
WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE IF YOU WERE BACK IN CHARGE?

FORMER TOP EDITORS HAVE THEIR SAY

Amanda Bennett THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER **Skip Perez** THE LEDGER **Ronnie Agnew** THE CLARION-LEDGER
Timothy A. Franklin THE BALTIMORE SUN **Mike Pride** CONCORD MONITOR **James O'Shea** LOS ANGELES TIMES

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The empty newsroom of The Philadelphia Inquirer is a symbol of changes in the industry.

Photo by Matt Rourke/
The Associated Press.

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From left: global health, page 20, photo © Kristen Ashburn; soldier in Afghanistan, page 26, photo by Anja Niedringhaus; Gay Talese, page 32, photo © Joyce Tenneson.

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Photo © Goodman/Van Riper Photography.

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“We editors are brave at standing up to power or danger or opprobrium—as long as it is coming from the outside. We are surprisingly weak at facing down the stares from within our own newsroom ...”

—AMANDA BENNETT, PAGE 4

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Challenging Ideas



WHEN KOKY DISHON TOOK OVER FEATURES AT THE CHICAGO Tribune in 1975, she didn't tinker. She slapped a "Closed for remodeling" banner on the old Tempo section and the following day redefined the so-called women's pages for all time. Coverage of political rallies ran next to wedding announcements. Sophisticated science reporting crowded out society stories. Bold graphic design replaced stock. Before she was done, Dishon would help launch the "sectional revolution," a national explosion in rich and deeply reported niche feature sections about everything from health to homes to film to food to arts and more. She created sections, killed them when they'd run their course, then built new ones in their wake. The pace of innovation not only upended the "soft news" ghettos of American newspapers, it attracted new sources of advertising revenue to fund journalism that likely saved a generation of readers. These were readers whose newspapers were in danger of becoming irrelevant to lives inexorably altered by changes in the social order.

The creativity she and other editors of her generation brought to the sleepy corridors of newspaper features departments seems easy and obvious now but it was neither. The assumptions they challenged about women readers in particular were as entrenched as any that inhibit journalists today. Moreover, they were arguing for the importance and appeal of content that some of their colleagues viewed as neither important nor appealing. When one leading editor of the time was asked about his plans for his paper's features portfolio, he said, "I love the comics!"

It's hard to do what Dishon did—replace an engine in mid-flight. The horizon—tomorrow's edition—is too close. But journalists are being asked to do that every day, and then the day after that, in the context of a radically altered media landscape. The crumbling of traditional business models and

consumption habits have made their efforts ever more urgent, even as resources for supporting those efforts wither.

Dishon's "Closed for remodeling" sign was not mere notice of a redesign but a declaration about the end of one era and her vision for the next. What would that same challenge look like today, and not just for part of a newspaper's operation, but for all of it? With that in mind, we put the following question before a group of accomplished former American newspaper editors from publications of varying sizes and geography:

Unencumbered by tradition and with the advantage of some hindsight, how would you organize your newsroom—or one similar—today? Assuming a budget in the ballpark of what you had, how would you deploy your resources to produce compelling journalism and address the needs of news consumers in 2012?

It is a difficult assignment, even with the benefit of distance. Some former editors who accepted the challenge later demurred, confiding that they struggled with the answers or were concerned about how former or future colleagues would react to their ideas. So we are especially grateful to those journalists who ventured forth. Some of their ideas are tactical, others address fundamental organizational changes; some are about things they would start doing, others are about the things they would stop. What they all share is an abiding intellectual and emotional investment in the struggle for the answer and for the future of the nation's newspapers, even the ones they left behind.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Ann Marie Lopez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Looking back what would they do differently? Six editors take a hard look at newspapers and what it will take for them to stay alive. More investigative journalism, more training, and an embrace of digital initiatives are among the priorities they'd have if they were back in charge. What resonates throughout their essays is the need for coverage that helps citizens and democracy thrive.

Looking Back, Seeing Today

‘Our expectations were both too low and too high. We misread how radical the shift in technology would be and how broad our response would have to be.’

BY AMANDA BENNETT

BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 2001 AND November 2006, I was editor of two Knight Ridder papers, first the Lexington Herald-Leader and then The Philadelphia Inquirer. It was a period of intense turmoil. Today Knight Ridder no longer exists. My job as editor vanished when the Inky was sold to a local private equity group, which subsequently filed for bankruptcy.

Back then, the changes were coming so fast that we were all struggling to keep our heads above water—and often failing. Had I known then what I know now, here's what I would have done differently—and how I would use that hindsight even now:

I WOULD TRUST THE NEWS AND THE NEWSPAPER: With circulation and advertising both dropping, we had a tendency to go apocalyptic. I remember long impassioned discussions about the “future of news,” about how young people didn't care anymore, about how newspapers were becoming irrelevant. The panic froze us and perhaps made us less effective at figuring out what our problems were.

Now it's much clearer that people—including young people—want news and that even physical newspapers have long lives ahead. We still have the challenge of redefining what news is, figuring out how people want to get it, and, crucially,

how to pay for it.

TODAY: I can see us focusing on what that news should be and how we should deliver it.

I WOULD STOP LOOKING FOR A MAGIC

BULLET: Back then, in our panic, we kept looking for big solutions to fix our problems: Zoned editions. Community news. Citizen journalists. The Web. Each was The One Solution or nothing. We beat up our newsrooms, exhausted everyone, and pinned our hopes for transformation on a succession of big bets. Our expectations were both too low and too high. We misread how radical the shift in technology would be and how broad our



Protesters gather outside The Philadelphia Inquirer after the paper printed one of the controversial Muhammed cartoons in 2006. Amanda Bennett, above, then editor, remains proud of the decision to publish what many papers didn't. Photo by Rusty Kennedy/The Associated Press.

DREXEL, 'NOVA, TEMPLE MARCH INTO WOMEN'S TOURNEY SPORTS

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FUMO TRIAL: THE VERDICT

GUILTY ON ALL COUNTS




Ex-lawmaker faces 10 years or more

By Craig R. McCoy and Emilie Lounsberry
PHILADELPHIA STAFF WRITERS

The FBI pursued him for four years. Its agents interviewed more than 350 people and compiled documents that filled 240 boxes. The grand-jury transcript takes up nearly 7,000 pages. The trial took 22 weeks and the testimony of 102 witnesses. Yesterday, a jury of 10 women and two men wrote the finish. They found Vincent J. Fumo

Tony Auth



TONY AUTH / The Philadelphia Inquirer (tauth@phillynews.com)

Series: 21 Reasons to Elect Kerry

The delusions and deceit on Iraq just keep coming

The Philadelphia Inquirer spent months documenting the corruption of a powerful state senator and ran a series of 21 editorials endorsing U.S. Senator John Kerry for president in 2004.

response would have to be. At the same time we missed how myriad would be the opportunities this shift would create.

TODAY: I would keep trying as many things as possible, including fiddling with different ways of asking people to pay for the news.

I WOULD NEVER ATTEND ANOTHER FOCUS GROUP: Ever. How many prototypes did we gin up? How many boards with different kinds of stories did we pass around? How many times did we hear readers say "Yes! I want THAT!" only to have that section or feature or zoned edition fall flat? How many evenings did we all spend behind the one-way glass window listening to our readers tell us we were too conservative, too liberal, not local enough, too local? Things were changing so fast that readers themselves didn't even know what they wanted. And they certainly didn't know what was coming down the road at them.

I used to say that no one, if asked, would have said that they needed a teeny vacuum cleaner they could hold in their hands. Yet we all now own DustBusters. Similarly, none of our readers would have said: "I want to share the news the second I hear it with anyone I want." Or: "I want to know what my friends are reading as soon as they read it." Yet millions would soon be doing that on Facebook and Twitter.

TODAY: I still wouldn't hold or attend a focus group again. Ever.

I WOULD HAVE STOPPED ENGAGING IN STUPID ARGUMENTS: How much time did we waste arguing about what is the proper profit margin for a newspaper company? How much time did we waste trying to decide whether public ownership was to blame? Profit margin and shareholder pressure may have been stresses on the industry but they were nothing compared to the technological and social upheavals we should have been focused on. I watched and worked for companies that milked every cent of profit from their papers as well as for

those that husbanded every newsroom resource for as long as possible. All met with very similar fates. We argued in-house about profit margins and private vs. public ownership at a time when we should have been looking outward.

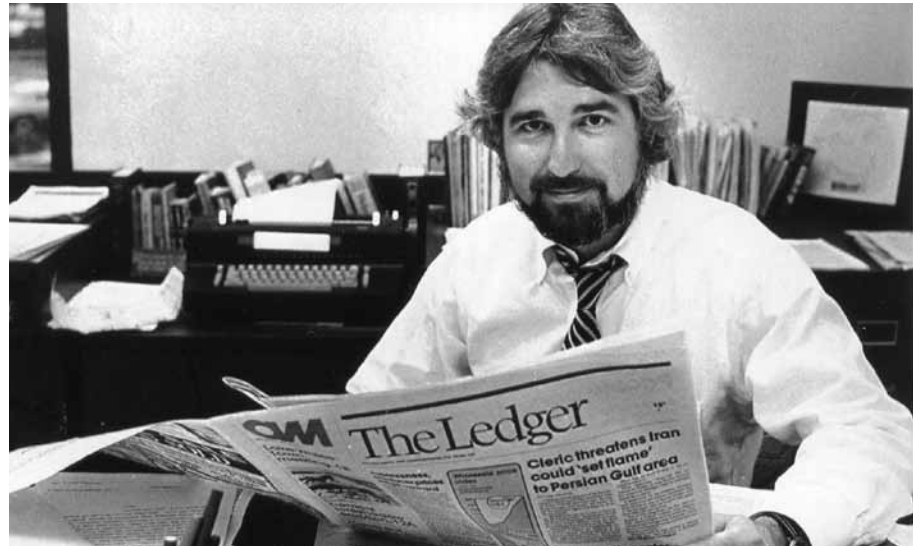
TODAY: I wonder who wouldn't cheer for an extra point of profit margin.

I WOULD HAVE BEEN BRAVER: As I look back on my career as editor, I feel proudest of the times I was bravest: The day I helped the Lexington editorial board craft an editorial saying that there wasn't enough evidence of weapons of mass destruction to warrant an invasion of Iraq. The month in Philadelphia when we ran 21 days of editorials on why John Kerry and not George W. Bush should be elected president. The weekend we ran the controversial Muhammed cartoon. The months and months of tackling a powerful—and corrupt—state senator (who is now in prison).

We editors are brave at standing up to power or danger or opprobrium—as long as it is coming from the outside. We are surprisingly weak at facing down the stares from within our own newsroom when we hear, “That’s not what we do,” “That’s not my beat,” or “We’ve never done that.” How many more times should I have said “Yes it is,” “It’s your beat now,” “It’s time to try.” I should have been braver at recognizing the difference between a reverence for the past and a reluctance to face the future.

TODAY: The future still lies ahead. Why not try?

Amanda Bennett is executive editor for projects and investigations at Bloomberg News. After a 23-year career at The Wall Street Journal, she was a managing editor at The Oregonian and editor of the Lexington Herald-Leader and The Philadelphia Inquirer.



Skip Perez, above in 1980 at his former paper in Florida, would like to see a “training renaissance.”

The Overlooked ‘People Piece’

‘... the right kind of training will boost morale and reward the news organization with dedicated staffers itching to tackle groundbreaking assignments.’

BY SKIP PEREZ

WHEN I RETIRED IN JANUARY 2011 AS executive editor of The Ledger, a 55,000-circulation daily in Lakeland, Florida, I had had my fill of reorganizing and restructuring, redefining and realigning. These terms were euphemisms for “We must slash payroll because advertisers aren’t spending like they used to. And our profit is shrinking. So our stockholders aren’t happy. And Wall Street is dissing us. So you gotta do more with a helluva lot less. Congratula-

tions, you now have four titles!”

I was asked to write about how I would do things differently if I were leading a newsroom in today’s hectic media landscape. But I can’t do justice to that assignment for two reasons: 1.) I have no clue what I’d do differently or better because I operated largely on instinct based on what I observed, feedback I received, and what I thought our readers deserved to know, and 2.) I now sense a much more fundamental problem that

deserves thoughtful, immediate attention—a creeping despair that requires a sustained and systematic assault because it poses a serious threat to journalism.

Newsrooms have never been well-springs of optimism, even in the best of times. But this is different. Unrelenting awful economic news about most media companies has contributed to an atmosphere of fear and insecurity among many if not most journalists. Those anxieties are well founded. Nearly 14,000 newsroom jobs have been eliminated since 2007, according to the American Society of News Editors (ASNE), and a visit to Erica Smith's excellent website newspaperlayoffs.com shows the steady stream of layoffs across the industry.

Eroding faith in a noble calling is a plague on the craft, with far-reaching implications for the future of the profession and, more important, democracy. But my sense is that almost everyone is overlooking the “people piece,” meaning

training is essential. Training budgets are among the first to be eliminated when money gets tight. But the right kind of training will boost morale and reward the news organization with dedicated staffers itching to tackle groundbreaking assignments. And those who are given training opportunities will gladly share their experiences and ideas with colleagues at a meeting or brown bag lunch. So one small step toward lifting spirits is for upper management to commit to a healthy increase in newsroom training budgets.

OWNERS WHO CARE

Newsrooms also would be rejuvenated if staffers believed the owners had a genuine appreciation for their work and values. Adolph Ochs said his New York Times would cover the news “without fear or favor.” But some nouveau newspaper owners have demonstrated an appalling lack of judgment and knowledge about journalistic mission

and ethics. In one particularly egregious case, a CEO proposed cash incentives to everyone, including reporters and editors, for selling advertising. A seminar on journalism credibility and conflicts of interest would be a valuable learning experience for executives tone-deaf to those fundamental values.

attack plunging newsroom morale. In a commentary reflecting on managers' handling (and mishandling) of repeated announcements of staff layoffs, she discussed the “new reality” of managers dealing with staffers who have no loyalty to their employers and “harbor deep resentments” toward their corporate bosses for failing to grasp the depth of grief associated with debilitating cuts in recent years.

Yet even in this somber scenario there is hope. Geisler argues that newsroom managers must rededicate themselves to helping staffers improve and do their best work. That's why a training renaissance is vital for the salvation of high-quality journalism. Managers must learn to help their workers motivate themselves because self-motivated employees are key to any organization's success.

When Warren Buffett announced late last year that he was buying the Omaha World-Herald, his hometown newspaper in Nebraska, a staff meeting erupted in cheers. Some were surprised by the reaction, but anyone who has read “The Snowball,” Alice Schroeder's biography of Buffett, knows that he was a driving force behind the Omaha Sun winning a Pulitzer Prize in 1973 for exposing questionable financial practices at Boys Town, a venerable local institution for wayward youths. Buffett owned the paper and he helped editors and reporters decipher Boys Town tax returns.

What was the message in those cheers? Hope and pride in having an owner who believes in the power of journalism to change society and shine a spotlight on wrongdoing “without fear or favor.” Despair won't get a foothold in a newsroom where the boss understands and encourages extraordinary work and gives the staff the resources to pursue it.

Skip Perez was executive editor of The Ledger in Lakeland, Florida for 30 years before retiring in 2011. He also served as senior editor for The New York Times Regional Media Group and vice chairman of the U.S. Freedom of Press Committee of the Inter-American Press Association.

As most editors know, a newsroom that aggressively pursues important, hard-edged stories on a regular basis is less susceptible to the culture of complaint.

the newsroom staffers who should care deeply about the quality of their work and feel good about it every day. Certainly one may argue they should be grateful to have a job, and most probably are. But simple gratitude falls far short of the excitement and zeal that dominated newsrooms 42 years ago when I landed my first reporting job. How might newsrooms recapture that essential spirit, short of hiring a managing editor for psychotherapy?

As most editors know, a newsroom that aggressively pursues important, hard-edged stories on a regular basis is less susceptible to the culture of complaint. The work is noticed and celebrated. It is a wonderful antidote to pessimism.

To nurture this atmosphere, particularly at smaller newspapers with which I am most familiar, a commitment to staff

and ethics. In one particularly egregious case, a CEO proposed cash incentives to everyone, including reporters and editors, for selling advertising. A seminar on journalism credibility and conflicts of interest would be a valuable learning experience for executives tone-deaf to those fundamental values.

For my money, the Poynter Institute is the gold standard for industry training on everything from basic newsgathering to management leadership. Poynter and other professional groups—notably ASNE and the Newspaper Association of America—could do the industry a major service by seeking effective ways to address the heightened anxieties and hopelessness that persist in many newsrooms.

Poynter's Jill Geisler is one of the few passionate advocates for doing more to



Speak Loudly, Move Nimbly

‘Lead the community through the newspaper’s strong editorial voice. ... Find out what works on the Web for your market, and exploit it.’

BY RONNIE AGNEW

Ronnie Agnew, former executive editor of The Clarion-Ledger, considers investigative reporting a top editorial priority. Photo by Melanie Thortis.

I LEFT THE NEWSPAPER BUSINESS THIS past August after 27 years, but I find that I'm consuming more news and information than ever—on multiple platforms—and that I'm increasingly defending an industry trapped between its glory days and uncertain future.

My reading takes me beyond my local newspaper to electronic versions of several national publications, including The New York Times and USA Today, the flagship of my former employer, Gannett, which owns The (Jackson, Miss.) Clarion-Ledger, where I spent nine years as executive editor and 18 months as managing editor.

While newspapers are in a desperate race to find a new business model, the line of naysayers predicting their ultimate demise continues to grow. My advice to them: You're in for a long wait. But there's plenty of work to do to keep the naysayers at bay.

In my time away from the newsroom, my consumption of news has evolved into an intense desire for more depth in reporting. It would not be fair to criticize the industry without putting forth ideas that might help. So what do newspapers need to do to get their swagger back? How about the thoughtful and sophisti-

placed priorities, devoting too much coverage to Lady Gaga and too little to local government.

Cover the community better than anyone else. Monitor what the competition doesn't provide. Unless the newspaper is a national one, local news is the primary reason people buy the paper.

Accept the fact that as more readers become comfortable with digital tools, circulation of the printed newspaper is likely to decrease. Newspapers need not be threatened by this. Provide the information readers want and watch them come.

Move faster and more nimbly into digital initiatives. Paywalls are just a start and should have become standard years ago, before staffs were cut and the public came to expect free as the norm. The successful newspaper must be disseminated any way the reader wants it. Social media tools must be embraced and used to enhance news reports, not replace them.

Lead the community through the newspaper's strong editorial voice. The opinion pages should provoke thought and generate passionate community discussion. Whether or not readers disagree with the views expressed, they do not want tepid opinion pages.

Find out what works on the Web for your market, and exploit it. Most newspapers toss the entire paper on the Web, instead of finding some specialties to build upon. If video is hot in your market, specialize in it on your site. If folks want nightlife information, feature it. If they want "good reads," that's what you should give them. You're dealing with a totally different audience on the Web; find out what that audience wants.

Get out of the office and get to know the town, what makes it tick, what makes it unique. Staff cuts are no reason to do journalism by phone. The town ought to know the newspaper is there and have respect for it, even when there are disagreements.

None of what I suggest would be considered cutting edge. Newspaper executives have become so consumed by the business side of the industry—and even I find it difficult to blame them—that some are losing sight of their commitment to the people at home, the ones they want to serve. The result is hundreds of underserved communities and public officials celebrating their newly discovered freedom as their conduct of the public's business too often goes uncovered.

A quality read, regardless of platform, will be the central element that will pump new life into the industry. Yet the exodus of seasoned news professionals has created a level of inexperience that has contributed to the decline, making it more difficult to do even the basic things that I suggest.

But my advice to my friends in newsrooms across America is you can quit, give up, or use the cutbacks as an excuse for a poor news product. Contrary to what many would have us believe, American communities have a huge appetite for news. Don't worry so much about how it is consumed. Focus on what you will give readers to consume.

Ronnie Agnew, executive director of Mississippi Public Broadcasting, is the former executive editor of The Clarion-Ledger in Jackson, Mississippi.

Accept that the newsroom can no longer cover everything. Develop a list of franchise beats and ... own them. It's your town; act like it is.

cated inclusion of digital tools and social media and a return to what made them successful in the first place? Make me editor again and here's what I would do:

Maintain an investigative reporting culture. Strong reporting questioning authority, exposing corruption, and speaking for the powerless has led the way for many years in separating newspapers from their competitors. Any newspaper without strong investigative reporting is on the verge of becoming irrelevant. Yet many papers have mis-

Eliminate home delivery of the Monday paper. Put the Monday paper on newsstands and reinvest the savings in lagging coverage areas.

Accept that the newsroom can no longer cover everything. Develop a list of franchise beats and make the commitment to own them. It's your town; act like it is.

Bring back training. Training budgets have been cut, but there are other ways to teach people. Bring in folks on the cheap. Do in-house seminars.

A Bridge to the Future

Instead of printing the paper every day, ‘we would provide to our subscribers an e-reader such as a Kindle or a Nook. This serves the dual purpose of strengthening our print editions on key days and building an e-reading habit ...’

BY TIMOTHY A. FRANKLIN

HANGING PROMINENTLY IN THE LOBBY of The Baltimore Sun building is a black and white photo of the legendary H.L. Mencken. Along with his visage is this quote: “As I look back over a misspent life, I find myself more and more convinced that I had more fun doing news reporting than in any other enterprise. It is really the life of kings.”

“Life of kings”? Nearly half a century after The Sun’s icon uttered those words, there are few journalists at metro newspapers today who would echo that sentiment.

It doesn’t have to be so.

The time for tinkering is past, however. Redesigns and the repackaging of print editions may temporarily stem declines. They will not save the franchise. Diluting the quality of journalism through quarterly budget cutting may ensure survival in the near term. It’s a suicidal strategy over the long term.

It’s been about three years since I occupied the editor’s office, a glass-enclosed space at The Sun that included Mencken’s old conference table, where he no doubt held court like a king. Since then, I taught journalism at Indiana University (IU) and now work as an editor at Bloomberg News.

Over that time, I’ve seen bright students voraciously consume news, most of it on their smart phones and laptops. And I’ve interacted with sophisticated Bloomberg readers who are willing to pay for quality news and data they receive on computer terminals and



Former Baltimore Sun editor Timothy A. Franklin says his new mantra would be: “We are a digital news operation with a print component.” Photo by Chris Gardner/The Associated Press.

websites and via apps.

What do these IU students and Bloomberg subscribers have in common? They’re smart, discerning readers who crave trusted, credible news and information.

And many don’t rely on print daily.

NO PRISONER TO PULP

If I were starting over in the top job at the Sun, knowing what I know now, my

new mantra for the newsroom would be: We are a digital news operation with a print component. We are not a print newsroom with a digital component. That is the organizing principle that guides all of our decisions, I would tell my staff.

In Baltimore, it’s time to break the daily ritual of printing newspapers and throwing them on driveways and stoops seven days a week. Yes, there’s a risk in

breaking readers' print habit. But that routine is in decline anyway. There are creative ways to maintain daily readership and build a bridge to the future.

My newsroom would acknowledge a painful reality. The print editions some days of the week—mainly Monday, Tuesday and Saturday—are so paltry they beg the question: Why am I paying for this? They're a physical manifestation of the decline of the business.

The considerable money spent on ink, paper, trucks, delivery agents, and news production those three days could be reinvested in improving the print editions on the other days. In the process, an entirely new delivery mechanism could be spawned.

Rather than manufacture and distribute print editions those three days, we would provide to our subscribers an e-reader such as a Kindle or a Nook. This serves the dual purpose of strengthening our print edition on key days, and building an e-reading habit for what will inevitably be an entirely digital future.

YOUR LOCAL 'SIRI'

My newsroom would aspire to be a service-oriented, one-stop news and information portal for the region. For a modest subscription fee, my newsroom would give readers different tiers of information based on the device they're using and their needs. Yes, frequent users would pay.

A breaking news desk would crank out headlines and two- or three-paragraph news accounts for smart phones and social media. This desk also would send news alerts via e-mail and Twitter.

At the same time, other editors, reporters, photographers and graphic artists would be creating in-depth and refined versions for print, tablet and website editions.

Our franchise Sunday newspaper will be meatier and a showcase for powerful local storytelling. We can afford it because we're cutting our print losses three other days of the week and using our resources differently.

More than being a source of news, however, we would be a go-to digital repository for community information and tips that readers need in their daily lives. Want to know the best place to catch a cab or what's the hot new restaurant? My newsroom would aspire to be the local equivalent of Siri, Apple's voice assistant, instantly providing answers to the questions you have about Baltimore. We'd create a Utilities Desk with editors who would create and update that information.

PERSONALITIES AS BRANDS

Not everyone wants the entire content of the daily news report, any more than a music lover wants to buy an entire CD. We live in a world of niche interests. We would build brands within the brand. In sports, for example, we would sell a monthly digital subscription that is less expensive than the entire paper, and give readers access to our beat writers for chats, video of news conferences, and all the stats they can handle.

We would aggregate stories and blogs from other credible sources that are relevant to fans of the Ravens, Orioles and the University of Maryland.

We'll also produce a weekly Baltimore sports magazine or tab that we'll sell separately.

Personalities can be brands, too. My newsroom would celebrate our personalities and create more of them. They provide a personal connection with readers and unique voices for the community.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

Perhaps the single biggest mistake editors and publishers have made in recent years is cutting the number of investigative reporters. Any new newsroom paradigm also must have a back-to-the-basics approach, with a commitment to accountability journalism. This is not a luxury. It's fundamental to the role of the news organization in the community. It builds trust with readers. It demonstrates that we have their best interests in mind.

Frankly, it's also good business. It puts the news organization at the center of the

community conversation on issues that matter. It's also a point of differentiation at a time when our competitors' newsrooms have been pared by budget cuts.

My newsroom would cover the traditional city and suburban beats aggressively—city hall, statehouse, politics, cops, courts and schools. We would cover the major companies and industries. These beats are the lifeblood of what we do. My newsroom would have two full-time obituary writers.

It also would have a dedicated social media desk with editors connecting with readers on a personal level through sites like Facebook and Twitter and providing tailored news and information for those platforms. This is the best and most efficient way to engage with readers one-on-one and provide them with news and information they're interested in. To accomplish all this, my newsroom would not be bound by many of the conventions of legacy newspapers.

In an era of easy interactivity, my newsroom would have an opinion editor—not an entire editorial board—and there would be fewer institutional editorials. We would have op-ed columnists who engage with readers.

We would need fewer page designers and copy editors and more video editors and Web producers. We would need fewer general assignment writers and more reporters who are experts and can share that knowledge with readers via blogs.

It won't be a life of kings anytime soon. It could at least be a life of princes, however, if we boldly innovate and execute.

Timothy A. Franklin is a managing editor in the Washington bureau of Bloomberg News. He was the top editor of The Baltimore Sun, the Orlando Sentinel and The Indianapolis Star, and a senior editor at the Chicago Tribune. Before joining Bloomberg, he was the director of the National Sports Journalism Center and the Louis A. Weil, Jr. Chair at the Indiana University School of Journalism.



Concord Monitor editor Mike Pride interviews Barack Obama before the 2008 N.H. presidential primary. Photo by Dan Habib/Concord Monitor.

Turn the Newsroom Inside Out

‘The goal would be to enlist the public in expanding local sports and photography while reducing the role of professional journalists in these areas.’

BY MIKE PRIDE

THE CONCORD (N.H.) MONITOR STILL shows up on my doorstep each day. I read the local news. I follow with dismay the Republican reactionaries the voters elected to the New Hampshire Legislature in 2010. I read the obits. I read the news from City Hall and the business

community. I read about sports and local culture. I read the editorial page. I pretend nothing has changed while knowing it has.

The Monitor is a small paper—with a circulation well under 20,000 after a decline of 15 to 20 percent during recent

years—but its task is large. It covers the city of Concord, more than 20 towns (each with a distinctive personality and history), a 424-member Legislature, many state agencies, and, every four years, the nation’s first presidential primary.



The Concord Monitor blends community journalism and a national voice. Top: Editor Mike Pride as a colonial publisher. Bottom: With Bill Clinton before the 1992 N.H. presidential primary. Photo by Gayle Shomer/Concord Monitor (top); photo courtesy of Concord Monitor (bottom).

Since I left the Monitor in 2008 after 25 years as editor, severe cuts have been made to keep the paper solvent. The cityside reporting staff has fallen from 15 to 8.5 members. The staff remains as skilled and committed as ever, but even without new duties as bloggers, tweeters and breaking news Web writers, it is too small to cover the community.

A community newspaper, with its flexibility and closeness to readers, is the ideal place to lead the revolution in online journalism, but I retired in part because I was not the person to direct that crusade. If I were starting a community paper in Concord today, my first hire would be a savvy person who would make smart online news delivery a top priority. After that, every idea I hatched and executed would be aimed at restoring and enhancing local news reporting.

I would make significant changes in the newspaper's content and how it is gathered. The main ones would be in the sports and photo departments.

There would be no sportswriters per se on my staff. I'd merge production of the sports pages into a universal desk and move the sportswriters to the news side. Of course, the paper would often use their talents to cover big local sports events and write sports features, but most of their time would be spent reporting the news.

What about the rest of sports? We would buy coverage of Boston pro sports, the University of New Hampshire teams, and other regional sports but leave coverage of most national and international sports to other websites.

We'd expand local sports coverage, mainly using the Web. This would require even greater use than the paper now makes of sports stringers, call-ins and e-mails from local high schools and league officials. The Monitor would be the place for people to turn for comprehensive coverage of everything from small-fry soccer to statewide high school sports to community hoops and softball teams. This would require great care in updating scores, standings and schedules and close

contact with the local sports community.

When I was editor, visiting groups of high school students often told us they read our sports pages each day to see what their friends and acquaintances from other schools were doing. If the paper did an even better job online of covering school sports, it might attract more young readers.

The changes I'd make to the photography department would be similar to the ones in sports. The Monitor has a fine tradition of doing in-depth photo projects, including one that won a Pulitzer Prize. But to fulfill the paper's daily photo demands while also doing such projects requires a larger staff than the Monitor can now afford. I'd start using photos taken by readers. Everyone now has a camera so amateur photojournalists are everywhere.

My Monitor might have one full-time photojournalist and one full-time intern. The photo editor would enlist the public to cover the community—sports, breaking news, nature, features—in pictures. The main vehicle for presenting these photos would be the online Monitor, where content would be updated as often as possible. The best photographs—and I believe the paper would get high quality from local amateurs—would grace the

front page and other section fronts of the print paper.

Managing reader-produced content presents challenges, but there is a precedent for it at the Monitor. The opinion pages already have a rich abundance of local and state commentary. The goal would be to enlist the public in expanding local sports and photography while reducing the role of professional journalists in these areas.

I'd institute two other changes—one a slight modification, the other a major shift. The modification would be to step up the sharing of local and state news with other newspapers around the state. The Monitor already does more of this than ever but not as much as it should. There is nothing glamorous about digesting and aggregating stories written by other newspapers. Yet in a far-flung but community-minded state like New Hampshire, a crisp, comprehensive state news report is important. It is also a useful antidote to the if-it-bleeds-it-leads mentality of statewide commercial television.

The major shift I'd make would be to abandon extensive wire coverage of world and national news. The Monitor has provided this for decades, and there are still times when such news

dominates a day's events and should dominate the front page of the printed paper. But the effort and expense of putting together a full daily wire report are wasted in an era when readers have many timelier and better sources of such news at their fingertips.

The Monitor's overriding purpose is to provide state and local news so that readers can know each other, identify challenges and solutions, and make informed decisions. Of our institutions, only a local newspaper can serve democracy in this way. To do this the paper needs a staff of smart, skilled reporters—a staff big enough not just to cover a large area but to dig deeply into local and state issues.

If I were starting the Monitor today, every action I took would be aimed at enhancing the paper's ability to report local news. The time may come when the Monitor should sell its press and commit exclusively to online journalism. If it does, the paper's reason for being will be no different from what it has always been.

Mike Pride, a 1985 Nieman Fellow, was editor of the Concord (N.H.) Monitor for 25 years. He still writes for the paper and is working on his sixth book, a history of New Hampshire during the Civil War.

EMPTY NEST SYNDROME

Like any institution, today's Concord Monitor is captive to past decisions. Just over two decades ago, before cell phones and the Internet were part of daily newspaper life, the Monitor's owners built a modern office building and printing plant five miles from downtown. It was a wonder—spacious quarters and a big, state-of-the-art press that allowed us to publish a Sunday newspaper and start a profitable printing business. These were the days before full pagination, and we still needed a composing room to paste up our pages. The building is still a jewel set on a bluff high above the Merrimack River, but what you notice inside are empty desks and vacant spaces.

Given the luxury of starting anew, I'd move the Monitor staff back to downtown Concord and print the newspaper offsite. Operating from Main Street would hold many advantages. The paper's

journalists would be closer to the news and they'd get more story tips. They'd be more visible, helping the paper's image as a major player in the community.

For all my 30 years at the Monitor, every editor and reporter had a desk, a chair, and a computer terminal in the newsroom. Journalists today can do their jobs anywhere. My newsroom would thus be small. Less space would mean less overhead, and any savings could go to building a larger reporting staff.

At a paper that depends on the rapid professional growth of beginning reporters and photojournalists, people learn while working together. Yet as every editor knows, the reporters who spend the most time out of the office are the most plugged-in and productive. —M.P.

Community Outreach

‘The Los Angeles Times is still uniquely positioned to fill a huge public need—aggressive coverage of California, a state with problems that equal its heft, a state hit particularly hard by the recession ...’

BY JAMES O’SHEA

IN THE FOUR YEARS SINCE THE END OF MY 14-month tenure as editor of the Los Angeles Times, the nation’s largest metropolitan daily newspaper, I’ve given a lot of thought to what I would do now with the resources I had available to me back then.

There’s no doubt that I would change the way I would use the 920 journalists and the \$121 million budget I had at my disposal. I thought then—and I still think—that the Times should give readers something they need and want—systematic, stellar coverage of California, which is as big and more important than many nations.

As editor of the Times, I didn’t get to talk to as many readers as I would have liked. But whenever I did, they all said the same thing: They needed better and more sophisticated coverage of the state, a role that plays to the strength of the Times.

The paper was considered one of the industry’s crown jewels. We had everything a multimedia newsroom needed: news bureaus around the world and nation, great correspondents and editors, stunning photography, sophisticated graphics, and strong, solid reporting.

But the organization lacked a crucial component: It had a weak sense of community, the core of its journalistic soul. In fact, few in the organization could even agree on which community the paper should serve. Many journalists felt that the Times community was the

nation and the paper had to be the voice of the West.

The marketing and advertising departments argued that the Times should be a local paper, one that provided the region’s cities and towns with intensely local news coverage. Never mind that such a goal was impossible. Even if I had closed all of our foreign and national bureaus and diverted the resources to covering places like Temecula, the paper still would have needed an infusion of cash that was not available. Los Angeles County alone has 141 cities, towns and census-designated places.

Lost in the confusion generated by the second-guessing and internecine warfare common to organizations under such stress were key existential questions: What was our purpose? Just who was our community and what did our community expect of us?

News organizations exist to serve the community by providing credible information so citizens can make informed decisions, the lifeblood of a democracy. Each newspaper has a different community. What might work for the Los Angeles Times won’t necessarily work for the Chicago Tribune and vice versa. But a news organization must determine how it can best use its journalism to serve the public, where it can fill gaps in public knowledge that will give it a leadership role in the community. If it does a good

job and gives the community information it can’t get elsewhere, the newspaper, website, magazine or whatever can charge more because it is truly adding value.

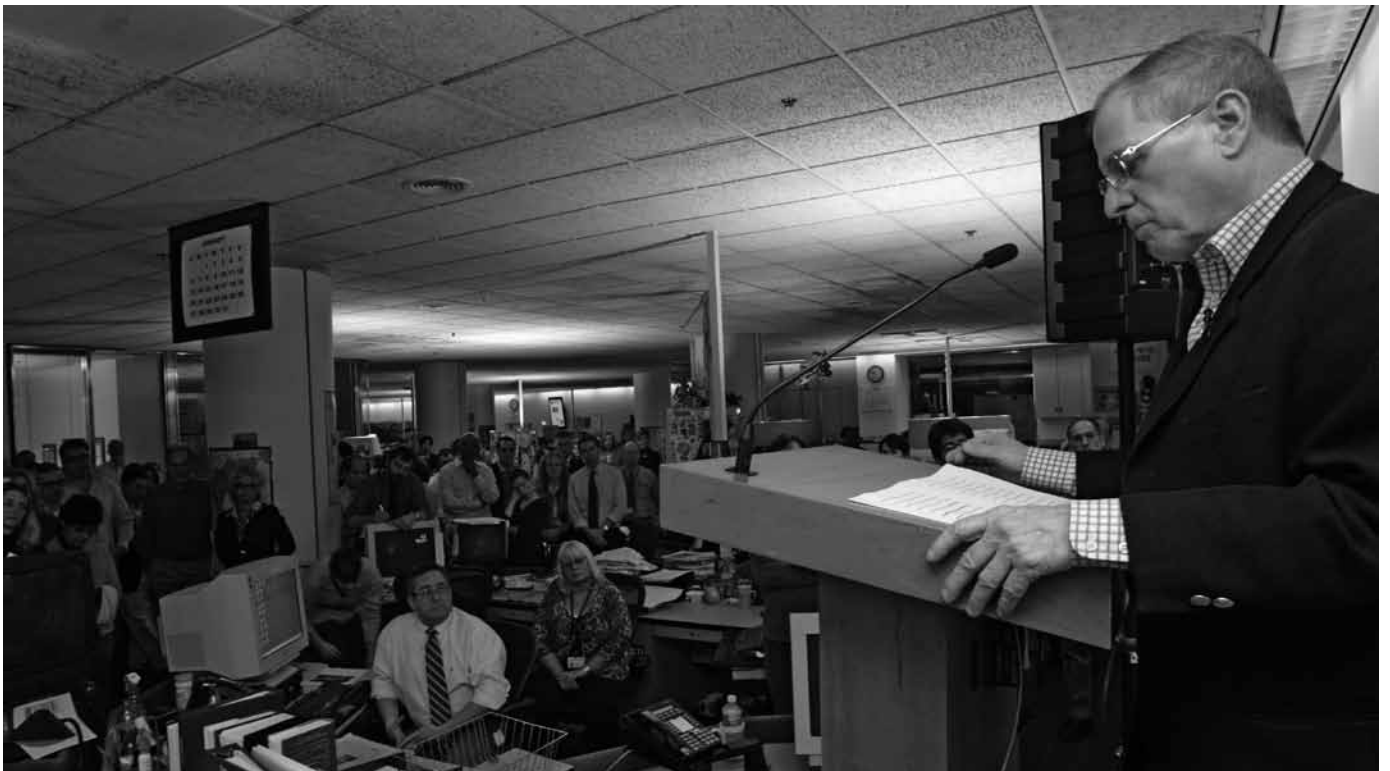
The Los Angeles Times is still uniquely positioned to fill a huge public need—aggressive coverage of California, a state with problems that equal its heft, a state hit particularly hard by the recession and the toxic mortgage scandal.

The success of California Watch, an online project of the Center for Investigative Journalism in Berkeley, is evidence of the interest in this kind of reporting. Media outlets throughout California have snapped up California Watch reports on state issues. There’s plenty of room for more.

THREE CRITICAL SKILLS

Once I set my eyes on state coverage, I would become radical in my approach. The Times newsroom—and, for that matter, the entire news business—needs to be totally reorganized to revolve around three skill sets.

The first and most basic set is technological. Most journalists of my era and earlier know little about things such as data mining and geotagging. This is technology that, in the right hands, can be used to monitor and analyze communities and make it possible to dramatically expand the reach of reporting deep into those communities. Public records can



Los Angeles Times editor James O'Shea addresses the newsroom before leaving the paper in 2008. Photos by Kevork Djanszian/The Associated Press (top); Genaro Molina/Los Angeles Times. Copyright © 2008 Los Angeles Times. Reprinted with permission (bottom).

be mined for information about everything from health outcomes to real estate transactions.

The second skill set—and the one that is more important than ever—is the ability of the journalist to report and analyze. Raw data can be interesting, but

kinds of questions that journalists know how to probe and answer.

The third skill set is social media experience. Newsrooms need experts in social media to determine who in the community wants this journalist-enhanced data and how best to get it to them. Social

it would take some new investment to provide the kind of training and education that currently doesn't exist. Lastly, I would lead a crusade to convince journalists in the newsroom that they can no longer expect someone else to solve their problems. Journalists of my era often responded to the challenges posed by the industry's shifting business model with the retort: "That's a business side problem." More often than not, though, the business side's answer was budget cuts that diminished journalism. Tomorrow's newsroom leaders must take responsibility for the success of the enterprise by convincing themselves, readers and owners alike of something that has always been true: Good journalism is good business.

Lastly, I would lead a crusade to convince journalists in the newsroom that they can no longer expect someone else to solve their problems.

it assumes value when a skilled journalist uses reporting to turn it into credible knowledge or insight.

Data can tell you which hospital in Los Angeles has the best outcomes for heart surgery. But it takes reporting and editing to tell you why that hospital is best. Does it excel because it has top-quality physicians, more specialized nurses, certain best practices, or what? Those are the

media experts can also help connect journalists directly to the community, bring others—be they bloggers or citizens—into the conversation, and promote the kind of honesty and standards that makes for distinguished journalism.

I can't say precisely how I would realign my staff and resources to populate the ranks of the new newsroom. But it wouldn't be that hard. And I know

James O'Shea, editor of the Chicago News Cooperative, is the former editor of the Los Angeles Times and the author of "The Deal From Hell: How Moguls and Wall Street Plundered Great American Newspapers."

THE GREAT YOUNG HOPE

I wish I could say that revolutionizing newsrooms like the one I left at the Los Angeles Times in January 2008 is all that's needed to change the fortunes of American journalism. But I can't.

I believe the news industry in America needs a revolution that goes far beyond a bottom line. We need to restore the soul of journalism and the revolt should be led by journalists—particularly young ones, the industry's best hope. Younger journalists should free themselves from the shackles of my generation and seize the opportunity in this adversity.

The trouble with journalists like me is we spent our lives working for corporations—not evil organizations but institutions that grew more soulless as they aged. It's almost as if we looked at them like they were Dad, someone to pay and solve our problems, no questions asked. We developed a dependency that delegated the solving of our problems to the people who ran these companies—a class of accountants and professional managers as interested in the health of the first quarter as in the First Amendment.

As journalism continues its inexorable march online, a new generation of journalists should realize something: You don't need these guys.

Technology will level the playing field. Even now, it doesn't cost that much to acquire databases, and data can be mined in places

like the Philippines where labor is cheap.

Journalists can capitalize on these new sources of information to form small, nimble companies that can reach deeply into the community and cover it with the passion and commitment that is rare today. If you are producing journalism that your readers can't get anywhere else, they will value it, pay more for it, and become the kind of committed audience that a smaller universe of advertisers wants to reach.

If I had the resources that I had at my disposal when I was editor of the Los Angeles Times, I would focus them on producing unparalleled coverage of the state of California. But the real question isn't what I would do. It is what you, a younger generation, unencumbered by my dependencies, should do to capitalize on the opportunity to occupy journalism.

You don't have to go to work for some company that is trying to get journalism on the cheap by paying you \$30,000 a year. Start something on your own. Report and don't just repeat. And don't be afraid to fail. Failure is good for the soul.

So go out there and give readers an alternative to the superficial. Infuse your effort with a passion for true journalism. Cover the community; give the public what it deserves: Journalism—with a soul. —J.O.

‘Blowing Up the Newsroom’ (and Other Thoughts on Survival)

We invited members of the American Society of News Editors to say what one change they’d most like to make to their newspaper. Their answers ranged from a return to basics to breaking down the divide between editorial and advertising.

‘THE MASTER NARRATIVE’

I would push even harder than I did for every part of the paper—and website—to deal with the one or two or three subjects of paramount interest to the community. At Knight Ridder, we dubbed that “the master narrative.” That would accomplish what hyperlocal partisans want: indispensable news available nowhere else. But, unlike hyperlocal, it doesn’t require a huge staff focusing on miniscule subjects of interest to only one neighborhood and of zero interest to the rest of the readers.

JERRY CEPPOS

*Former executive editor
San Jose Mercury News, Calif.*

Former vice president, Knight Ridder

‘LINK, SHARE, TEAM UP’

Only connect. Stop thinking you are a standalone news organization that must beat the others and start cooperating with other local, responsible news organizations. Link, share, team up. Serve your audience before you serve yourself.

TODD BENOIT

*Director of news and new media
Bangor Daily News, Me.*

‘THIRST FOR UNDERSTANDING’

It has been nearly a decade since I edited a newspaper but I continue to believe that the key to success is a news report that offers understanding of the world. Readers—people in general—thirst for understanding. All of us want to know why things are the way they are, and a good newspaper provides the explanations. A good explanation of a complicated or obscure issue comes to the reader like a cool glass of water on a hot day.

LOU URENECK

*Former editor
The Portland Press Herald, Me.*

‘MARRY THE KNOWLEDGE’

Develop a synergy between the editorial and advertising departments regarding online projects by forming teams that include salespeople, editors and online designers. We need to marry the knowledge that the newsroom is gathering on how to connect with readers with advertising so that they can connect our advertisers with those readers.

Continue to move toward segregated products in print and online, with print

becoming more of a newsmagazine format with in-depth reporting, features and analysis while spot news and the police blotter become almost solely the domain of the website.

KEN TINGLEY

*Editor
The Post-Star, Glens Falls, N.Y.*

‘MORE FAILURES’

In the process of blowing up the newsroom in almost every way, I would have made more demands, taken more risks, and accepted more failures. I would have understood that people use the thing that makes their lives easier and/or better, and I would have aimed my paper toward being that thing. I would find the three brightest, most creative people I could and tell them to come up with the next YouTube, eBay, Facebook, Groupon or Craigslist. I’d tell them not to worry about the technology. Give me something that will give people something they want and need.

JOHN ROBINSON

*Former editor
News & Record, Greensboro, N.C.*

GLOBAL HEALTH: A STORY RARELY TOLD

‘Today while billions of dollars [in aid] are lost to corruption and dysfunction—and billions more save many lives—both traditional and new media are too often missing this important story altogether.’

BY STEFANIE FRIEDHOFF

LAST FALL I PITCHED A STORY TO A FEW colleagues at U.S. news organizations. I thought it would make a great investigative piece. The pitch started like this:

Almost two years after the devastating earthquake, Haiti is home to the largest cholera epidemic in the world. Cholera is a disease that can be prevented and treated easily—yet over 6,000 Haitians have died of it within the past year and over 450,000 have fallen ill. In the aftermath of a disaster, outbreaks of water-borne infectious diseases are typical but the inadequate response to the cholera epidemic in Haiti is shocking.

My pitch didn’t succeed for a variety of reasons. A wire service passed because a long story on Haiti had been done three months earlier and it was too soon for another. A newspaper colleague replied that the cholera epidemic wasn’t news anymore. A magazine editor said the foreign travel budget had been spent on covering the nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan. Finally, a broadcast colleague said such a story would contribute to compassion fatigue in the audience.

After more than a decade as an international science correspondent and six years at the Nieman Foundation coaching global health journalists, I wasn’t surprised. In global health, the



A woman, infected with HIV, at a hospice in Harare, Zimbabwe. Photo © Kristen Ashburn.

stories that matter are rarely news; the resources and commitment it takes to investigate programs and major players are rarely available; and the truth about how hard it can be to help people in need can indeed be numbing.

In fact, as anyone who has ever tried to pitch a global health story knows, enthusiastic responses are rare. This reminds me of covering the genetic revolution in the 1990's, before journalists began to understand how deeply the discoveries in molecular biology were changing society. Even in 2001, when I was a Nieman Fellow, covering genetics was still referred to by colleagues and some prominent Harvard faculty as the "broccoli" among the topics a journalist could pursue. As a result, for years the public remained rather uninformed about the sweeping legal, medical and social implications of gene technology.

That has changed, obviously, and questions about how genetic information may transform our health insurance system, for example, are now part of the national conversation—thanks to excel-

world a much smaller place, health is increasingly being recognized as a social justice issue—one that underlies all other development, from the healthy growth of individuals to economic productivity and national stability.

Where international health dealt with infectious diseases in developing countries, global health today focuses on all health challenges, everywhere. It asks for cooperative action and solutions, not mandates for developing countries. It asks for shared responsibility for the welfare of all people. Jeremy Greene, the Harvard physician and historian of science, says, "Global health has become a visible and apparently universal good for our times, a moral imperative that has captured the imaginations of many around the world—albeit often to quite different ends."

To be sure, there has been some outstanding reporting on some of these developments, such as a 2007 Los Angeles Times investigation into the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's investment practices and some unintended

GlobalPost and the Kaiser Foundation Media Fellowship Program, drew journalists from news organizations such as The Associated Press, The Guardian, The Times of India, Public Radio International's (PRI) "The World," The Lancet, and the nonprofit video start-up Global Health Frontline News.

MAJOR OBSTACLES

Drawing on our discussions and my experiences as an international science and health reporter and editor, I'd like to share five major obstacles to global health reporting as well as a few exemplary ways in which individual journalists and news organizations have overcome these barriers:

No foreign correspondents left to follow the story. Between 2001 and 2011, foreign health aid to developing nations quadrupled from \$7.6 billion to over \$28 billion. During the same period, 18 newspapers and two newspaper chains in the United States closed all their foreign bureaus. Without staff overseas or a travel budget, newspapers cannot assess promises and programs on the ground.

GlobalPost is one new media venture trying to fill the void. Its yearlong project "Healing the World" focused on the Obama administration's Global Health Initiative and delivered reporting from Nepal, Kenya, Guatemala and other nations to assess how the initiative is working. Up to that point, there had been little coverage of this flagship foreign aid program since it was announced in May 2009. In a departure from GlobalPost's for-profit model, this project was supported by the Kaiser Foundation Media Fellowship Program.

Health stories are rarely news. Except for fast spreading infectious diseases such as pandemic influenza, most global health stories lend themselves to investigative and explanatory journalism, not breaking news. Few people will want to know that the World Health Organization (WHO) released a 100-page report on clean water. What people need to know is that in the absence of access to

In global health, the stories that matter are rarely news ... and the truth about how hard it can be to help people in need can indeed be numbing.

lent, in-depth reporting on the subject.

Just as with the genetic revolution, it is taking journalists time and effort to recognize, investigate and interpret the far-reaching political, social and economic impact of the globalization of health care. Global health is a phenomenon that many inside and outside of journalism are still trying to wrap their heads around.

WHAT IS GLOBAL HEALTH?

Even the term itself is fairly new. The field used to be called international health. The change represents a new worldview: As industry, technology and the global spread of AIDS have made the

consequences of donor generosity. But the rise of global health coincided with the collapse of foreign and explanatory reporting, and, as a result, many in traditional journalism, including the Los Angeles Times and The Boston Globe, had to abandon their initial efforts. Today while billions of dollars are lost to corruption and dysfunction—and billions more save many lives—both traditional and new media are too often missing this important story altogether.

In December 2011 about 30 freelance and staff journalists came together in Boston to share what they have learned covering global health. The workshop, co-hosted by the Nieman Foundation,



A mother pays her respects to her son at a wake in Balti, Moldova. Like many inmates in the former Soviet Union, Dumutru Stupalov contracted multidrug-resistant tuberculosis in prison. Photo by David Rockkind/Pulitzer Center.

clean water and health care, diseases may appear that will not stop at borders but will end up sickening everyone, rich or poor. That's explanatory journalism.

What they also need to know, for example, is how much of the taxpayer money that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) pumps into health projects worldwide actually reaches the people it is intended for and how much of it stays with U.S. contractors. That's investigative journalism.

Domestic newsrooms, however, are facing the same troubles as foreign

bureaus, and many journalists with experience in explanatory and investigative journalism have been laid off. At the same time, nonprofit investigative journalism centers often have regional missions or focus on more traditional investigations.

By focusing not on breaking news from conflict and disaster zones but on in-depth reporting about the underlying causes of political crises, environmental disasters, poverty and suffering around the world, the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting presents an interesting example of a new media venture that is trying to save foreign reporting while

redefining it. The center has done some groundbreaking reporting on water and sanitation, for example, as part of its Downstream project. These multimedia collaborations with National Geographic and PBS's "NewsHour" are available online and are part of the center's outreach to schools and universities. The Pulitzer Center also works with Nieman Global Health Fellows on the production and placement of their reporting projects.

Finding the narrative in the issue. Global health too often is viewed as a series of issues. HIV/AIDS is an issue, so is malaria, lack of sanitation, and the

need for better health care systems in poor countries. But issues are not stories, and people, except for public health wonks, do not relate to issues.

“I get too many pitches that are boring,” said David Baron, health and science editor at PRI’s “The World,” at the recent workshop. “We cannot adopt the mindset and the jargon of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). If we want people to listen, we need to tell a tale. We need to move people emotionally.”

Baron did this, for example, by working with a reporter who pitched a story about maternal mortality in Haiti. He helped the reporter craft a narrative that allowed listeners to follow the journey of an American midwife, a volunteer, who arrived full of idealism, confronted unexpected challenges, and returned home with a more sober understanding of Haiti’s complex health problems.

It’s complicated. Even a reporter as experienced as Christine Gorman, a 20-year veteran of Time magazine who is now senior editor for life sciences at Scientific American, describes this field

when journalists find narratives that identify a problem, who’s to blame for it, and how it affects us all. In her award-winning series “When Drugs Stop Working,” The Associated Press’s Asia-Pacific medical writer Margie Mason did just that.

While engaged in her Nieman global health fieldwork, Mason discovered that there was a young man with extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis in a Florida sanatorium—unbeknownst to the public. This meant that for the first time, a tuberculosis strain entirely resistant to antibiotics had entered the United States. It was the perfect segue into the broader story about how agricultural practices and bad policy decisions contribute to the rising problem of drug resistance.

There is very little training. If you were to start covering global health today, you’d find very little instruction on how to decipher World Bank reports or drug patent laws around the world, for example. While journalists are used to educating themselves on any given topic, professional organiza-

THE ROAD AHEAD

Beyond the few distinct opportunities that currently exist—such as the Nieman fellowships at Harvard or the fellowships provided by the International Reporting Project at Johns Hopkins University—journalism schools have a role to play in pushing this beat forward, both via professional training and academic inquiry. In addition, the journalists who cover global health must come together to share experiences and resources and establish a way to move ahead. The seed for that was planted at the meeting in December.

There are a few other obstacles, such as compassion fatigue in audiences and the claim that global health reporters practice advocacy journalism. They are not unique to global health or the new media landscape, however, and have been addressed well by environmental journalists.

What has not been addressed yet is how journalists can get better at showing how global health affects local health. How drug resistance halfway around the world for example led to changes in how doctors in U.S. communities prescribe antibiotics for ear infections in children. How some African and Asian countries struggle to care for their sick because their health care workers are recruited straight out of nursing school by companies in the U.S. and the U.K. How the outsourcing to China of the production of many active ingredients in popular drugs has led to some holes in quality control that trouble even the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Without such narratives, global health will remain an obscure and elite activity to many. Ten years from now, I hope the public will be as informed about the evolution and consequences of the globalization of health care as it is today about the far-reaching impact of the genetic revolution.

Stefanie Friedhoff, a 2001 Nieman Fellow, is special projects manager at the Nieman Foundation and a freelance journalist for U.S. and German media.

“We cannot adopt the mindset and the jargon of nongovernmental organizations. If we want people to listen, we need to tell a tale.” —DAVID BARON, “THE WORLD”

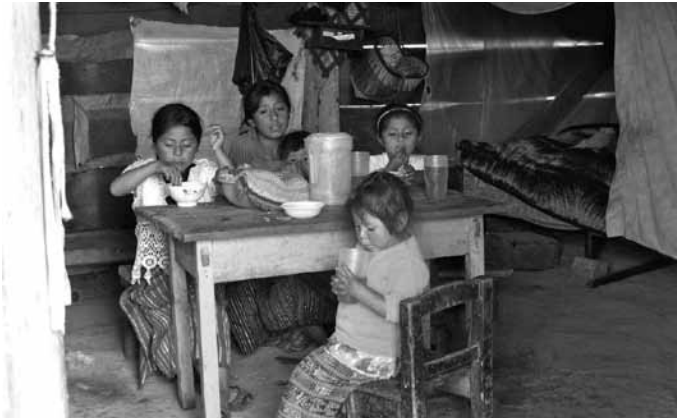
as “maddeningly opaque.” Thirty years ago there were only three major international bodies designing international health policies and programs (WHO, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund) as well as a few key NGOs.

Today, there are thousands of NGOs of all sizes and several powerful new players, such as the Gates Foundation and The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria and TB. To put this in perspective, the Gates Foundation’s annual budget for health programs recently surpassed that of WHO.

Just as in environmental journalism or business reporting on globalization, complexities are best conveyed

tions such as Investigative Reporters and Editors or the Association of Health Care Journalists (AHCJ) have long shown that reporters covering complex subjects benefit from tailored training that includes learning from experienced peers.

There is no professional organization devoted to training global health journalists. (To be fair, AHCJ and the World Federation of Science Journalists each feature a few sessions on related subjects in their flagship conferences.) And there are few in-depth online resources beyond what the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation offers (<http://globalhealth.kff.org/Journalists.aspx>).



Half of all children in Guatemala suffer from chronic malnutrition. Photos by Samuel Loewenberg/Pulitzer Center.

‘WHAT GETS ATTENTION, GETS FUNDED’

When Samuel Loewenberg, a freelance foreign correspondent, heard in 2009 that 50 percent of children in Guatemala are chronically malnourished, he could not believe it. He double-checked the numbers, found out it was true, and sought funding to report on the problem. Says Loewenberg: “I had to find out how this was possible.”

He discovered a mix of reasons: an impoverished population in rural, war-ravaged Guatemala, a lack of basic infrastructure, increased world food prices, and, most importantly, a lack of political will to address the situation. He also found children who were so malnourished their dark hair had turned blond, their organs had started to fail, and their face muscles were too weak to produce a smile.

“What makes this even more distressing is that Guatemala is rich enough to prevent it,” Loewenberg, a 2012 Nieman Global Health Fellow, wrote in *The Economist*. “Other Latin American countries, such as Bolivia, Peru and Brazil, have reduced child hunger. Yet according to Unicef, the incidence of stunting—a common indicator of chronic malnutrition—in Guatemala is twice what it is

in Haiti, where income per head is only a quarter as high.”

A decade ago Loewenberg covered lobbying in Washington, D.C. Today he reports on global health. It’s a beat that requires tenacity and skill, as editors are not easily sold on stories about subjects such as sanitation, broken health systems, or maternal mortality.

“Politicians talk about foreign aid successes but journalists have to be on the ground to show what is really happening,” says Loewenberg. “By putting information out there, we are affecting policy. What gets attention, gets funded.”

When he tried to draw attention to the crisis in Guatemala, he even made a short film for PBS. But because of funding problems, it did not air for several months, says Loewenberg. During that time, hundreds of children died from hunger.

Yet once his reporting was published in *The Lancet*, *The Economist*, and *The Atlantic* and broadcast on “World Focus,” aid organizations rushed to help. The United States Agency for International Development alone disbursed \$15 million. —S.F.

COMMON GROUND

ANJA NIEDRINGHAUS has worked on the frontlines of many major conflicts over the past two decades. Here she reflects on work from her new book “At War.”

NOT A SINGLE YEAR PASSES WITHOUT A conflict or war. The 1992 siege of Sarajevo in the former Yugoslavia was the first conflict I covered. That one—because it happened in the heart of Europe—woke up the world, yet people outside of Europe felt removed from it.

That sense of distance fell away after 9/11. Today we are united in the feeling that war affects us all, that we all have a stake in the wars that rage on. While conflicts are now more frequent and protracted, their essence remains the same—two sides fighting over territory, power, competing ideologies.

Meanwhile technology has quickened the pace. In Benghazi, Libya I filed from the frontlines, and within seconds I was running with my equipment to the new frontline.

For me, covering conflict and war is the essence of journalism. My assignment, regardless of the era, is about people—civilians and soldiers. The legacy of any photographer is her or his ability to capture the moment, to record history. For me it is about showing the struggle and survival of the individual.

Conflict is not all that I cover. I like the Olympics and the World Cup. In sports, there is a start and a finish. With war, the story never ends. It keeps me coming back.

Anja Niedringhaus, a 2007 Nieman Fellow, is a photojournalist for The Associated Press. “At War” is published by Hatje Cantz.





Previous spread: A German soldier in northern Afghanistan celebrates his 34th birthday in the early morning.

Top: Palestinian boys play with a phone they found in the debris of a house in eastern Jebaliya, Gaza Strip.

Right: A Libyan rebel urges people to leave the city of Bin Jawad as shelling by Muammar el-Qaddafi's forces pounds the frontline.

Far right: Palestinian teenagers enjoy a ride in an amusement park outside Gaza City.
Photos by Anja Niedringhaus.







An Afghan student at a girls' high school writes on a chalkboard.



**Afghan men on a motorcycle overtake
Canadian soldiers on patrol.**
Photos by Anja Niedringhaus.

The New York Observer

Gay Talese helped launch literary journalism in 1966 when *Esquire* published his profile “Frank Sinatra Has a Cold.” He shares his thoughts on the craft.

EDITED BY PAIGE WILLIAMS

Invited by the Nieman Foundation, Gay Talese recently spoke at Harvard’s Writers at Work series in conversation with Esquire writer at large Chris Jones. His remarks have been edited for clarity and brevity. The full transcript is available online at Nieman Storyboard (www.niemanstoryboard.org).

One of the problems of journalism today is how we are narrowing our focus and becoming indoors in terms of internalizing our reporting. The detail is what I think we’re missing.

You have to be there. You have to see the people. Even if you don’t think you’re getting that much, you’re getting a lot more than you realize.

People I like to write about are people who have had a history of ups and downs.

If you get to know your characters well and introduce them with your writing well enough that the reader will identify with them, or at least have a sense of them through your skill as a writer and a reporter, you’ve achieved much of what a fiction writer does.

Even as a young reporter I would think, why can’t I do what short-story writers do or as novelists do, which is write scenes?

After you’ve gotten it right, then how do you go about communicating the facts to the reader? That’s where creativity takes its role in nonfiction: storytelling.

If you’re an outsider you’re the perfect journalist.

I don’t think you know almost until the piece is published whether it’s publishable.

In one way I can say I waste a lot of time; it’s part of my occupation; I’m an occupational time waster because so much of what you do doesn’t immediately measure up.

When I worked on *The New York Times* in the old days, those guys that got it right weren’t necessarily lyrical figures in the world of literature—they were boring. They got it right, but they were the paper-of-record people. If you weren’t a dazzling stylist it didn’t make a bit of difference; in fact they suspected anyone who might be called a stylist in those days.

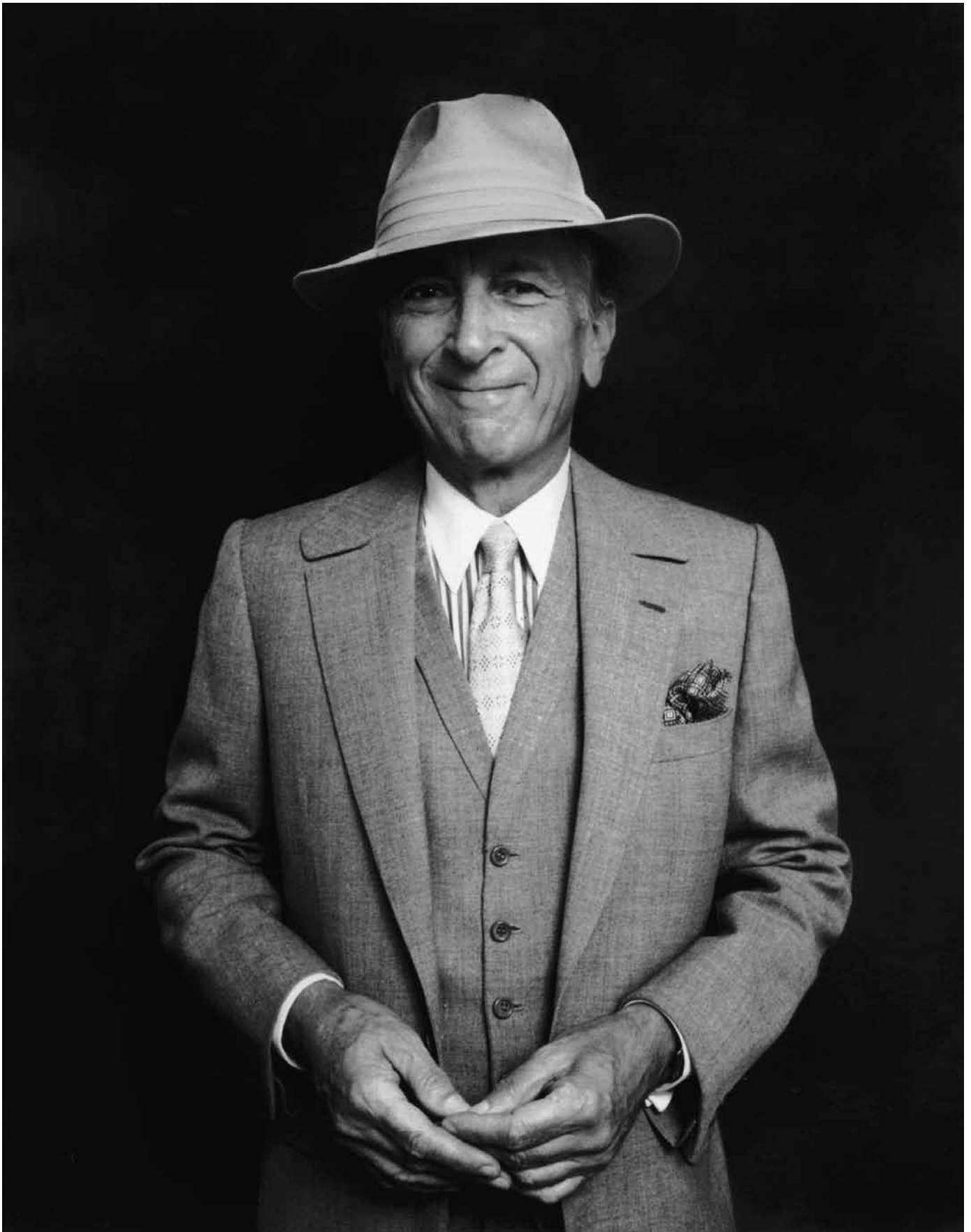
If you lie, you get kicked out. And the people who kick you out are your colleagues.

I save everything. I have a basement, what used to be an old wine cellar, and I have dozens and dozens and dozens of filing cabinets, and it’s all in order, day by day, month by month, year by year, and there are big signs telling you what year you’re in.

The press box in the 1950’s was the era of alcoholism in journalism. You don’t see any drinking going on anymore. You don’t see any smoking. Fornication is out. Everything is out.

I don’t think I’ve learned anything in terms of technique. It’s as hard now as it was for me then.

Paige Williams, a 1997 Nieman Fellow, teaches narrative writing at the Nieman Foundation.



Gay Talese, even as a young reporter, was drawn to writing scenes, as short-story writers and novelists do. Photo © Joyce Tenneson.

Books



Oakland journalist Chauncey Bailey, right, is blocked by followers of Yusuf Ali Bey as their leader leaves a court hearing in 2002. Photo by Nick Lammers/Oakland Tribune, courtesy of the Bay Area News Group.

To Kill a Story

After Chauncey Bailey was murdered, journalists banded together to finish his investigation. **BY STEVE WEINBERG**

Killing the Messenger:

A Story of Radical Faith, Racism's Backlash, and the Assassination of a Journalist
BY THOMAS PEELE
Crown Publishers. 441 pages.

CHAUNCEY BAILEY DIED ON AUGUST 2, 2007, shot as he walked to the Oakland Post, the weekly newspaper he edited in the San Francisco Bay Area. At the time Bailey had been investigating Your Black Muslim Bakery, an Oakland institution led by Yusuf Ali Bey IV, a man with a long criminal history.

When I learned about Bailey's murder, my first thought was "Arizona Project." To his credit, investigative reporter

Thomas Peele, much younger than I am, had the same thought.

The Arizona Project was formed in 1976 to send the message that killing a journalist would not kill a story. That year Don Bolles, a reporter at The Arizona Republic, was murdered over an ongoing investigation into organized crime that upset its targets.

Under the leadership of Newsday's Bob Greene, a team of journalists

gathered in Arizona to complete Bolles' investigation. Then an investigative reporter at The Des Moines Register, I served as a distant cheerleader for the Arizona Project, which produced a book-length exposé. When I became executive director of Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) in 1983, I fielded questions about Bolles and the dangers of investigative journalism, and I answered critics who objected to journalists engaging in a crusade.

In the weeks following Bailey's murder, the Chauncey Bailey Project came together quickly. Peele moved from the Contra Costa Times to the Oakland office of his employer, the Bay Area News Group, which also published the Oakland Tribune and the San Jose Mercury News. Other participants included currently employed and retired journalists from other newspapers, radio, television and nonprofit organizations; freelance journalists; and journalism students and professors from two universities.

Peele, the lead information gatherer, and his fellow investigators were uncertain whether they could find justice for their colleague. But they knew they could send a message: "Killing a reporter would result in far more journalistic scrutiny than a single reporter could have achieved," as Peele writes in his new book, "Killing the Messenger: A Story of Radical Faith, Racism's Backlash, and the Assassination of a Journalist."

His book is a welcome development for journalists everywhere who want to know how the investigation unfolded, but never found time to follow the daily breaks. Much of it is devoted to an impressive history of the Nation of Islam (also known as the Black Muslim) movement, but I will focus on the journalism that got Bailey killed and the journalism of Peele's team—journalism meant to advance Bailey's suspicions about Your Black Muslim Bakery and its criminally minded brain trust. Any journalism emerging that helped identify

and punish Bailey's killers would count as a bonus.

The crew behind Your Black Muslim Bakery had threatened at least one journalist before Bailey. As Peele recounts, "a gutsy reporter named Chris Thompson of the weekly East Bay Express had written several long exposés about the Beys [the family that dominated the Black Muslims]. Consequently, he received death threats, the windows of the Express's office were smashed, and Thompson spent several weeks in hiding."

Police raided the Beys' North Oakland compound the day after Bailey's murder; soon a confession emerged. Devaughndre Broussard, a 19-year-old Bey soldier, "admitted to police he had killed Bailey to stop a story he was writing about the bakery and [Yusuf Ali] Bey IV." Bey IV was 21 years old at the time, with lots of influence derived from his deceased father, the original Yusuf Ali Bey, a made-up name.

BAILEY'S SHORTCOMINGS

With candor aplenty, Peele writes in the introduction to his book, "It didn't matter that the Post was a small weekly on the margins of journalistic credibility or that Bailey was, at 57 years old, caught in a downward career spiral. What had happened to him was far bigger than that. The free press on which the public depends to keep it informed had been attacked." Bailey was an African American who had overcome racism in his personal and professional lives. The Post circulated free, almost entirely among an African-American readership.

Bailey graduated from journalism school at San Jose State University in 1972. His career began at a San Jose television station and continued at an African-American newspaper in San Francisco. He eventually moved to reporting jobs for the Hartford Courant and The Detroit News. Back in the Bay Area in the early 1990's, Bailey began covering African-American doings for

the Oakland Tribune, sometimes writing positive stories about the Bey family empire built around the bakery, which served simultaneously as a compassionate employer of ex-convicts, a community center, a mosque, and a command post for thuggery.

Peele praises Bailey's deadline reporting skill, his tireless work ethic, and his passion for newspapering. Yet despite helping avenge Bailey's murder, Peele is unsparing about Bailey's superficial and sometimes boosterish journalism at the Oakland Tribune during the 1990's and into the new century. Bey had run for mayor of Oakland in 1994, opening himself to scrutiny. Yet his involvement in multiple murders, rapes, public assistance fraud, child labor law violations, and other illegalities was not widely known.

Here is a sample passage from Peele: "Yes, Bey was a racist, an anti-Semite; he went on television every week and said some crazy things. But Bailey was of a generation of African Americans who were cautious about judging one another ... Of course, Bailey didn't know that Bey was far more sinister than he even seemed ... If Bailey did suspect anything, he wasn't going to spend weeks and months digging it up. ... There were welfare records, police reports, court documents. Together, they could have been used to assemble the puzzle that was Yusuf Bey."

When Bey died in 2003, Bailey wrote the obituary for the Tribune. It did not completely ignore Bey's crimes, but, according to Peele, it was too deferential. In any case, Bey's offspring continued operating the bakery and the associated criminal enterprises. Meanwhile, the Tribune fired Bailey during 2005 for unethical professional behavior. Bailey pieced together a freelance journalism career of sorts, one that brought him into contact with the Bey enterprises.

Bailey wasn't alone in stepping lightly around the Bey family. Members of the Chauncey Bailey Project calculated they

would not receive all that much help from the authorities. According to Peele, the Bey family and its pseudo-religious enterprises “had largely gone without scrutiny for decades,” other than Chris Thompson’s digging and Bailey’s questioning. “The Oakland Police Department’s indifference to—or outright fear of—the cult members was legendary. Politicians kowtowed to them, praised them, loaned them taxpayer money that went unrepaid. Even when the cult’s patriarch, Bey IV’s father, Yusuf Ali Bey, was found through DNA evidence to have raped girls as young as 13 years old, he was still heralded as a community leader. That he died in 2003 before the charges were proven in court only added to his followers’ belief that he was a victim of persecution.”

Almost a year after the murder, journalists from the Chauncey Bailey Project obtained the secretly recorded police video of Bey IV “laughing about and mocking Bailey’s murder.” The journalists posted the video, which raised a question about why law enforcement authorities had not held Bey accountable for ordering the murder. The journalists followed up with additional stories about law enforcement’s inadequacies.

Peele chronicles high points from the Chauncey Bailey Project’s stream of stories. One story explained that “data from the tracking device hidden [by police] on [Bey] Fourth’s car showed it [had] been parked outside Bailey’s apartment less than seven hours before the murder.” Peele also acknowledges advances in the murder investigation published in the San Francisco Chronicle and elsewhere.

Just last year a jury convicted Bey IV of ordering the Bailey murder and other murders. He received a prison term of life without parole.

Steve Weinberg is the author of eight nonfiction books and a freelance writer for magazines.



Masha Gessen’s new book is “The Man Without a Face.” Photo by Svenya Generalova.

Facing Putin

Masha Gessen on the Russian leader’s totalitarian regime and the weaknesses of U.S. media coverage of her country

Russian-born Masha Gessen is very much a journalist and a citizen. In writing “The Man Without a Face: The Unlikely Rise of Vladimir Putin,” released by Riverhead on March 1, she draws on the chilling history she has lived. “Putin changed the country fast,” she writes, “the changes were profound, and they took easily.” For more than 12 years, she didn’t vote in parliamentary elections because Putin had rendered them meaningless. Last year, her hopes for a regime change revived, she helped organize anti-government protests. Gessen spoke with Nieman Reports’s Jonathan Seitz over Skype from her home in Moscow. Edited excerpts of their conversation follow; a longer version is available at www.nieman.harvard.edu/gessen/.

Jonathan Seitz: One way of reading “The Man Without a Face” is as a long-form fact-checking exercise. In untangling these conspiracies about who Putin might have ordered attacked or killed, how do you decide who to believe?

Masha Gessen: What I hope comes across in the book is that in a way it doesn’t matter. The blame for the situation—for a country where people run the very real risk of falling outside of the law, having no protection, and being killed—lies with

Putin and the system he has built. The question of whether the order to have somebody eliminated came directly from him or whether it didn't become secondary, right?

Yet I find it important to show where we can point to Putin personally [as the culprit] with some probability. So we end up with [former FSB agent Alexander] Litvinenko's murder as the only one where—even without having a court decision or an investigation that has been open to the public—the evidence seems to point to Putin beyond any doubt.

Is the truth about these crimes ever going to be known?

I hope so. That is obviously one of the most frustrating things not only about writing a book like this, but also about living in this country. It's a closed system that's not particularly likely to document its violence, and if there's a peaceful transition it will probably include immunity from prosecution.

So do you see Putin as just another power-hungry tyrant?

I think that's basically right. One thing that is very important and has been underreported in the West is this incredible, insatiable greed that has been the motivating factor behind his decisions. If his first term as president was about consolidating power, then the subsequent eight years have been about consolidating wealth.

Do you also see Putin as something of a psychopath?

My researcher's working theory was that Putin is a psychopath, but I'm not in the business of making psychiatric diagnoses, especially of people I have actually never met. But I think it's as good an explanation as any.

What kind of response to your book are you expecting in Russia?

Things are changing fast so I feel a lot safer now than I did before the protests started. The original plan was for my fam-

ily and I to leave the country just before the book came out. But I decided not to.

As someone who's reported in Russia for 20 years, what lessons do you have for journalists covering your country?

I think that one lesson for any journalist working in a closed authoritarian society like Russia is that it's a little bit like a war zone. I have been a war reporter and I believe deeply that you have to get out every couple weeks just to make sure that you don't start taking unnecessary risks.

I also fully believe in activist journalism, so I am not speaking the standard objectivity line. But I think that if you do choose sides as a journalist, you have to make a conscious choice and not have it be a psychological trick.

You criticize the U.S. media for underreporting Putin's rise to power and the way he rolled back reforms. How can American journalists do a better job of covering Russia?

One thing I realized after finishing the manuscript is that American journalists are still behind the curve on Russia because they have not covered the incredible extent of corruption and the consolidation of wealth by the Kremlin. That is a very, very important failure because I am convinced that it's what is principally motivating the protests now. I think American journalists are not doing a great job of explaining to their readers why thousands of people are coming out into the streets.

I think part of the problem is the reliance on pundits who shift positions much faster than they would in a more stable society. In Russia, people who had no connections with the Kremlin—and were perceived rightly as independent commentators—fall into bed with the Kremlin and continue to be perceived by the U.S. press as independent commentators for years. Another problem is that a lot of people in the U.S. press who end up editing stories from Russia once served as Russian bureau chiefs.

They think they understand Russia, but they don't realize how the country has changed cardinally in just two, three or four years.

Do you see social media in Russia as merely an organizing tool or is it by nature an instrument of change?

That's the big question of our age, I guess. I wouldn't say that I was caught completely unaware by the protests, but I had no idea that Facebook and other social media were going to become such effective instruments so fast. Yet about half the people who attended the big protest on December 24 didn't get their information from social media.

For many years, social media in Russia reflected the very unhealthy nature of the flow of information in Russia, where the blogosphere was as atomized as society itself. Offline, people didn't have connections from one social stratum to another. It was the same way in social media. That still holds true to a large extent. Even Vkontakte, a Russian equivalent of Facebook, has almost no connection with Facebook. They are two completely unconnected social networks that have a similar interface and are used for similar purposes, but by two completely different groups of people.

You seem very hopeful that the protests will bring about regime change.

I don't think it's possible to predict the exact mechanism of change because it's such a broken society. But I do believe that once a system like this—which is so rigid that it's inherently fragile—is destabilized, it cannot hold on for very long. It may be a matter of months. It may be a couple years, but it's going to collapse. It just lacks the flexibility that is necessary for long-term survival. And I can say that I hope it will happen sooner rather than later.

Masha Gessen, a 2004 Nieman Fellow, is the editor of Vokrug Sveta science magazine and editor in chief of its publishing house.

Essay



The Jukebox in My Mind

The playlist in East Africa is full of surprises.

BY GWEN THOMPKINS

I COME FROM A TOWN WHERE PEOPLE put their grocery bags on the pavement and dance when a good song blares over a car radio. I've done it. My friends and family have done it. That's just the way New Orleans is. We prick up our ears for the whiff of a melody and let it take

us away. That may be why I'm so easily seized by music—even ambient music—no matter the location or circumstance.

During my time in East Africa, from 2006 to 2010, music underscored and punctuated life in a way that I have not experienced before or since. Yes, there

were drums. Yes, there were handmade wind instruments. Yes, the songbirds sang and the chanting frogs chanted and a percussive wind moved through tall grass and bottlebrush trees. Ululations? Check. Tinkling laughter of children playing? Check. But, more often than not, Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers were on the radio singing:

*Islands in the stream
That is what we are
No one in-between
How can we be wrong
Sail away with me
To another world
And we rely on each other ah ah
From one lover to another, ah ah*

The Parton-Rogers collaborations and their solo recordings of the 1970's and 1980's feature prominently in East Africa, where radios far outnumber TV sets. Listening to the radio in that region can be like entering a time warp, where U.S.-based music known as "Country-politan" is still going strong. In Kenya, I often felt like a little girl again, as if I should be waiting for "The Mac Davis Show" to come on TV. Or "Mannix."

East Africans also listen to reggae, rock 'n' roll and hip-hop. But let's face it, country songs tell more universal stories. Women from Nairobi to the Napa Valley will likely meet a man-stealing "Jolene" at some point in life:

*And I can easily understand
How you could easily take my man
But you don't know, what he means to
me, Jolene*

And men from Juba to Juneau fear that their "Ruby" will take her love to town:

Oh Ruby, for God's sake turn around

Some songs seem cathartic. It's no accident that "Coward of the County" is

an all-time favorite in Kenya. The song, written by Roger Bowling and Billy Edd Wheeler, tells the story of a man who is pushed to violence when thugs rape the love of his life. East Africans rarely speak about such matters in public. And yet “Coward of the County” creates a space for public acknowledgement and discussion of a serious crime that shatters families throughout the region and around the world. That’s what great storytelling can do.

Other songs simply help people find dignity in circumstances beyond their control. I once hired an SUV and driver to transport me from northern Uganda to Kampala—an eight-hour, dusty, bumpy, swerving ride. Acholiland in northern Uganda was returning to life after years of war between the government and rebel militias, most notably the Lord’s Resistance Army. Murderous raids, unspeakable mutilations, and child kidnappings had forced whole populations from their land. Thousands were still living in camps. The driver, a young man whose clothes passed for “fashion-forward” in the north, must have played Dolly Parton’s “Coat of Many Colors” 17 times:

*And I tried to make them see
That one is only poor
Only if they choose to be
Now I know we had no money
But I was rich as I could be
In my coat of many colors
My mama made for me*

Rwanda, during my brief visits there, was all about the blues. By the time I arrived, President Paul Kagame had cut all ties with France, beefed up relations with Washington, and passed a law making English, not French, the preferred national language. If a Hutu or Tutsi had any ambition whatsoever, that person needed to learn English quick.

Paul X, my driver for hire, would transport me from the airport in Kigali

to the border crossing with the Democratic Republic of Congo—a journey lasting several hours. It’s a nice ride. Rwanda is impossibly green, manicured, blooming. Bean fields are laid out with slide ruler precision. Mountains and lakes look like Switzerland in springtime. But in Paul’s Toyota, we could have been driving through the Mississippi Delta.

It seemed fitting that we listened to the blues in Rwanda. Despite giant strides ... an unexpressed sadness hangs over the nation.

His MP3 player was set exclusively on B.B. King and Eric Clapton. Paul was betting on the CD “Riding With the King” to improve his English:

*When the moon peeks over the mountains
Baby I’m gonna be on my way
I’m gonna roam this mean old highway
Until the break of day*

It seemed fitting that we listened to the blues in Rwanda. Despite giant strides—a growing infrastructure, rising economy, motivated work force, and impressive gains in the cultivation of tea and coffee—an unexpressed sadness hangs over that nation. Around every corner is a reminder of the 1994 genocide. In the spaces between people. In the silences. In the vaguely perceptible undercurrents of spite.

Every time Paul and I drove to the Congolese border and back, we passed a tiny building called The Clean Heart Hotel. To me, that sign was an indicator of how Rwandans still identify themselves by the experience of 1994. Matters of conscience find berth in the smallest of spaces there and loom over the horizon like a brilliant sunset. Ultimately, what’s done will never be finished. That’s the staying power of the blues.

Peacekeepers play a lot of love songs. In Darfur, an Egyptian officer once complained, “There’s no food, no women, nothing here.” The region, which is almost the size of France, feels empty for the most part. It takes helicopter rides over miles of scrub to reach the major cities. But at the same time, Darfur is brimming with petticoat layers of

intrigue and conflict. Brothers-in-arms one day disown each other the next. Rebel fighters fleece their own people. Both the Janjaweed and the rebels resort to banditry to make ends meet, routinely manipulated and abandoned by silent benefactors at home and abroad.

The African Union/United Nations peacekeeping force is made up of Africans from all over the continent. Riding in their protected vehicles over the unforgivably hot sands of the growing desert, the peacekeepers mostly listened to Celine Dion. Tracy Chapman was also on high rotation. But the ride I remember best was in a convoy with then U.S. special envoy Scott Gration. I couldn’t get my gear in place fast enough to record what the driver—a non-Arab Darfuri—was playing: Bob Marley’s “Redemption Song.”

*How long shall they kill our prophets
While we stand aside and look
Some say it’s just a part of it
We’ve got to fulfill the book
Won’t you help to sing
Another song of freedom
‘Cause all I ever have:
Redemption songs
Redemption song*

It’s a beautiful melody to hear on an empty horizon. Makes you hopeful.

My favorite musical moment was in northern Sudan, outside a town called El Obeid. I was reporting a story about gum arabic, a resin from a particular acacia tree that is vital to pharmaceuticals, soft drinks, watercolors, newsprint and a wealth of other products. Somehow I got arrested and—after protracted negotiations—left the following day. On the long, flat, sandy road back to Khartoum, there was only the occasional camel carcass to look at. I was feeling about as deflated as they looked. Then, over the truck radio, I heard a sweet, gravelly voice sing:

*It's very clear
Our love is here to stay
Not for a year
Forever and a day*

"That's Louis Armstrong!" I yelled to the interpreter and driver. "He's from my hometown!"

They looked confused.

"He's from my hometown!" I yelled again.

I don't know if they ever really understood. But they looked happy that I looked happy.

*In time, the Rockies may crumble
Gibraltar may tumble
They're only made of clay
But our love is here to stay*

By the time the song ended, my heart was soaring. For a moment, I was home again and all was right with the world. Then I realized, home was East Africa and that felt right, too. I turned up the radio full blast.

Gwen Thompkins, a 2011 Nieman Fellow, was East Africa correspondent for NPR from 2006 to 2010. Before that she was senior editor of NPR's "Weekend Edition Saturday" for 10 years. She now lives in New Orleans in a house where every room has a picture of Louis Armstrong.

Nieman Notes

1950

Hays Gorey, a longtime political correspondent for Time magazine, died at a health care facility in Salt Lake City on April 5th, 2011, from complications with dementia. He was 89.

Gorey was best known nationally for his work at Time from 1965 to 1991. He was in Los Angeles covering the campaign of Robert Kennedy in 1968 when the senator was assassinated and covered three presidential campaigns as well as the Watergate scandal and resignation in 1974 of President Nixon.

He collaborated with photographer Bill Eppridge on "Robert Kennedy: The Last Campaign," and co-wrote, with Maureen "Mo" Dean, the wife of White House counsel John Dean, "Mo: A Woman's View of Watergate." He also wrote a biography of Ralph Nader and co-wrote Florida Congressman Claude D. Pepper's autobiography.

A native of Salt Lake City,



Hays Gorey

Gorey started working for The Salt Lake Tribune at age 17, using his salary to pay his way through the University of Utah. He was promoted to city editor at age 24 and was news editor before joining Time's Washington bureau.

In a tribute by Paul Rolly on the paper's website, former Tribune publisher Jack Gallivan called Gorey "a journalist's journalist." Gallivan continued, "When he first started at The Salt Lake Tribune, his professionalism quickly endeared him to everybody on the staff. I did everything I could to dissuade him from leaving us to work for Time, but Washington was too attractive. I consider Hays one of the most distinguished sons of The Salt Lake Tribune."

He is survived by his wife, **Nonie**, four children, nine grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren.

1966

Bob Giles has been named commentary editor for GlobalPost, after serving on the international news website's editorial advisory board for the past three years.

Giles, who spent 11 years as curator of the Nieman Foundation before retiring this past summer, will be responsible for recruiting commentators from around the world and screening submissions for the site's recently re-launched commentary section.

Before being offered the



Bob Giles

position, Giles had discussed the section's lack of activity and editorial oversight with CEO and co-founder Philip Balboni. "I feared that clashing opinions and ideological arguments did not serve GP's mission of hard news," Giles wrote in an e-mail to Nieman Reports. The pair worked out a plan for the section, and Balboni asked Giles to run it.

"One of the joys of this new assignment will be to reconnect with a world of international and U.S. Nieman Fellows working overseas," Giles wrote. "I anticipate that some will contribute to the section and others will put me in touch with knowledgeable voices in their countries who might contribute commentary for GlobalPost."

Ralph Hancox has written two novels about contemporary challenges facing the world. "Knock, Knock — Who's There?" and "The Latte Project," dealing with immigration and the illegal

ANN CURRY SPEAKS OF TRAUMA AND PROMISE IN 31ST MORRIS LECTURE

“WHY DO WE DO IT?”

Ann Curry asked that question about her work and the work of other foreign correspondents during the 31st Joe Alex Morris, Jr. Lecture at the Nieman Foundation on February 2nd. In her case, she said, it’s for “a hope—one that is often unrequited—that some good will come out of what we do.”

Curry, a “Today” co-anchor who frequently reports from abroad for NBC News, spoke about covering crises, natural disasters, genocide and war in places such as Sudan, Somalia and Iran. She discussed stories that moved her and compelled her to stick with foreign reporting and spoke about the need for reporters to maintain empathy, even when interviewing dictators.

The Morris Lecture honors Los Angeles Times foreign correspondent Joe Alex Morris, Jr., who covered the Middle East for 25 years before he was killed during the Iranian Revolution in 1979. Two years later his family, friends and colleagues founded the annual lecture by an American foreign correspondent or commentator.

Curry started with NBC News in 1990 as a Chicago correspondent. She helped launch the 24-hour MSNBC cable network and spent 14 years as news anchor on “Today” before becoming co-anchor. She was also anchor of “Dateline NBC” from 2005 to 2011 and regularly fills in for Brian Williams on “NBC Nightly News.”

Reuters Balkans bureau chief **Adam Tanner**, NF ’12, introduced Curry, praising her “commitment to foreign reporting and covering global crises in a medium that isn’t always friendly to foreign reporting.” He noted that Forbes ranked her the 66th most powerful woman in the world, ahead of Vogue editor Anna Wintour, Newsweek editor Tina Brown, and Harvard president Drew Gilpin Faust.

Curry, who has covered death and destruction around the world, opened the lecture by admitting that she probably suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder. “Anyone who does this kind of reporting and says they don’t have PTSD is in denial,” she said. “Or possibly lying, or doesn’t realize it themselves.”

The symptoms, she pointed out, are often quiet and subtle, “an emotional rigidity” or “uncharacteristic lack of empathy” that can impair the ability to cover situations in foreign countries with “sharp clarity” and to “see past the differences” with other people. She stressed that the danger of psychological trauma is inherent in the work, and it can affect anyone, regardless of who they work for.

“No matter who hires you,” she said, “no matter how big the organization or how much money they have, they can’t pay you enough to deal with this.”



Ann Curry, a “Today” co-anchor, talked about some of the foreign stories she has reported that have mattered most to her. Photo by Lisa Abitbol.

For her the lasting symbol of suffering—“the face that stays with me”—is a young woman from the Democratic Republic of the Congo she interviewed in 2008. The conflict in that country has already killed more people than any war since World War II, and rape has increasingly become a weapon against civilians.

Soldiers killed her parents when she was 17, gang-raped her for two days, and left her for dead. She became pregnant and delivered a stillborn baby. Two years later she was still in the hospital, where Curry met her.

“I asked her ‘Do you want revenge?’” Curry said. “Instead she said ‘All I want is to rise out of this bed and thank the people who saved me and cared for me. I want to praise God, and I want to feel a mother’s love again.’”

After the piece aired, “the phones lit up” with people wanting to know how to help, Curry said. But the calls she appreciated most were from people who were furious with her for putting the teenager on TV and possibly subjecting her to additional harm.

“Here’s a woman from a country most people don’t know anything about,” she said, “and they’re concerned for her, this woman who was left for dead.” —JONATHAN SEITZ

HONORING A PIONEERING JOURNALIST FROM LIBYA



Mohammed Nabbous, honored posthumously; his widow Samra Naas; and their daughter Mayar. Photo by Lisa Abitbol (right).

DURING THE EARLY DAYS OF LIBYA'S REVOLUTION, MOHAMMED "Mo" Nabbous was the first in his country to broadcast Muammar el-Qaddafi's attacks on citizen protesters. The 27-year-old jury-rigged a satellite Internet connection and established a makeshift studio in a Benghazi courthouse. He talked to people all over Libya on his mobile phone and filmed attacks by pro-government forces.

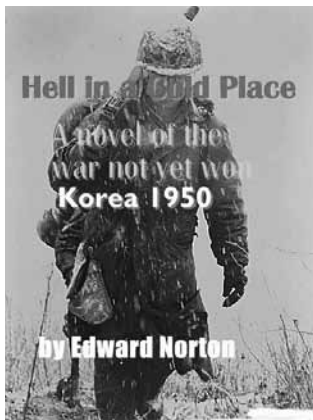
It was on February 19, 2011 that Nabbous bypassed the Libyan government's shutdown of the Internet and launched Libya Alhurra TV (Free Libya TV), live-streaming audio and video. One month later he was shot and killed by sniper fire.

At the time, Samra Naas, his wife, was seven months pregnant with their first child. Hours after he died, she announced his passing on the live-stream and asked Libyans to keep work-

drug trade, respectively, were published in 2011 as print-on-demand books. They can be ordered from him at rhancox@pmd26.hbs.edu. Hancox is retired from teaching at the Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing at British Columbia's Simon Fraser University.

1973

Edward C. Norton self-published his 10th novel, "Hell in a Cold Place," as an Amazon e-book in January. Set at the beginning of the Korean War, it focuses on



the withdrawal from the Chosin Reservoir of U.S. Marines under attack by Chinese "volunteer" divisions. In an e-mail to Nieman Reports, Norton writes that "retirement is a bore, and thus I've been writing books I want to read." Much of his work relies on the research skills he learned as a journalist.

1976

Ron Javers moved to China in February to teach in the School of Communication and Design at Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou.

The former executive editor of Newsweek International, Javers wrote in an e-mail to Nieman Reports that he made the move at the request of Hu Shuli, the dean of the school and editor in chief of Caixin Media.

Javers will maintain his media strategy and consulting group, Ron Javers Worldwide. The group, based in New York, has consulted with companies and nongovernmental organiza-

tions in Turkey, Pakistan and in several countries in Eastern Europe, but most of its work has been in China, where media development and investment activities have remained strong, despite the slowdown in the U.S. and in Western Europe.

At Newsweek, Javers was responsible for the growth and development of its worldwide special editions, most of which he launched, working with writers, editors and publishers in China, Japan, South Korea,



Ron Javers

Mexico, Argentina, Russia, Poland, Kuwait, Turkey and Pakistan.

1978

Danny Schechter has published "Occupy: Dissecting Occupy Wall Street" through ColdType.net. The book is a collection of reports and commentaries about the Occupy movement that he wrote for Al Jazeera English, his News Dissector blog, and other outlets. In the introduction, he explains that he covered the movement as a participatory journalist "reporting less on the day-to-day than on deeper trends" and that he "was totally sympathetic—it was an 'awakening' that I and so many were waiting years [for]—but I was not always uncritical."

In the preface, investigative reporter Greg Palast writes "the media made the occupation in New York and the USA a tale of cops and tarps and conga drums and young white kids with dreadlocks but without jobs.

ing for his cause, the cause of freedom.

Naas traveled to the Nieman Foundation this past December with Mayar, the couple's daughter, to accept an award honoring her husband as a representative of all those who worked to disseminate news during the Arab Spring. Nabbous was selected by the current class of Nieman Fellows as the 2011 recipient of the Louis M. Lyons Award for Conscience and Integrity in Journalism.

In remarks delivered at the ceremony, Naas said her husband risked his life out of love for his country. On the heels of citizen revolts in Egypt and Tunisia, Nabbous felt a sense of urgency. "He believed it was now or never," she said. It was critically important that Libyans—and the rest of the world—know that government forces were using anti-aircraft and heavy

artillery against their own citizens, she said.

In joint remarks at the Lyons award ceremony, 2012 Nieman Fellows **David Skok** and **Jonathan Blakley** summarized what Nabbous accomplished in the last month of his life. Skok called Nabbous "an anchor, producer, reporter, and a citizen journalist, all wrapped into one. Using the latest tools at his disposal he circumvented the media blackout placed on those inside Libya, setting up the very first independent news channel in a country that hadn't known a free press in over a generation."

In an interview the following day on Public Radio International's "The World," Naas told **Lisa Mullins**, NF '10, that she plans to raise Mayar in Libya: "Her father died because he believed in Libya and he wanted Libya to become a better place for his kids." —JAN GARDNER



Schechter opens the lens wide and gives you the full picture of a movement which encompasses all of America's dispossessed ... and that's a lot."

1981

David Lamb will receive the University of Maine's annual Alumni Career Award at his class's 50th reunion this June.

During nearly 40 years as a journalist, Lamb traveled to 145 countries as a foreign correspon-

dent with United Press International and the Los Angeles Times. He was elected to the Maine Press Association's Hall of Fame in 2005.

In February 2011, he led a 23-day tour of nine UNESCO World Heritage Sites for National Geographic Expeditions.

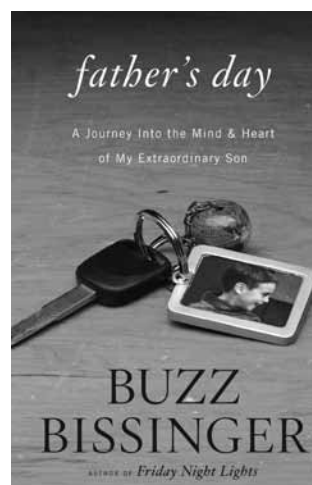
Don McNeill's first novel, "Hear, O Israel" was published by Puna Press in January.

The book, written under the pen name Sam Jon Wallace, is set in modern-day Israel and across the Mediterranean. Three story lines come together in an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. McNeill is also the author of "Submariner's Moon," a story collection published under his own name in 1996.

1986

Buzz Bissinger's fifth book, "Father's Day: A Journey Into the Mind and Heart of My Extraordinary Son," will be released on

May 15th by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. It's a memoir about his son Zachary, who suffered severe brain damage when he was born three and a half months premature in 1983. In contrast, Zachary's twin, Gerry, born three minutes earlier, is a high achiever. In the hope of better understanding Zachary, Bissinger decides that the two of them should drive across the country to visit all the cities where the family has lived.



Bissinger is a contributing editor for Vanity Fair and a sports columnist for the Daily Beast.

2001

Ken Armstrong and Michael J. Berens received the 2012 Selden Ring Award for Investigative Reporting from the University of Southern California's Annenberg School of Journalism for their Seattle Times series "Methadone and the Politics of Pain."

The series looks at the more than 2,000 people who, since 2003, have fatally overdosed on methadone, a drug that was often prescribed in Washington state to Medicaid patients with chronic pain. Within weeks of publication, the state changed its policy regarding the drug.

"It's deeply satisfying that a family-owned metro, The Seattle Times, has won this recognition for their fine work on a little-understood public-policy issue," said **Geneva Overholser**, NF '86, director of the School of Journalism.

2002

Matthew Schofield joined the three-person national security reporting team in McClatchy's Washington, D.C. bureau on March 1st.

Schofield had been a columnist for the McClatchy-owned Kansas City Star, where he started in 1984. From 2003 to 2008, he served as European bureau chief for McClatchy, covering Iraq and the Israel-Hezbollah war.

2004

Masha Gessen started a new job in January as editor of the Moscow-based *Vokrug Sveta*, one of the oldest science magazines in the world. She also is editor in chief of the company's publishing house.

Her book about Russia's president, "The Man Without a Face: The Unlikely Rise of Vladimir Putin," was released on March 1st by Riverhead Books.

For more about Gessen, her book, and journalism in Russia, read the interview with her on page 36.

Margaret Kriz Hobson has joined the staff of Environment & Energy Publishing as a reporter for EnergyWire, a new website that launched in March.

It focuses on "unconventional fuels—meaning natural gas fracking, deep-water oil



Margaret Kriz Hobson

drilling, oil development in the Arctic waters, and oil from tar sands and tight formations," Hobson wrote in an e-mail to Nieman Reports. "These are by far the nation's most lucrative and the most controversial sources of energy for the future."

Prior to joining E&E in December, Hobson was at Congressional Quarterly for a year and had previously been the energy and environmental reporter for National Journal. In the two decades she's covered the field, she wrote, "I've always respected the unbiased, comprehensive news approach at Greenwire and ClimateWire—two of the company's [E&E's] other online publications/newsletters."

"With more news outlets in Washington focusing on breaking news and (for some) political gossip," she continued. "I saw this as a rare and attractive opportunity to write comprehensive articles on some of the coolest energy and environmental issues I know."

2006

Bill Schiller has returned to Toronto after a stint as Asia bureau chief for The Toronto Star. He offered this update:

"After having spent nearly five years in China and 10 years abroad previously for the Star, I won't be heading out for another permanent posting anytime soon. Like so many papers, we have now closed all our foreign bureaus except Washington, D.C.

"But—happily—management remains dedicated to covering the world and we've been sending people here, there and everywhere continuously over the past year. At one point during the Arab Awakening, we



Bill Schiller

had eight reporters in the zone. I'm also told the travel budget will remain unchanged for the coming year, which is great.

"But my humble desire now is to report frequently from the United States in the coming year, which I believe will be the most fascinating story of all in 2012."

Brent Walth has been awarded a master of fine arts in creative writing from Warren Wilson College. Now the managing editor for news at Portland, Oregon's Willamette Week, he was inspired to enter the program after taking Anne Bernays's writing course during his Nieman year. The program required travel to North Carolina for classes as well long-distance project work with faculty.

Walth, the class correspondent, sent in the following updates:

Zippi Brand Frank won a 2011 News & Documentary Emmy Award for the HBO documentary "Google Baby." She produced and directed the film, which examines surrogacy and the online purchase of donated eggs and sperm through the experiences of women in the United States, Israel and India. "Google Baby" won in the category for outstanding science and technology programming.

Jon Palfreman won a 2011 Health Care Research and Journalism Award for the Frontline documentary, "The Vaccine War," which he wrote, produced and directed. The judges deemed it "the definitive story of the vaccine debate." The award is sponsored by the nonprofit National Institute for Health Care Management Research and Educational Foundation.

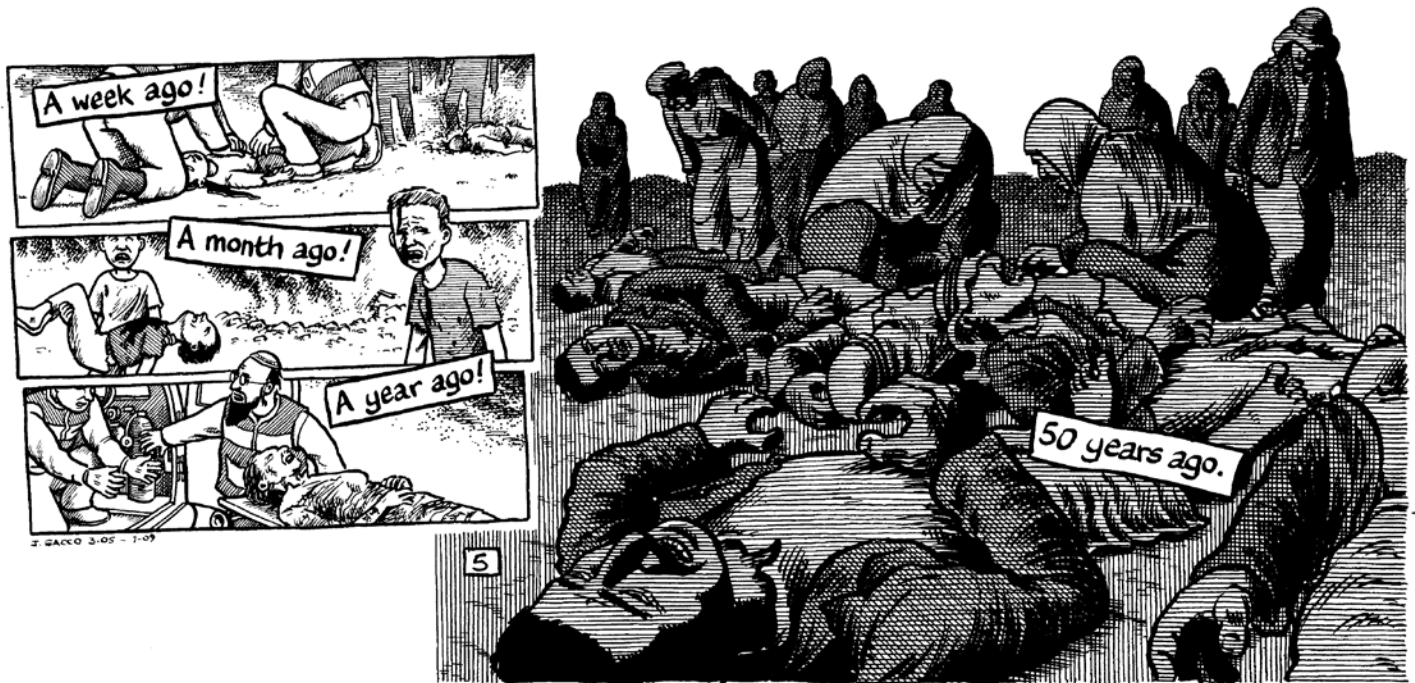
Palfreman, a journalism professor at the University of Oregon, was also producer, director and co-writer of the Frontline documentary "Nuclear Aftershocks," which examined the safety of nuclear power in the wake of the nuclear accident in Fukushima, Japan. It aired in January.

Nancy San Martin, interactive editor of The Miami Herald, led the team that won a regional Emmy Award for "Nou Bouke," a documentary on Haiti in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake. It was the Miami Herald Media Co.'s first Emmy.

"We hope this award will serve to bring attention to the many needs still facing that nation," said Nancy, a longtime Herald reporter who became interactive editor in 2009. "Haiti remains far from recovery."

Takashi Oshima will be covering U.S. and Japanese issues from the Washington, D.C. bureau of The Asahi Shimbun, a daily newspaper based in Tokyo.

Oshima started as a staff writer for the paper in 1995. After two years at Harvard for his Nieman Fellowship and a master's program at the Kennedy School of Government, he moved to the New York bureau of TV Tokyo America. In



In this panel from “Footnotes in Gaza,” Joe Sacco takes a long view of violence in the Gaza Strip, looking back to 1956. Image courtesy of Joe Sacco.

DRAWING HISTORY INTO TODAY’S NEWS

WHEN JOE SACCO AND CHRIS HEDGES TRAVELED TO THE GAZA Strip in 2001 for Harper’s magazine, they researched a little-known mass killing from 1956. But when the piece, written by Hedges and illustrated by Sacco, was published, editors had cut the entire section about Israeli soldiers killing hundreds of Palestinians during the Suez crisis.

That snub inspired “Footnotes in Gaza,” Sacco’s celebrated 2009 long-form comic book. Through flashbacks to 1956, he describes the killings of nearly 400 Palestinians in the neighboring towns of Khan Younis and Rafah.

“It irks me that history is always the first thing that gets cut out,” Sacco said, while recounting the incident to an audience at the Nieman Foundation in late February.

Sacco and **Chris Hedges**, NF ’99, have been friends since they met in Bosnia years ago. Their most recent collaboration is “Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt,” a book about poverty in the United States that focuses on four of the hardest-hit regions. Nation Books is due to release it in June.

While Sacco’s books are acclaimed and widely available now, the journalist-cartoonist faced stiff resistance starting out. For his first book, “Palestine,” he traveled to the region on his own dime—“and I didn’t have many dimes,” he said—and originally published it as a series of comic books, each one

selling fewer copies than the one before.

His use of cartoons to tell a story may have turned off editors, but his books are the result of meticulous research and reporting. He juxtaposes quotes from survivors and witnesses with his illustrations of their ordeals, relying on archival photos to get the look right.

He did acknowledge “a certain tension between using an accurate quote and interpretive drawing,” but said that it was necessary to get the story across. “My standard, if at all possible,” Sacco said, “is to show things the way they were.”

While in the field, he takes photographs and copious notes. They help him get into the minds of his subjects when drawing them, especially when it comes to their faces. But that process can be even more emotionally draining than interviewing survivors about what they saw.

“As a journalist, you’re kind of a technician or a clinician in the field,” he said. “It’s a very cold profession when it’s done well. ... But when you’re drawing, you can’t escape from the scenes you were told.” —JONATHAN SEITZ

Video from the event is available online at www.nieman.harvard.edu/JoeSacco/.

FROM NIEMAN TO SHORENSTEIN

Nazila Fathi, NF '11, a journalist who worked for *The New York Times* in Iran until she was forced to leave the country in 2009, and **David Greenway**, NF '72, a contributing columnist and former editorial page, foreign and national editor at *The Boston Globe*, are fellows this spring at the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy.

Alex S. Jones, NF '82, the center's director, said the two are part of a class "bursting with brain power and talent." He called Fathi "a courageous Iranian journalist" and Greenway "one of the nation's most respected commentators on foreign affairs."

Fathi is tracing the influence of satellite television, the Internet, and the press in Iran from 1993 to 2003 for a book she is writing. Greenway is researching conflicts between the government and the press over keeping secrets.

2010 Oshima returned to Tokyo and *The Asahi Shimbun*. He covered the aftermath of the earthquakes and the Fukushima nuclear plant disaster.

Beena Sarwar won the 2011 Pakistan Blog Award for best blog by a journalist. She writes about politics and freedom in Pakistan on her blog, *Journeys to Democracy* (www.beenasarwar.wordpress.com).

Sarwar is currently a visiting fellow with the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

Jeb Sharp is now show producer of Public Radio International's "The World," after 13 years as a reporter for the program.

In an e-mail, she explained the position: "The show producer sets the agenda for the daily broadcast. Think curator and logistics manager all rolled into



Jeb Sharp

one. I lead the morning meeting, assign producers, coordinate with editors, work with the engineering staff. I sit at the vortex of all the action so my main role is keeping all the channels of communications open."

Leading the team of journalists who put the program together is thrilling, but she looks forward to getting back to her own reporting. "I think many reporters who've become managers can relate," she added. She tweets @jebsharp.

Alice Tatah has earned a master's degree in communication for development from the Advanced School of Mass Communication at the University of Yaounde II in Soa, Cameroon.

In addition to her work as a reporter for CRTV in Cameroon, Tatah is editor of *Change Magazine*, a quarterly publication she founded in 2011 that focuses on politics, health care and social issues in Cameroon.

"Our country is in dire need of development and every one of us has a contribution to make," Tatah wrote in the premiere issue.

2007

Anja Niedringhaus's photography book "At War" was released by Hatje Cantz.

Santiago Lyon, NF '04, photography director for *The Associated Press* and a colleague of hers for 20 years, wrote an introduction for the book, which was released in conjunction with exhibitions of her photographs in Europe and elsewhere. See a selection of images from the book in a photo essay on page 26.

2010

Anita Snow joined the editing desk at *The Associated Press's* Latin America bureau in Mexico City this March.

Snow has spent much of her career in Latin America, including a decade as the AP bureau chief in Havana, Cuba. She spent the past year and a half in New York City covering the United Nations.



Hollman Morris

2011

Hollman Morris has returned to Colombia and is now director of Canal Capital, the public television station in Bogotá.

In an interview with the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, Morris said that he wants to provide television that is "in the service of the people ... that is popular and shows that television in Latin America isn't only about distraction, but an instrument for development."

A documentary filmmaker and broadcast journalist, Morris last year wrote that "the desire to return—so common in those like me who have left Colombia because of persecution—stays with me."

CORRECTIONS

In the Winter 2011 issue, the surname of the author of "Grateful for Well-Timed Words From Wicker" was misspelled. It is Alvin Shuster. In "A Posthumous Tribute to a Journalist's Career," Zaytoon Akhalwaya was misidentified. She is Ameen Akhalwaya's daughter.

VISUAL APPEAL With this issue, we've updated the look of Nieman Reports with the goal of making the magazine more inviting. We'd love to hear from you about the new design, what's in this issue, or any other journalism-related subject. Please send letters to the editor to nreditor@harvard.edu or Nieman Reports, One Francis Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138.

The Wide Web of Innovation

IN CHRONICLING THE EVOLUTION OF NEWS, THE NIEMAN Journalism Lab tracks start-ups, identifies innovations, and shares lessons about how quality journalism can thrive in the Internet age. Not every success can be duplicated in another market or niche but by highlighting best practices in online journalism, the Lab aims to help foster a sustainable future. Like the reporting you'll find on an everyday basis at www.niemanlab.org, the pieces summarized below offer insights about what's working.

—JOSHUA BENTON, NF '08, LAB DIRECTOR

Aggregation is deep in journalism's DNA

By David Skok, 2012 Nieman Fellow and managing editor of *Global News Online*



When Time magazine debuted in March of 1923, its 29 pages were full of advertisements sold against content aggregated from The Atlantic, The Christian Science Monitor, and the New York World, among others. Today the magazine is a respected source of original reporting.

That transformation might be good to keep in mind as aggregators, including

The Huffington Post and BuzzFeed, begin creating their own content. They are following a trajectory that can be explained by Harvard business professor Clayton M. Christensen's theory of disruption. As he explained in his book, "The Innovator's Dilemma," new entrants in an industry start at the bottom and move up the value chain by taking market share from their bigger, older and frequently complacent competitors. That's what Japanese automakers did in the 1980's; they started with cheap subcompacts and now they make Lexuses.

How a tightly paywalled, social-media-ignoring, anti-copy-paste, gossipy news site became a dominant force in Nova Scotia

By Tim Currie, online journalism professor at University of King's College

AllNovaScotia.com charges \$360 a year for exclusive coverage of the business and political elite of Canada's most populous Atlantic province. Yet nearly 6,000 subscribers—primarily the province's movers and shakers—keep coming back for its mix of speculation and business news, including a regular feature on "Who's Suing Whom." The site doesn't bother with multimedia or social media and rarely links. Reporters scour court records, property transfers, and building permits, consistently scooping their print rival. Subscriptions account for 80 percent of the 10-year-old site's revenue. It's not a model that will work everywhere, but it demonstrates that the right content can be king.

Having two brands isn't better than having one

By Joshua Macht, group publisher of the *Harvard Business Review Group*

The Boston Globe's new two-site strategy aims to capture the best of the free and paid Web, but in doing so, the paper risks diluting its brand. That's a lesson the Harvard Business Review Group learned in reverse.

Two years ago, the Review's separate websites (one free, one paid) were merged under a single URL and editorial team. With the magazine and website providing a more consistent experience, it's been easier to build readership. The result was a 20 percent increase in newsstand sales and 135 percent growth in unique visitors to the site.

Looking to Europe for news-industry innovation: A Three-Part Series

By Ken Doctor, researcher and analyst for *Outsell*

While the news about many American media companies is gloomy, a number of European news organizations have turned a profit from the Web:

- Finland's Sanoma has been effective at bundling digital and print subscriptions to its Helsinki daily, enticing a third of its print subscribers to pay for digital access.
- Norway's Schibsted, the world's eighth-largest news company, has been publishing classified ads online since 1999 and now has a Craigslist-like hold on the market in Europe.
- Switzerland's Gossweiler Media has begun licensing its model—digital first, an intensely local focus, and integrated advertising—across Europe.

The Wall Street Journal covers Fashion Week fashionably, finding uses for Pinterest and Instagram

By Andrew Phelps, staff writer at the *Nieman Journalism Lab*

To cover one of the most glamorous annual events in New York City, the staid Wall Street Journal capitalized on the growing popularity of Instagram and Pinterest. The former is a photo-sharing app that lets users apply filters to images, the latter an invitation-only social message board.



The Journal assigned nine reporters to Fashion Week and sent them into the field with iPhones, Instagram accounts, and orders to file as many photos as possible. Posting photos on the two services reached an audience far beyond typical Journal readers.



The Fine Art of Reinvention

An invitation to lead a photo tour of Venice is a turning point.

BY FRANK VAN RIPER

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, THE FIERY playwright known for, among other things, proclaiming, “He who can, does. He who can’t, teaches,” never came up against the sea change shaking journalism.

His observation has been used for decades to disparage teachers as somehow less than competent practitioners of a craft. Shaw’s snarky comment presupposed that all one had to do to be successful at something was to excel

at it. Tell that to the legion of men and women—reporters, photographers, editors and others who were doing first-rate work on newspapers, magazines and wire services—who have been downsized or simply fired from jobs they thought they would keep for life.

In today’s world, Shaw’s words might be transformed into something like this: “Those who can, do. Those who can and are fired anyway, reinvent themselves.”

Take me, for example. After 20 years as a reporter and editor in the Washington bureau of New York’s Daily News, I saw the handwriting on the wall in 1987, negotiated a great buyout for myself (ah, those were the days), and went into business with my new wife Judy as a commercial photographer, doing everything from annual reports to weddings. (I had been a photographer as long as I had been a writer and vice versa.)



Two scenes from Venice. Photos © Goodman/
Van Riper Photography.

Within five years I also became a freelance photography columnist for The Washington Post, first for the printed Weekend section, then for Washington post.com.

At one point Judy and I were bringing down six figures doing some 50 weddings a year. We were considered among the best wedding shooters in town and my Post column was so popular that in 2002 “Talking Photography,” a collection

of 10 years of columns, was published.

As always, things change. A generation of out-of-work news photographers gravitated to wedding work, creating not only more competition for us, but competition that often low-balled us. And younger photographers always were entering the field, making our position even tougher to maintain.

At The Washington Post, the website suffered more and more cuts. Not

surprisingly, after 19 years my column was dropped.

Given these lemons, it was time to make lemonade. First, I took control of my column, continuing to do it on my own (www.TalkingPhotography.com), while securing agreement from the Post to maintain my existing online column archive.

I was always a very good public speaker—able to deliver a message

succinctly and well, as would any good reporter in print—and, on top of that, I was enough of a ham that I loved doing it. I vowed to turn this talent into a moneymaker.

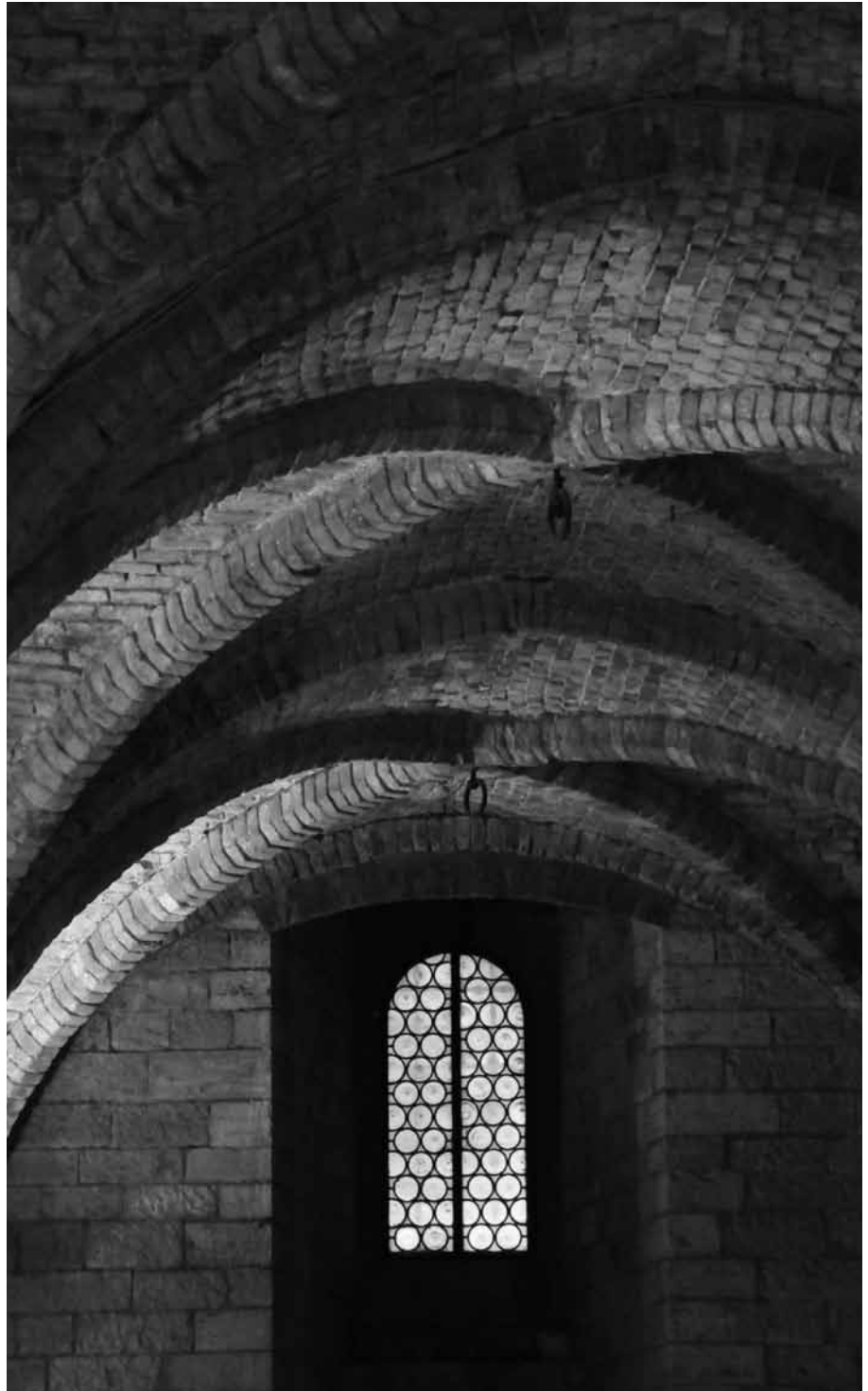
My first sustained experience as a speaker had come during the many appearances I made before D.C. area camera clubs to judge competitions or present an evening's program. But arguably the impetus for all that my wife and I are doing today came in 1998 when a travel agent, whose husband was a fan of my column, asked if I would be interested in leading a photo tour in Venice during Carnevale.

Not only did Judy and I have a ball during that week of teaching and touring, but the great photos we got convinced me that my next book would be a collaboration between us on Venice in winter.

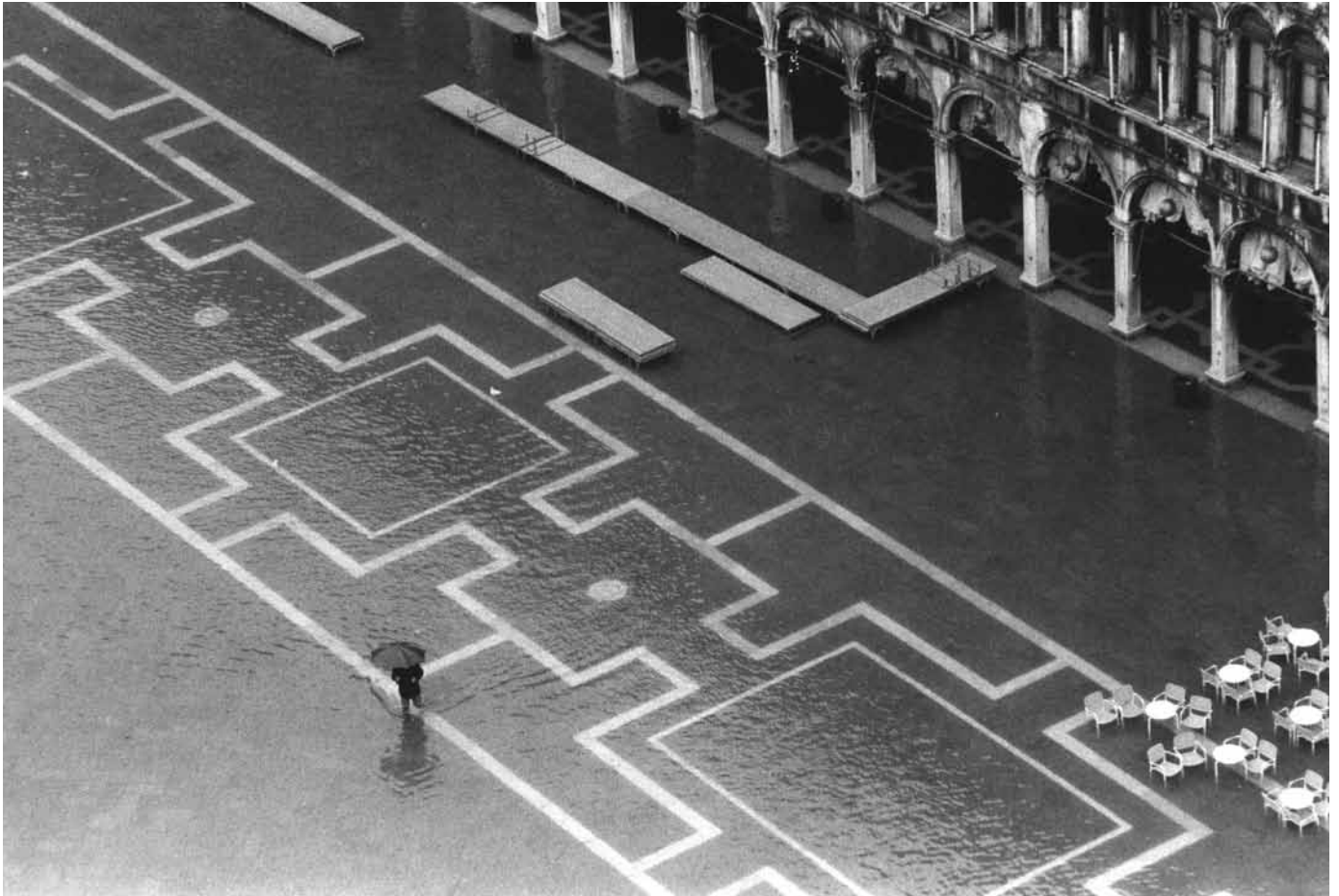
Thus, two paths opened up: joint photography books and international workshops. Judy and I collaborated on "Serenissima: Venice in Winter," and that, in turn led us to our annual photography workshops in Umbria. We did our first book signing for "Serenissima" at an Italian specialty shop in Bethesda, Maryland. When we mentioned that we wanted to teach more workshops, the shop owners offered us use of their villa in Umbria. That was in 2010. We have never looked back.

Our summer photo workshops on the Maine coast sell out, and we host photo tours in Umbria during May and October. All that's left is an annual workshop in Venice—in the winter. That's likely to start next year.

Frank Van Riper, a 1979 Nieman Fellow, is a documentary and fine art photographer, journalist and author. His most recent book, "Serenissima: Venice in Winter," is a collaboration with his wife Judith Goodman. Information about their photography workshops is online at www.experienceumbria.com and www.summerkeys.com.



The vaulted ceiling in Perugia's ancient city hall is a point of interest in Umbria. Photo © Goodman/Van Riper Photography.



Above: A view of Venice from a bell tower.
Left: Meringues piled high in Assisi. Photos ©
Goodman/Van Riper Photography.



“Those who can, do. Those who can and are fired anyway, reinvent themselves.”

—FRANK VAN RIPER, NF '79

Dispatches From A World of Opportunity

Two members of the current Nieman class share key moments of insight and transformation as they finish up their year at Harvard.

FACE TO FACE WITH ‘FALSE NECESSITIES’

“IF I WERE TO SUM UP WHAT I HAVE learned, what has changed me, from the nine courses I took and the 62 seminars or forums I have attended (and counting!), it would be the idea, central to my study of comparative constitutional law (under the incomparable Frank Michelman), of ‘false necessities.’ In a given legal order, as in any field or profession, certain values and practices come to be seen as indispensable. A comparison with other legal systems, however, would show that some of these are only contingent on caprice or circumstance. For instance, the very concept of judicial review, on which journalists raised on American-style constitutional traditions depend to protect their rights, means different things in different jurisdictions. To come face to face with that, with the false necessities of life as we have thus far come to understand it, is unnerving and liberating.”

JOHN NERY
senior editor
Philippine Daily Inquirer

FINDING SOCIAL CAPITAL

“OF THE MANY RICH EXPERIENCES (SO far) this year, the most rewarding may be auditing a course that gives me new insight on a topic I already know well—community in America. I’ve had the privilege of joining a small group of undergraduates who meet in professor Robert Putnam’s living room each week this spring to discuss ‘social capital,’ or the intangible benefits we derive from joining groups as diverse as book clubs, service organizations, and bowling leagues. Social capital is closely related to other civic activities—such as voting and volunteering—that are vital to the composition of a community. As an editor, I realize this aspect of community health is important to the success of our news organizations.

“So, when I go home, I won’t just be watching how many stories our newspapers and websites break, or how many subscribers and unique visitors we attract. I’ll be thinking about the dimensions of civic life in our communities and how we enhance them while fulfilling our essential mission of reporting the news.”

DAVID JOYNER
vice president for content
Community Newspaper Holdings
Alabama

Nieman Reports
One Francis Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138



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PLUS

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Joe Sacco's Cartoon Journalism

Chauncey Bailey's Life and Death