, it brought out aspects of the exhibit which had eluded my youthful scrutiny. My mortification was complete. I recalled meeting at the exhibit an intent, studious fellow who pored over each object at length and made voluminous notes. He had said he was from the *Times*, which was not noted for its features. The by-line on the story was that of Alva Johnston, one of the great reporters of our time.

I was even more deeply involved in another example of the art of news feature writing. I had been sent out to a Long Island community to investigate strange goings-on in the volunteer fire department. The chief and some of his jovial henchmen, among other questionable practices, had stolen the fire engine for a joyride to Coney Island on a Saturday night. The more I delved into the story, the more excited I became. But I stayed with it too long. I found I couldn't get a train back to Manhattan in time to make the first edition with the story. On phoning the city desk I was told, "Hold on. I'll give you a rewrite man."

THIS meant I couldn't even write the story myself. Disappointed but true to my trade, I poured out all the fine details I had worked so hard to get. The rewrite man showed no enthusiasm. In fact, I had to pause now and then to make sure he was still on the line. Finally, he asked me a couple of minor

questions and hung up. I left the phone booth in a low state of mind. When I arrived in Manhattan, I picked up a first edition and there was a rich, delicately written, funny story running more than a column. As I read it I realized I couldn't have done as well. The rewrite man was Robert B. Peck, then recognized as the best in New York.

Incidentally, volunteer fire departments constituted a good source of stories. Something was always happening among those gallant guardians of the public safety, as in the case of two rival companies who slugged it out in a jurisdictional fight while the house burned down, or the time when the faint, wheezy firehouse whistle was found to be caused by the tapping of its source of power to operate beer pumps in the cellar.

IN those days the *Herald Tribune* held a preeminent position for being well written. Good writing, along with thorough coverage, was not only expected of the reporter but enforced. If a reporter turned in a story, feature or otherwise, which was not up to writing standards he was told to do it over again, or it was given to a rewrite man.

The late Stanley Walker, city editor during that period, was a harsh taskmaster, ruling over grammar and style with a firmness that belied his otherwise genial nature. A young reporter who had just turned in what he thought was a prose poem would be advised by a copy boy, "Mr. Walker wants to see you." As the reporter would approach the desk Walker would give him a quick but withering glance and say nastily, "We don't use the term 'burglarize' on this paper," and turn away. The reporter, laid low by the searing comment, would slink away in the throes of dejection and, likely as not, head for the emporium next door to seek solace in the flowing bowl while pondering the depths of his inadequacies. Conversely, when Walker left his desk and, approaching a reporter, said tersely, "Nice story this morning," the youthful aspirant to literary fame would be so puffed up by the accolade that, likely as not, he would head for the nearby emporium and have a slug just to curb his exuberance.

Walker was such a stickler for good usage that he rewrote the *Herald Tribune's* Style Book, bringing it up to date and incorporating his own ideas

