

2018

Bet You Missed It-Press Clippings – in the news – Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

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Bet You Missed It

Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

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Editor's Note: Hey, are y'all reading this? If you know of an article that should be called to *Against the Grain's* attention ... send an email to <kstrauch@comcast.net>. We're listening! — **KS**

MISTRESS OF THE CHILD IN DANGER GENRE

At age 90, **Mary Higgins Clark** still writes two novels a year. She got started when her husband died young and she had to support five children. *Where Are the Children* became a runaway best seller and a movie. And she followed that with 50 best sellers.

There's always a strong moral code, no profanity, no overt sex or graphic violence. She has started to use co-authors — her daughter **Carol** and **Alafair Burke**, daughter of **James Lee Burke**.

See — **Alexandra Wolfe**, "Weekend Confidential: Mary Higgins Clark," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 21-22, 2018, p.C11.

IMAGINED MAYHEM

No one ever gets murdered in the Faeroe Islands except in the pages of crime novels. There are only 50,000 people, no locked doors, and everyone knows each other.

But "Nordic Noir" has found a new locale. **Jógvan Isaksen** is the local success with 18 novels set in the islands.

Craig Robertson has moved his setting from Glasgow with *The Last Refuge*, and plans a trilogy. English novelist **Chris Ould** already has a trilogy (*The Blood Strand*, *The Killing Bay*, *The Fire Pit*).

In a way it's no crazier than all the country house mayhem of **Agatha Christie** at a time when England had virtually no murders. And then there's the stacked corpses of 264 episodes of "Murder, She Wrote" in the coastal Maine town of Cabot Cove.

See — **Alistair MacDonald**, "Novelists Make a Killing From Virtually Homicide-Free Country," *Wall Street Journal*, April 21-22, 2018, p.A1.



PRONOUNCING POLITICAL CARTOGRAPHY

Elbridge Gerry signed the *Declaration of Independence*, fought for the **Bill of Rights**, ended as **James Madison's** Veep. But he's solely remembered for drawing voting districts to his advantage when he was Governor of Massachusetts.

A cartoonist morphed a senate district onto a winged and clawed salamander. Titled it: "The Gerry-mander, a new species of Monster."

And you've been pronouncing gerrymander wrong. It's a hard G like Gary.

His descendants are at pains to correct the public to no avail. **Alex Trebek** got it wrong on "Jeopardy!" Although curiously, **Ronald Reagan** would say it correctly.

See — **Redi J. Epstein** and **Madeline Marshall**, "Dear America, We All Say 'Gerrymander' Wrong," *The Wall Street Journal*, May 25, 2018, p.A1.

OBITS OF NOTE

Anne V. Coates (1925-2018) was born the niece of **J. Arthur Rank**, the famous British film producer. He was devoutly religious and wanted her nowhere near "the fleshpots of cinema."

She got around this taboo by working on religious films for churches as a film editor. Women often filled the editing jobs because it was considered technical and unglamorous. Her first film credit was for *The Pickwick Papers* in 1952.

She had **Oscar** nominations for *Becket* (1964), *The Elephant Man* (1980), *In the Line of Fire* (1998), *Out of Sight* (1998).

With 33 miles of film to chop down in *Lawrence of Arabia*, her genius invention was to transport viewers through space and time by having **Peter O'Toole** learn he is being sent to Arabia, blow out a match, then cut to an orange sun rising over a scorched desert. Academy Award for that one.

Her last work was *Fifty Shades of Grey*. She wanted to sex it up but the producers wanted to keep it R rated.

Art Paul (1926-2018) was the first employee of *Playboy*. **Hefner** gave him total artistic freedom, so he bought original art from **Warhol**, **Shel Silverstein** and **Salvador Dali**.

And he designed the bunny logo in thirty minutes of creativity.

Alice Provinsen (1918-2018) started her art career at **Walter Lantz Productions** doing Woody Woodpecker. She married an illustrator from **Disney Studios**, and the pair entered an illustrious career writing and drawing. They won a **Caldecott Medal** for *The Glorious Flight*, illustrated **Margaret Wise Brown's** *The Color Kittens*.

And they designed Tony the Tiger for Kellogg's Frosted Flakes cereal. For a flat fee. No royalties.

See — "Obituaries," *The Week*, May 25, 2018. P.35.

KIDS TOUR THE WORLD BOOKS

Miroslav Sasek slipped out of Prague in 1947 just as the Reds were tightening their grip. He became a star at Radio Free Europe but left in '57 to execute *This Is Paris*, a kids' book he had long incubated.

Before color TV and mass foreign travel, he was soon opening a portal to the world for elementary school kids. *This Is San Francisco*. *This Is the United Nations*. *This Is Israel*. *This is Hong Kong*. His style was bright, avant-garde, displayed the opulence and plenty of post-war capitalism.

He remained stateless, living in whatever city he was writing about and walking its streets. His last book was *This Is Historic Britain* in 1974.

And as you could guess, he was never published in the Soviet Bloc.

See — **Deborah Cohen**, "The Kids' Guide to the Postwar World," *The Atlantic*, June, 2018, p.38.

And you can read: **Olga Cerna**, **Pavel Ryska**, and **Martin Salisbury**, *This Is M. Sasek: The Extraordinary Life and Travels of the Beloved Children's Book Illustrator*.