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FIVE DOLLARS

Reengineering Society With Economic Shock Therapy

Bill Buzenberg and the National Public Radio Idea

"...to promote and elevate the standards of journalism"

—Agnes Wahl Nieman, the benefactor of the Nieman Foundation.

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Cover : A broken-down truck is restarted along the Burma Road in Chuxiong, China. Photo: Stan Grossfeld/The Boston Globe

Curator's Corner

A Wider Audience for Superb Reporting

Spring comes hard in New England. The frozen ground yields grudgingly to the northering sun. But come April each year the irresistible force of new growth begins to break free and the poet's "cruelest month" becomes a time of renewed hope and promise appreciated more because it has been so long in coming.

This renewal of hope and promise comes through the front door of Lippmann House each April in the form of 20 to 24 finalists for Nieman Fellowships. They arrive having made it to the final stage of the selection process not just upon the basis of a compelling record of production of the kind of journalism on which a self-governing society depends, but also upon a clearly articulated desire to do the work even better.

Each year a Nieman selection committee chooses these finalists from among 60 to 90 journalists in mid-career who have applied for a sabbatical year at Harvard. Each year, for the better part of three days, the selection committee intensely engages with the life, the work and the aspirations of these print and electronic journalists from news organizations large and small from all parts of the country. And each year committee members leave their weekend in spring at Lippmann House with a new respect for the commitment and dedication of the journalists whose careers and goals they have examined.

This was so this year as it has been for every one of the nine years I have been involved in choosing Nieman Fellows. During that time 25 of the best of Harvard's faculty and 25 journalists of significant accomplishment have welcomed spring with a better sense of the depth of the reservoir of journalists around the country who see their work as an important part of the process of self-government.

They may find themselves captivated, as committee member Elizabeth Bartholet did, by the candidate whose career in journalism began as a Vista volunteer when she created a newspaper to serve the needs of the poor and disadvantaged people in her district. Or as Sydney Schanberg did by a reporter who devoted himself to creating a radio station in Burundi, which he staffed with Tutsis and Hutus who worked together to produce balanced, reliable news in the midst of a raging genocide. But whatever the specific story each candidate has to tell the result is the same. As Schanberg, who won a Pulitzer Prize when he risked his own life to witness the genocide of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, said, the judging experience had shown him a "new generation of journalists as good as any."

The interesting thing about this reaction to a closer, more systematic look at the work of today's journalists is that it seems to be shared by anyone who has served on the selection committee of a program such as this or on any jury for major journalism awards. The fact is that despite all the problems confronting journalists today, despite the daily examples of the corrupting influence of corporate greed that undermines public interest journalism, that when you have a chance to pull the best of it together there is an extraordinary amount of superb journalism being committed across the country today.

Unfortunately much of what we see in these competitions, which distill out the best in the business, is the kind of journalism that is increasingly overshadowed and marginalized by entertainment and celebrity journalism. They seem to be the stories that are moved inside the report to make room for the stories that seek to minimize cost and target consumers for the advertisers.

Maybe it would serve the interests of journalism and the interests of the public better if we could find a way to give such stellar and important work the wider audience it deserves. Maybe a creative use of the new technology of the Internet would be to make these stories available to everyone with access to a computer. Maybe the Newspaper Association of America could establish a Web page that routinely posted the most important stories produced each day wherever they originate. It would certainly provide tangible proof of the claims regularly made of the importance of journalism to self-government. Such a project would enrich the nationwide flow of public affairs information produced around the country each day. It might also, finally, realize the vision of James Madison when he spoke of the "means of obtaining popular information" on which democracy depends. ■

What They're Saying

Paul Kennedy
The Value of 'If' And 'Likely to Be'

Photo: © Robert A. Lisak, 1995

How can one possibly write that wonderful book, "The Twenty-first Century Will Be American"? It's reasonable to assume that the United States will still be the leading world power in, say, the year 2010, although note that the World Bank forecasts by certain ways of calculating gross domestic product, [that] China may have the world's largest economy by that date. But to make claims for a nation's relative position in the year 2060, 2080 is completely unscientific and intellectually unprofessional....

The person talking or writing about the future should use conditional and provisional language, not...affirmative I-know-it-all language. If the Chinese economy grows at an average rate of 10 percent per annum for the next 15 years, then it is likely to be, etcetera, etcetera. By using such language as "if" and "likely to be" the author is more flexible, allowing for the possibility of new data, new variables that will affect projections either upwards or downwards.—*Paul Kennedy, J. Richardson Dilworth Professor of History at Yale University and author of "Preparing for the Twenty-first Century," at a Nieman Foundation seminar, April 2, 1997.*

Ron Rosenbaum
Pursuing Fraud In Ideas

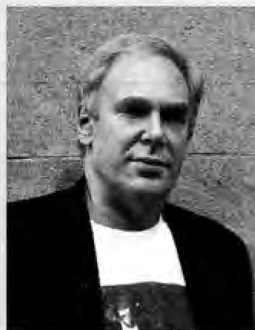

Photo: Alexander Bouis

For journalism in the 60's, 70's and 80's, the idea was follow the money, find the corruption that money causes. And journalists did a lot to identify patterns of corruption. I think that still needs to be done, obviously. But, in a way, what I found is that there's a kind of corruption in ideas that really needs to be pursued even more. There's a lot of unthinking, knee-jerk reverence for established ideas that a smart journalist can go into and find really wonderful comedy, drama, great stories.—*Ron Rosenbaum, contributing writer, The New York Times Magazine, cultural columnist, The New York Observer, and author of the forthcoming book "Explaining Hitler," at a Nieman Foundation seminar, February 21, 1997.*

Elizabeth Swados
Belief in Self Despite Reviews

I have doubts almost every hour about what I do. Because it's such a strange profession. ...As far as my overall artistry, I don't tend to dwell on it. But I do sometimes worry. I don't walk around fully confident. I've been completely and thoroughly trashed by critics. The New York Times, I think for four years in a row, it was just like [Frank Rich] hated me. He didn't just dislike my work; he hated me. It's really hard. No matter what anybody says. I don't read reviews. But you hear. You hear, "Oh my god, he really said this about you, that about you." And you don't recover. You never do. But maybe that's part of it. Maybe it's a humbling thing. Maybe it's about learning why you do it. Because, believe me, if I didn't love and believe in what I did, the four years that Frank Rich covered my stuff, I would have quit.—*Elizabeth Swados, composer and writer of musicals, film writer and scorer and book author, at a Nieman Foundation breakfast, March 13, 1997.*

Reengineering Society

From Washington to Beijing, from Russia to South Africa, from Brazil to Vietnam, the world is caught up in an unprecedented experiment in social reengineering by harnessing the power of economic competition to create wealth and determine how it should be distributed among people. For decades this bold experiment will test the ability of the news media to report its successes and failures to improve the well-being of society.

Unleashing Competitive Forces Around the World

By Pankaj Ghemawat

A question for reporters and editors:

What do the following 10 geopolitical developments since the 1970's have in common?

1. Deregulation/privatization of specific sectors such as health care, financial services, telecommunications and other infrastructural areas in developed and developing countries.
2. The enactment of a free trade agreement in North America.
3. The institution of market-friendlier and more open policies throughout much of South America (with a few notable exceptions such as Venezuela and caveats such as the southern cone's own regional trade pact, Mercosur).
4. South Africa's opening to the rest of Africa and the rest of the world.
5. West (and parts of Central) Europe's progressive integration under the European Union's Single Market Program.
6. The collapse of communism in East Europe and the rest of the former Soviet Union.
7. China's engagement in world trade.
8. Moves toward market economies in South Asia.
9. Exploding trade and investment flows (particularly the share of them accounted for by developing countries).
10. Formation of the World Trade Organization.

The simple answer:

Competitive forces, internal and external, have become more important in determining patterns of wealth creation and distribution. In fact, we are living through an unprecedented experiment in social reengineering—an experiment involving harnessing the power of competition through sudden, significant policy changes that we refer to as competitive shocks. To take just an external, trade-based perspective, calculations by Professors Jeffrey Sachs and Andrew Warner of Harvard suggest that excluding backsliders, 58 countries went from being closed to trade to opening up between 1960 and 1994. Converts since 1985 alone number 48 and include Mexico (1986), Turkey (1989), Poland (1990), Brazil (1991), South Africa (1991) and India (1994).

Additionally, many countries that do not make it onto the Sachs-Warner list have nevertheless engaged in significant internal liberalization—the elements of which can range from reduction of government-imposed barriers to entry, mobility, and exit, to deregulation of domestic price/non-price competition, reform of input markets (particularly capital and labor) and privatization. The erstwhile socialist bloc supplies a number of important cases, including China and Russia, in which internal reforms have outpaced external liberalization. Many non-socialist countries have also moved to increase the intensity of domestic competition without fully opening up in an external sense: countries such as Bangladesh and Egypt, to cite two rather different examples. Overall, more than five dozen countries, accounting for at least one-third of the world's population and one-sixth of its Gross National Product, seem to

Photo: Richard A. Chase

Professor Pankaj Ghemawat received his A.B. degree in Applied Mathematics from Harvard College in 1979 and his Ph.D. in Business Economics in 1982. In 1991, he became the youngest full professor appointed in the school's history. Ghemawat's past research has centered on decisions that involve significant amounts of commitment or irreversibility, such as entry into new markets, exit from old ones, capacity expansion and product and process innovation. He has written two books, "Commitment" and "Games Businesses Play" and more than 30 articles and cases on this broad topic. His current research focuses on competition in developing countries and especially in how competitive shocks affect industrial structure and strategy. Ghemawat is a coeditor of the "Journal of Economics and Management Strategy" and the "Strategic Management Journal."

Opposite page: Mexicans at the El Paso border waiting to work. Photo by Stan Grossfeld/The Boston Globe.

have experienced some sort of broad competitive shock since 1985. Adding in large sectors in developed countries that are also being liberalized pushes these numbers up significantly, to perhaps as much as one-third of the world's GNP!

The future of this grand experiment remains unsettled. Will it continue to run its course or will it create and be consumed by its own contradictions—as argued, for example, by William Greider in his recent book, "One World, Ready or Not?" If the experiment does continue, what are the implications for institutional structure and national sovereignty? For differences in income within and across countries?

Definitive answers to these questions will not be available until the dust settles. Because of the lagged effects of sweeping economic changes and the interactions among them, this process is likely to take decades. But judgments about what is happening to the world economy cannot and should not be entirely deferred until historians are able to perform their post-mortems: the stakes are simply too high, and the urgency too great. This is where news organizations must step in, in ways that promise to redefine their roles. There are at least four dimensions along which the effective news organization of the 21st Century is likely to be most differentiated from its 20th Century predecessors.

William Julius Wilson

Rich-Poor Gap: Europe and the U.S.

One thing that struck me when I spent a year in Paris (1989-1990) and I traveled all over Europe lecturing and when I've gone back to Europe since then is how concerned people are about [the income gap between the rich and the poor]. I mean they are really concerned. They discuss these issues. I've been interviewed over BBC more than any local station here in the United States. These problems are emerging and they want to do something and they use the United States as a negative example. They don't want to be like the United States. I mention the dominant American belief system, that is the belief that people are poor because of personal deficiencies or inadequacies. It is interesting that when you look at public opinion polls and you see that in Europe people are far more likely to invoke the structural explanation for poverty or public assistance. People are not working or on welfare because the economy is bad and not enough jobs and so on, and far less likely to use an individualistic explanation.—*William Julius Wilson, Malcolm Wiener Professor of Social Philosophy at Harvard University, at a Nieman Foundation seminar, April 23, 1997.*

1. Generating Knowledge

Somewhat ironically, while it is a commonplace that many economies—especially developed ones—are becoming more and more knowledge-based, our knowledge about their structures has become less and less complete as they have outgrown the 19th Century, manufacturing-based model that still underpins many official statistical systems. At an international level, trade in services provides a particularly glaring example: while there is general agreement that it has grown more rapidly since World War II than trade in manufactured products, no one knows how much more rapidly because of lack of a comprehensive database.

The problem of outdated classification systems is compounded by competitive shocks which, by speeding up economic changes, have also speeded up the obsolescence of economic information. Take another egregious example, this time at a national level: that of India. It was perhaps acceptable to work with census information that was five and even 10 years out of date during the decades in which India's economic structure was largely frozen. But since the competitive shock of the early 1990's, that alternative has become less and less acceptable—especially insofar as attempts to assess the early returns to the reform process are concerned.

Of course, given the scope of censuses and their "public good" character, which limits the returns that can be appropriated by a private organization that invests in them, the private provision of such comprehensive information is likely to continue to be impractical. But that still leaves considerable room for news organizations to generate systematic information through sample surveys as a way of informing the debate surrounding the reform process. In India, for example, my colleagues and I have teamed up with a leading business periodical to launch a large-scale survey of how local companies' business strategies have changed in the wake of that country's competitive shock. This important issue is one on which aggregated official information, even when it does become available, will shed little light.

It should be obvious, too, that the ultimate goal of news organizations in regard to these lacunae in official statistical systems should be to generate not only information but also useful knowledge. That will require a more analytical focus not only in determining what data to gather but what to make of it, as described in the subsections that follow.

2. Recognizing the Dynamics Of Competition

Data gathering and interpretation must both be guided by a sophisticated sense of the dynamics of competition which, as emphasized by Joseph Schumpeter, the economist, involves a

process of creative destruction. While Schumpeter's observation applies more broadly, it is particularly pertinent to environments that have recently experienced competitive shocks.

Two examples dramatize the upheavals that are part and parcel of the process of creative destruction. First consider a case from a developed country context: that of the U.S. airline industry. The passage of the Airline Deregulation Act in October 1978 essentially scrapped a system that had regulated entry, expansion, exit and pricing for decades. Over the next 15 years, the number of certified airlines that provided scheduled domestic service nearly doubled, from 33 to 64—a striking change in and of itself. Even more strikingly, however, this large change in net numbers masked even larger amounts of entry and exit: between 1978 and 1993, about 210 new airlines entered the market and 180 exited! And change continues.

Second, look at an example from a transitional economy: that of Poland's economy-wide "big bang" in 1990, which involved simultaneous liberalization of foreign trade, foreign direct investment, prices, and regulations on entry, exit and factor markets. At the time of this competitive shock, there were about 36,000 companies with more than five employees each registered with Poland's Central Statistical Office. Through 1994, about 90 percent of them shrank or shut down, shedding about one-half of the 8.5 million jobs that they had originally accounted for. This situation was alleviated, to some extent, by the registration of more than 25,000 new companies, which created about 1 million new jobs. And some observers think that companies that did not register because they have fewer than five employees or because their owners elect to operate in the "grey" economy have had an even bigger impact on post-shock job creation in Poland.

Such examples are rich in lessons for how news organizations ought to track the effects of increased competition. I will cite just three. First, a fixation on business failures misses out on the fact that high rates of turnover, of entry and exit, are expected and even essential to the redeployment of resources within an industry or an entire economy. Second, while net job losses (as in the Polish case) are obviously a matter of concern and therefore newsworthy—especially when the losers are concentrated in particular industries or geographic areas—a focus on them must be tempered with a recognition that (a) it often takes longer to create jobs than to shed them; and (b) many of the jobs that quickly disappear, including the better-paid ones, often did not add much economic value—from an overall social perspective—to begin with. A third and related point is that productivity growth is the single most important metric for assessing the social impact of increased competition because such growth is what expands the size of the overall economic pie—determining, in turn, the resources available for safety nets and other transfer payments. The deregulation of U.S. airlines, for instance, is largely regarded as a success by specialists because it is estimated to have saved passengers $100 billion in fares in its first 10 years alone—an amount largely derived from productivity gains.

3. Understanding Companies

Paying more attention to the dynamics of competition also requires paying more attention to the entities that actually compete with each other: companies. This might sound like too obvious a point to belabor, but it isn't: news analyses often offer their readers a characterization of companies that is, to borrow E. M. Forster's literary terminology, flat rather than round.

One frequent problem is that the companies are treated monolithically, as a "corporate sector" that has the same interests with regard to and faces the same challenges from a competitive shock. What this misses out on is the fact that companies' interests are likely to vary greatly depending on the industries or sectors in which they compete. For example, the implications of an economy-wide competitive shock in many previously protected developing countries often varies significantly between the manufacturing and agricultural sectors, not to mention at a finer level of disaggregation. Better skills at industry analysis are an essential requisite for more nuanced treatment of companies.

Second, even at the level of a specific industry, there are often large variations in the calculus of companies' self-interest depending on their competitive positions within that industry. The one aspect of this distinction that is most frequently picked up concerns the difference between "domestic" and "foreign" companies, but even here the focus is frequently on the domestic market and the interactions are frequently framed in win-lose terms. What this misses out on are the large (but shifting) possibilities of cooperation between domestic and foreign companies—as often evinced by high rates of joint venture formation (and dissolution)—that blur our ability to distinguish cleanly between them. And the locus of such cooperation need not be confined to domestic markets. For example, in a world in which one-third of all international trade takes place between parent companies and their foreign affiliates, partnerships with foreign companies can be an essential component of domestic export efforts.

Third, within the set of domestic companies, there often tends to be a focus on the largest corporate entities. Small and medium enterprises tend to be discounted despite a substantial body of work that highlights their contributions to output, exports and job creation, especially in developing or transitional economies. Thus, in countries as diverse as Poland and India, companies with fewer than five employees account for most of the employment in an importantly large number of sectors.

Finally, even the reporting on large domestic companies that does take place tends to downplay important differences in institutional structure. In many economies, developed and developing, outside the United States and the United Kingdom, the bulk of organized industrial activity in the private sector is accounted for by large, highly diversified business groups, often con-

nected by financial interlocks and family or other personal ties. Given the role that these groups are going to play, one way or another, in the reallocation of private sector resources around the world, there is intense interest in whether they represent holdovers from an era of restrained competition (and are therefore likely to shrink in scope as competition increases) or whether they are actually efficient organizational forms given institutional and market imperfections (e.g., financial ones) that are likely to persist for some time to come. Unfortunately, very little of what does get written about large domestic companies sheds any light on this important systemic issue.

4. Redirecting Coverage Of Governments

While more systematic attention must be paid to the roles that companies and competition among them play in driving economic growth, that should not imply a crowding-out of the extensive coverage news organizations have traditionally accorded to governmental actions. What is called for, instead, is a redirection of ways in which governments are covered to reflect changing institutional realities.

Coverage of governments has traditionally been skewed toward their macroeconomic choices—choices concerning such variables as interest rates, the money supply, tax policy and public finance. Macroeconomic stability along these and other dimensions is a necessary condition for sustained economic growth. But it is far from sufficient. Microeconomic factors, such as tariffs and other trade barriers, restrictions on entry and exit and price distribution controls, have a very large influence on the growth rates that are actually achieved within a given macroeconomic framework. More attention must therefore be paid to the micro-influences of governmental policies.

It would be a mistake to assume, in this context, that competitive shocks essentially represent a reversion to the state of laissez-faire, with government getting entirely out of the business of influencing companies' decisions at a micro level. For one thing, there are many one-time actions associated with a competitive shock in which the government is the prime driver. Privatization is one example. Writing the rules under which post-shock competition will take place is another. For this reason, many companies regard relationships with government as assuming more rather than less influence in the immediate aftermath of a competitive shock. For the same reason, news organizations have an obligation, in their traditional role as watchdogs, to pay extensive attention to such relationships.

A second broad reason why continued attention to governmental policy is important even in a world of stepped-up competition stems from the fact that governments will continue to play a large role in economic affairs—perhaps even a larger one than some governments, particularly in developed countries, have retreated to since 1980. Limited success at privatizing areas such as education is already spurring talk of the "new public sector": areas in which structural conditions seem to dictate an abiding role for government. Similarly, work by Dani Rodrik and others indicates that since the 1980's, the traditional social insurance function provided by governments in developed countries that promoted openness to trade has weakened substantially, in ways that may invite a substantial correction.

Finally, as other constraints on competitors' interactions are eased, antitrust policies—including, somewhat ironically, policies restricting the concentration of market power in media markets, should become more rather than less imortant

Once again, however, one is struck by the very limited diffusion of such academic insights into news analyses that at their extreme depict markets as displacing governments everywhere.

Conclusions

These recommendations, while easy to offer, will be hard to implement. In particular, they will prove impractical unless substantial investments are made in educating journalists about the basic principles of international and business economics. Cooperation with non-news organizations—universities, think tanks, consultancies, market research organizations, et cetera—is an essential part of such education. But while the challenge will be great and many news organizations are likely to have trouble meeting it, the payoffs to the ones that do are likely to be large as well. ■

More on Reengineering Society

Related to this special report on "Reengineering Society With Economic Shock Therapy" are the following book reviews:

- Bill Barnhart's analysis of "Bloomberg by Bloomberg," the autobiography of the man whose news service provides economic news to the media and to financial traders throughout the United States.—Page 52

- Lynda McDonnell's commentary on Robert Kuttner's "Everything for Sale," which contests the notion that unrestrained markets are the surest route to the most robust economy and the strongest society.—Page 53

- John Harwood's discussion of Robert Reich's "Locked in the Cabinet," in which the former Labor Secretary describes his vain efforts to convince President Clinton to do more to narrow the rich-poor gap.—Page 64

Who Will Report the 'Real Deal?'

By Karen De Witt

Every reporter has had the experience of someone asking for the "real story" on a suspicion that the full story, the "real deal" as they say on the street, has not been told. Often with reason, they have an intuitive feeling that there is something more, something missing, that we as reporters are holding something back. They don't trust us to tell everything. In fact, that feeling is so universal that it has engendered a deep cynicism about the media itself. As all know, we now rate right down there with politicians, lawyers and used car salesman as people Americans love to hate.

So whom will they turn to for the "real deal" on the wrenching changes that the unleashing of competitive economic forces are causing, not just in business and the workplace, but also in the family, in education, in health, in medicine, in religion, in lifestyles, in the broad sweep of human relations?

Who will tell us what happens when a large aging population is confronted with the youthful, uneducated one projected by demographers? How will the disengagement produced by suburbanization and mall culture damage civility? Who will tell us about racial world views and how what you see isn't necessarily what a white, black, Hispanic, Asian or multi-racial person sees? In the rush to multitask ourselves via E-mail, fax, cell phones and videocams, who will tally technology's toll on our eyes, ears, brains and self-esteem?

Who will show the connection between foreign policy and what happens to American society? Who will demonstrate how U.S. foreign policy has consequences that show up back home, not the least of which are Iranian taxi drivers and Latino waiters? Who will explain to an audience that perhaps doesn't want to hear that the global economy raises essentially the same issues in the 21st Century that slavery did for Americans in the 19th—that some race or class or nationality of people on the other side of the world happily toils for us on a different standard and at a lower wage than ours? This is not a one-note tale of Nike paying low wages in Indonesia. Around the world American corporations are employing people most Americans know only from the bottom of the page in some foreign date-lined snippet about a bus plunging off a precipice. These people are now going to be more and more our equals; they're going to be our trading partners, buy our goods and sell us theirs. So the global economy raises the question of universal equality as it changes the equation on global issues.

Who is going to tell those stories? Who can take the global point of view?

I never held out great hope that television, despite its enormous power, would perform that service. I used to think the print media, newspapers in particular, could and would do this. After all the print media, and by print media, I mean the handful of papers like The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Los Angeles Times, The Chicago Tribune, The Boston Globe, The Miami Herald, The Philadelphia Inquirer and USA Today, set the agenda for everyone else. But more and more I doubt it—although newspapers are in the best position to offer the best coverage. Perhaps the Internet can do the job.

Newspapers once were the general interest media that really did cover the rich and the poor and tell us about our world. Now only sports journalism serves the rich and the poor alike: you can be either rich or poor and still care about the New York Knicks. On other subjects newspapers are addressing only their niche audiences, mostly upper middle class whites.

The coverage of race and racial issues, I think, is the harbinger of how the media will cover everything that is difficult and complex. And it doesn't bode well.

The huge number of black men in prison, castoffs from the move of jobs from cities to suburbs, are the fallout from the disappearance of the black blue-collar worker. Kurt Vonnegut touched on the issue in his 1979 novel, "Jailhouse," noting the warehousing of

Karen De Witt, a correspondent in the Washington Bureau of The New York Times, covers social and cultural news. Recently, she co-authored an award-winning series on the financial and social ills plaguing Washington. De Witt has worked for The Washington Post, USA Today, The Washington Star, Newsweek, National Journal and Nation's Cities. She has been a foreign correspondent in the Middle East, South Africa, Southeast Asia and Central America and is a frequent panelist on the nationally syndicated, all-women talk show, "To the Contrary." A former Peace Corps volunteer in Ethiopia, she speaks Amharic, Spanish, French, Arabic and some Japanese and German.

blacks as a business. Today, according to The Sentencing Project, 40 percent of black men ages 18 to 35 in California are in prison, on parole or ensnared by the criminal justice system. (The figures are 20 percent nationally.)

But where are the articles investigating this situation with the same energy that the media exerts in covering smoking or downsizing? The problem is that the articles discuss crime by blacks as if it were a character flaw of black people, an approach that William Julius Wilson, the Malcolm Wiener Professor of Social Policy at Harvard University, has written as "it seeks to assign blame rather than recognizing and dealing with the complex realties that have led to economic distress for many Americans."

I'm deeply disturbed by these figures and not just because I'm black. If I were white, I'd be terrified because practically every societal ill that visits the black community—from unwed teenage pregnancy to drug-taking—visits the black community first. So if it's hit the inner cities, it's coming to a suburban shopping mall near you.

Imagine, 40 percent of white men in America, ages 18 to 35, having been in prison and/or likely to have future brushes with incarceration and the criminal justice system. I see newspaper series, movies, town halls meetings, and Nightline discussions.

If we are not covering what is under our noses, how will we cover people and issues that are much farther away in miles but have direct effects on American life?

These are the kinds of questions that must be answered not just after an O. J. Simpson verdict, or a Los Angeles riot, or another victory by Tiger Woods (who is, after all, only 21 years old), but on a sustained basis if the media is going to explicate issues of race that Jefferson and de Tocqueville worried about more than 100 years ago.

I hate to face it, but I got a better feel for the underlying tensions that caused the Los Angeles riots from watching Anna Deavere Smith perform "Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992" than I did from any media coverage, print or electronic. In fact, almost every newspaper missed the Hispanic involvement altogether, having preconceived the disturbances in terms of the 1965 Watts riots as a black event. Over half those arrested were Hispanic.

Take the Million Man March. Days before the event, there was a discussion of how to cover this march in my own office, the Washington bureau of The New York Times. As the only black reporter in the office at the time, I was tapped for this meeting. From the start, there was great disparagement of the march and the number of men that Minister Louis Farrakhan was predicting would attend. Now I know journalists are cynical and flip, but I was more tired than surprised by the discussion. I can't imagine reporters making sweeping statements about the movie industry or Catholics without even a casual knowledge of the subject, but here were my colleagues, utterly confident of opinions based on little knowledge of the dynamics in the black community, saying no one was coming, Farrakhan was a racist and no right-thinking (read "middle class and working") black man would participate, etc. ad nauseam.

Finally, one editor, noticing that I had said nothing, asked me what I thought. I said: "I don't know whether there will be a million men or not, but there are going to be a whole hell of a lot of black men coming to Washington. The man I go out with is a stock broker, his son handles artists and records for Sony Records, his brother is an engineer for a Japanese electronics firm in New Hampshire and his uncle is a retired policeman and they're all coming to the march."

My colleagues were stunned. They wanted to talk about Louis Farrakhan and his racist remarks. They wanted to talk about the fact that he'd excluded women. I said those weren't the overriding issues for blacks. I explained that there were such dire things happening in the black communities across the country that black people, black men in particular, were looking for any solution, any possible answer. Out of such discussions came a story that explained clearly why so many black men planned to come and why Minister Farrakhan was not the same issue for blacks as he was for whites.

I think it was helpful that a black person was at this meeting, but it was not a requirement. I don't think that there has to be a balkanization of newsrooms. Asians getting Asian stories, Afro-Americans getting black ones, white men white men stories, women reporters women's stories. Underlying balkanization is the assumption that all women and all minorities somehow have their fingers on the pulse of their communities.

The Washington Post learned the fallacy of that kind of thinking to their chagrin with Janet Cooke, a young Afro-American reporter, whose Pulitzer Prize was taken away because the central figure in her feature, a black child on drugs, did not exist as an individual (though perhaps as a composite). This middle class black woman from Cleveland had about as much knowledge of the mean streets of Washington as a white woman of the same background. It wasn't that she couldn't have caught on, but she didn't. She was scared. Drugs and poor neighborhoods were as foreign to her as if she'd been plopped down in another country.

I've seen the same fear factor at work among young, middle-class white colleagues, who can cover a disturbance or a murder in the Upper West Side but bow out when the disturbance is in Harlem or Brooklyn because they "don't know" those neighborhoods. These same people then get tapped to cover the news in foreign countries which are neighborhoods and cultures they initially know even less about.

Then, too, you don't get rabble-rousing ethnic outsiders at major newspapers. You certainly don't get them climbing the corporate hierarchy. People in power pick people similar to themselves in thinking and demeanor even when they select another color or gender. So there is no guarantee that just adding color and gender will give more sophisticated coverage, though that certainly is a step in the right direction.

No, what truly sophisticated coverage takes is a sensitivity that seems to elude the major newspapers.

It is not that we in the media are

lacking information; it is not that we haven't reported bits and pieces of major social change. What we fail to do is to interpret the information in smart ways. More and more reporters package and conceptualize as opposed to exploring a story, following it wherever it leads and seeing what it says outside their assumptions of what it should say.

In a recent series on downsizing, The New York Times assumed that cutbacks and layoffs put massive numbers of people out of work, leaving them facing lengthy unemployment. That is the way the series was coming out in the paper until economic indicators showed that people were not only finding new jobs, but jobs that paid comparable or more than their old ones. Yes, there was the individual personal story of doom and gloom from downsizing, but that was not the overall picture.

I've been as guilty as anyone else. Recently, on a reporting assignment in Yemen, I took a day trip with a group of Yemeni oil workers. They worked for Hunt Oil, and I thought that everyone would be happy to have the jobs because since the Persian Gulf War, the Yemeni economy had been anemic. Many of Yemenis, each supporting 8 to 10 people back home, had worked in the Gulf States and been thrown out prior to the Gulf War. Yemen voted against war with Saddam Hussein, arguing that it was a regional problem that should be solved regionally. Thus, my expectation was that the workers would be enthusiastic about having good-paying jobs with an American company. They were not. They were incensed that there was a salary differentiation between European and American workers and themselves, though they were doing similar work. How could an American company, they asked me, engage in this kind of discrimination? So much for preconceiving a story line. Sophisticated reporting and analysis requires stepping outside the conventional wisdom, thinking outside the box.

A 1,200 word article on how so and so got such and such a bill through Congress or such and such a vote happened is meaningless and only serves to disengage a reader unless the article explains how this affects her.

Sophisticated coverage also requires getting out of Washington and talking to sources outside the usual suspects. How many readers really want another 2,000 word article on the inexplicable intricacies of Whitewater or which Congressman/Senator/President did what to whom to get the vote on this?

USA Today made a much maligned attempt at reaching beyond the usually sources and was derided for it. The newspaper encouraged reporters to use black, Hispanic and female sources in stories that weren't about black, Hispanics or females. I don't know if anyone else adopted its heavy-handed approach, financially rewarding reporters and editors for what should be a good journalistic practice, but at least it was an effort. What it proved was that if you didn't force people do to this, they wouldn't do it on their own.

And what is wrong in interviewing a black physicist if his expertise happens to touch on your topic, a woman computer entrepreneur on a story about the Internet, or a white male high school student about his love of rap music?

That's a tall order, particularly now when newspapers are going through these same end-of-century changes themselves. After decades of declining readership, newspapers are scrambling for ways to increase advertising dollars and stay alive in the 21st Century.

Still, readership declines; advertising revenues dwindle. The Newspaper Association of America recently announced a three-year, $18 million advertising campaign to convince Americans that newspapers are vigorous and relevant. Many mid-market newspapers have taken up "civic journalism," with its focus groups, "community" journalism, columns written by readers and bottom-line reporting. The problem is that if we narrowly define the target audience and pander to them, who is going to tell these readers the bad news that they don't want to hear? These newspapers operating this way will tell readers what they already know. They will be islands of bland agreement surrounded by seas that may be very stormy. But the readers won't hear about that.

So far the national newspapers have distanced themselves from these flounderings, insisting on a higher journalistic ground. They offer foreign news, business news and national news. Their readers are affluent and cosmopolitan. But this makes them high-end niche marketers, a business interested only in part of the audience. Readers who don't buy jewels at Tiffany's, summer in the Berkshires or refurbish their second home get left out.

Journalists make much of their rights and of freedom of the press. But are fairness and the rights that journalism claims for itself valid when you're only going for part of the market, some of the audience? Rights involve at least some requirement to tell the "real deal."

At the end of the 20th Century, I think we can find hope for newspapers and their coverage of the socio-economic changes that are altering our lives in the experience of newspapers at the beginning of this century.

The first great period for newspapers was from the late 1890's to 1917. This was the heyday of muckraking, with reporters like Ida Tarbell, Frank Norris, Stephen Crane, and Sinclair Lewis. They were passionate about their subjects, not always "objective," but, oh, the stories they told and, oh, the readers they enthralled.

This same audience is out there today. Some of them are surfing the Internet, but the very fact that they can overload America Online means that people are just as hungry for stories now as they were in the past. There is no shortage of audience for newspapers. There is a shortage of breadth and interpretation. Right now the Internet offers a cornucopia of that.

In fact, we may look back on these days as the golden era of the Internet when there was an anything-goes attitude and you could not only get information on the best car buys and medical advice, but also pornography and Pierre Salinger on the plot theory of the TWA 800 explosion.

Some people are horrified that there is this undisciplined monster out there that anyone can get their hands on. But I'm more horrified by niche-marketing and single-minded interpretations of reality. ■

Privatization—Get Out the Worry Beads

By George Rodrigue

As they tossed welfare programs to the states last year, Congressional leaders brushed off concerns that the federal retreat might harm poor people. Governors, they said, care as much about their citizens as bureaucrats in Washington do.

Now many governors want to take "devolution" a step further. They hope to hire private firms to administer health and welfare services that once were the duty of government.

Welfare is just the newest boomlet in the privatization industry, which is growing so fast and so deep that journalists have great difficulties keeping up with it, let alone gauging its impact on public life.

For years, some states have let private firms run prisons and schools. Formerly nonprofit community hospitals are being gobbled up by profit-minded companies nationwide. And fear of crime has caused America's tonier residential enclaves, dissatisfied with run-of-the-mill police, to hire their own security forces.

Bill Clinton's Washington, too, is edging into privatization. For-profit corporations now commonly win government contracts for everything from file management to research on questions of national security or basic medical science. The Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy also use private firms for much of their front-line work.

The new ways of doing business raise serious questions for journalists. How will they be able to track winners and losers as Washington sends responsibilities to the states, and states send them to private businesses?

If history is any guide, it's time to break out the worry beads. Devolution enthusiasts argue that governors care as much about their citizens as federal bureaucrats do. That may be true. But federal bureaucrats don't have to run for election in the states. Governors do. And many expect state employees to help advance their agendas even if that means illegally suppressing bad news about social-service programs.

Private firms have spawned breathtaking innovations in management and data-processing. But some have made disasters of their forays into social-service contracting. Private firms owe their allegiance not to the state or to their clients, but to their stockholders. Depending upon how contracts are written, the two may be diametrically opposed.

Politicians who privatize services will have a vested interest in proclaiming the effort to be a success. Journalists may have trouble gathering evidence to the contrary; some government agencies have tried to hide data behind private firms. Others may never collect the information needed to honestly evaluate their contractors' performance.

A little-known program to protect nursing home residents offers one measure of the states' concern for needy, vulnerable and expensive citizens. The Older Americans Act created a nationwide network of "long-term care ombudsmen." They work within state governments. Under federal law, however, they must have total freedom to investigate and expose neglect or abuse.

In a handful of states, however, ombudsmen have found themselves censored, squelched and threatened by state administrators.

When Connecticut began a shift to "managed care" for Medicaid patients, ombudsman Barbara Frank tried to warn that the cost-cutting effort could threaten some nursing home residents. But Frank worked for the state's Medicaid agency, which worked for the governor. "I was told that my opinion was contrary to the agency's and I could not put that [concern] in my report," she said. She tried, also, to support an effort to guarantee that more seniors who were hospitalized could return to their old nursing home beds. "I was told that I couldn't speak to that, because it might cost money," Frank recalled.

Iowa's ombudsman, Carl McPherson, criticized nursing home regulators in his state. With the governor's approval, state officials retaliated by trying to strip him of his right to issue public reports. "What they want is someone who'll stay in line and not make trouble for them," he said. "You don't speak out against the industry or the regulators."

In New Mexico, ombudsman Tim Covell tried simply to mail a letter to the state health department, asking why it had failed to act against a substandard home despite three years' notice. "My agency director told me 'Don't you dare mail that letter,'" he said. "She told me she was afraid she would lose her job if I continued this advocacy program." As of early May, state officials were still trying to decide whether they could fire him. "I've been muzzled for political reasons," he said.

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State officials universally say they're not trying to harm senior citizens. They're just trying to ensure that everyone, including the ombudsman, plays on the same team. From a journalist's perspective, that's not comforting. State-sanctioned censorship occurs not because censors are evil but because they follow basic bureaucratic imperatives.

If private firms guaranteed to improve delivery of health and welfare services, the censorship risk might matter less. Alas, there are no guarantees.

When Congress' General Accounting Office surveyed state officials about private contractors' work on new child-support enforcement computer systems, more than half of the states said contractors had failed to deliver as promised. Just under half of the states said their contractors had done "poor-quality" work.

Virginia canceled one computer-systems contract with Electronic Data Systems in April. State Medicaid Director Joseph M. Teefey accused EDS of making "hollow and unreasonable" promises. EDS called the matter "a contractual dispute."

Andersen Consulting's work on a welfare administration system for Nebraska was originally set to cost $23 million. State Auditor John Breslow said the tab now stands at $36 million, with no end in sight. "I've been auditor now for six years, and this is the most wasteful project I ever heard of," he said. "It's like pouring money down a deep, dark hole." Andersen declined to comment.

Florida state officials say Unisys, another computing giant, has been fined $4 million for inadequate handling of their employee-insurance program; doctors were refusing to treat state workers due to late or unpaid bills, and employees complained that they were hounded by collection agents. At one time, Unisys' error rates exceeded 20 percent. Meanwhile, Unisys' administration of Florida's Medicaid program was plagued by fraud, due partly to what one state investigator called "no-brainer" security flaws. Florida newspapers reported that the firm put untested employees into offices containing cardboard boxes full of blank checks, plus rubber stamps bearing the proper authorization signatures. One $8 per hour temporary worker pleaded guilty to stealing over $200,000. Unisys declined to comment on the situation in Florida, but noted that several of their projects elsewhere had saved states large amounts of money.

A more professional thief allegedly stole $20 million.

Lockheed Information Management Systems, meanwhile, drew California's wrath for its child-support enforcement computer network, after the state noted 1,400 defects. "There have been major cost overruns," said spokeswoman Corrine Chee. "It was originally price-tagged at $99 million, and now it's $304 million." Lockheed said many of the problems stemmed from demands for systems changes from officials and those changes crippled the statewide system. Lockheed said it remains committed to making things work right and learned valuable lessons it hopes to apply elsewhere.

Of course, private firms are not the only groups that do bone-headed deeds. Last year, the chief of California's Environmental Protection Agency ordered subordinates to routinely destroy records that contradicted agency decisions, including scientific test results. Gov. Pete Wilson's office rescinded the order after employees complained that it violated their duty to California citizens.

"Employees of private firms owe their allegiance to the corporation and its stockholders," said Max Sawicky, a specialist in privatization with the Economic Policy Institute, a liberal think tank. It is possible, Sawicky added, that the interests of the corporation may differ sharply from that of the poor citizens it is supposed to serve. Contracts may, for instance, reward firms for saving welfare dollars regardless of how those savings come about.

Contractors may, however, share one important interest with government officials: suppression of bad news. Or sometimes of any news at all. Texas laws, for instance, are vague on the question of when the public should get access to private records, or to facilities where private firms conduct the public's business. As a result, some administrators of private prisons within the state have denied or hindered journalists' access to their facilities.

"You know, for a lot of men and women behind bars their only ability to defend themselves against official misconduct is to sit down and call the press, and for us to hustle over and see what's going on," said Rich Oppel, Editor of The Austin American Statesman. "So we are concerned about their rights, and about our ability to hear from them."

Federal law says fairly clearly that records "controlled" by government agencies are public, even if private contractors possess those documents. Even so, some government officials have tried to hide behind private contractors.

When The Chicago Tribune filed a federal Freedom of Information Act request for information regarding a National Cancer Institute study, the NCIC replied that the records weren't public. They were stored with a private contractor, who was analyzing the information under NCIC's direction. It took a lawsuit to reverse that novel interpretation of the law. In February, U.S. Magistrate Rebecca R. Pallmeyer noted that "Under defendant's [NCIC's] interpretation, agencies might be successful in refusing disclosure of agency documents merely on the ground that the documents are stored in a contract storage facility, rather than in the agency's own files."

Texas newspapers already are pushing for public disclosure laws to meet the challenge of the privatized, digital age. In Austin, Oppel predicts welfare reform will present journalists with new and more urgent challenges. "You're going to have discretionary judgments about who is granted benefits and who is not, who is removed from the rolls and who is not, and how those people are treated," he said.

"We want to be able to keep costs in check, and privatization is one way to do it," Oppel added. "But what we are saying is, allow these things to be exposed to the disinfectant of public light. Without that disinfectant there, citizens should be concerned." ■

Privatization—the Next American Revolution

BY FRANK C. WYKOFF

Privatization, one of the most important elements in the 1990's transition of Central European economies away from socialism toward capitalism, may soon become as important in the United States as it is abroad. Following disintegration of the USSR, societies from the Urals to the Caucasus to the Carpathians have tried to revamp their economic systems in order to enjoy the fruits of private markets. Indeed, the collapse of the Soviet model has forced new thinking around the globe. Privatization runs rampant in Mexico, India, China, South America, even Africa. Journalists covering the privatization story, which is bound to get bigger, can benefit from understanding some basic principles that are nearly as old as the science of economics itself.

If the failed models of central planning in Central and Eastern Europe were not enough evidence to justify privatization and decentralized decision-making in the United States wherever possible, then all one has to do is peruse the record of the U.S. public sector. The first, and perhaps most important, role of government is to keep the peace; keep the streets safe. Yet are American streets safe? Do women feel they can take a nice evening walk in any major American city? How about the public sector's growing involvement in health care since the creation of Medicare in 1965? The percentage of Gross Domestic Product going to health care has risen from seven percent to 14 percent, while major social indicators of health have been nearly stagnant. The government also produces housing. Does anyone envy the quality of life in HUD's Chicago housing projects? Public education, having lost the confidence of the middle class, is being supplanted by private schooling.

America and the West won the Cold War. Is that because of the CIA and the Defense Department? No. Think of just two phenomena—the CIA's Aldrich Ames and the Defense Department's $400 toilet seats.

Our way of life won because of what one wag called the "Marilyn Monroe Doctrine"—U.S. cultural exports, films, soft drinks, music, art, clothing (all privately produced) are so fabulous that people in socialist states wanted them. Eventually, even their own leadership simply ran out of patience with central planning.

Americans, frustrated with government failures, are increasingly giving up on central planning and are turning to decentralized and sometimes private and voluntary approaches to the delivery of services. Deregulation has been going on since the Carter Administration successfully deregulated airlines in the late 1970's. That has been followed by less command and control oriented policies in environmental policy and recently by less centralized welfare policy. Deregulation is taking place in telecommunications, natural gas delivery, and provision of electricity.

Meanwhile, states have shown increased interest in privatization of some functions. Welfare reform in Wisconsin, where private firms are responsible for reducing welfare case loads, is one dramatic example of this trend. In New Jersey and Tennessee private businesses operate prisons. In experiments in Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Ohio and Maryland for-profit schools are offering better schooling to students who pay with state vouchers.

Anyone who still doubts the inefficiencies of the public sector need only do business with any state's Department of Motor Vehicles or the U.S. Post Office. This is not to bash government, but to sober the reader into recognizing the difficulty in the public sector of getting the incentives right. There is no question that incentives work wonders in the private sector. Adam Smith, the father of Western economics, was absolutely right when he recognized the power of the invisible hand. Smith pointed to the difficulty of relying on good will, volunteerism, or the public sector and identified the working ingredients of the magic of the marketplace.

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Economic science has since taken Smith's insights to new levels. Economists now know enough about how markets work to know when they are likely and unlikely to provide a good social outcome. We also now know a good deal more about how incentives work in the public sector for both elected officials and bureaucrats. Based on this modern pragmatic analysis, one can sensibly assess privatization on a case by case basis.

As the journalist covers the privatization story, two key questions will help inform coverage in each case:

1. When will society be better off with a private solution than a public solution—when do gains outweigh losses—and who are the winners and losers? Since virtually every policy has both winners and losers, identifying each goes a long way to understanding political reactions to proposals. In other words, will privatization work? (Anyone who always answers "yes" or "no" cannot be taken seriously.)

2. Is this a true privatization of ownership and control or is it only a nominal privatization of ownership? We have seen here and abroad instances of nominal privatization by those unwilling to relinquish control. A private industry that is strictly regulated may not function any better than the old state-owned enterprise.

The answer to the first question can be suggested by considering the extent to which Adam Smith's invisible hand is able to operate effectively in achieving optimal social goals in each instance. In the case of housing, markets work extremely well. Each homeowner pays for the resources used in his home and gets what he pays for. Homes are expensive and can be re-sold, so owners have a strong incentive to protect the value of their property. This is not to say poor people should not be assisted in acquiring living quarters; it is to question whether the government ought to

The Metro-Davidson County Detention Facility in Nashville is one of 60 prisons, housing 43,000 inmates, owned and operated by Corrections Corp. of America in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Australia and Britain. The Nashville center, housing 1,092 inmates, was opened in 1992.

be engaged in building and managing property. Private markets are just as effective in providing what consumers want in housing as they are in satisfying consumer demand for shoes, shirts, cars, oranges, dishwashers, insurance, legal services, education and the many other wonderful products available to the typical American consumer.

Military defense and domestic policing are more complex. It is not feasible to build a defense shield to protect only those willing to pay the bill. Everyone has to be protected, so the private market does not work too well and a public solution is necessary. Without a central and legitimate government, the function of sheriff is hard to provide. As bad as crime is in the United States, do we really want to replace the police with private armed groups, like the Freemen in Wyoming, the Mafia in New York, or the militia in Texas? Put it another way; would you feel safer in Los Angeles or in Beirut?

The real answer to the first question (Will privatization work?) will be found in the details of each case. Is the privatization scheme set up in a way that exploits the essence of Adam Smith's invisible hand? Did the planners or de-centralizers set up a system in which the incentives will result in constructive social behavior? The public sector is going to have to lead the way in establishing viable property rights for common properties, in establishing effective environmental protection, in protecting society against infectious diseases and many other things. How to do these things is increasingly being answered by a market-type solution—stimulate a market with permits to pollute or enable the poor to buy energy and food with vouchers are two examples.

The answer to question two may also be found in the details. A year ago last spring, I was strolling down Andressey Ut, the lovely boulevard leading to the Pantheon of Heroes and central park of Pest from downtown Budapest, on a sunny day with a Hungarian entrepreneur. Pointing to a decrepit mansion on the tree-lined boulevard, I asked my host why he didn't buy the building, renovate it and make a fortune. After all, the location was fabulous—central Budapest, lovely street, easy access. He shocked me by saying, "I wouldn't pay a dollar for that building."

It turned out the apartment building was legally available for private ownership, but the owner could not evict tenants without extreme costs and trouble. He could not raise rents without facing a bureaucratic hassle. He was liable and, in fact, required by law, to keep up the building. He was liable for any injuries on the property. He had to pay high, controlled wages for workers. In other words, he would be acquiring the rights to excessive costs without potential benefits. Well-meaning Hungarian law had turned a marvelous asset into a private liability. The result was an abandoned, urine-soaked, glass- and trash-strewn dump in what should have been the Champs-Elysees of Central Europe.

It's a good thing we don't do dumb stuff like that in New York. ■

Media Fantasy—Stock Market Reporting

By Robert Lenzner

The financial press has been whipsawed by the stock market. At each change of direction, it blames inflation, the dollar, earnings, or the budget negotiations. It's more than a bit dizzying.

In March and April the market averages suddenly plunged 10 percent. The cause? Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan was raising interest rates. Inflation was returning. Look out below. The bull market was over.

Or was it?

Swiftly, the market rebounded, surpassing its former peaks to new record highs. The media, too, turned around. Suddenly, all was well again. The economy was booming, but there was little or no inflation in sight. A brave new era had dawned. A buying panic in large capitalizations stocks ensued.

Huh?

As the market shoots up or down 100 points or more each trading session, the press regurgitates yesterday's reason for the happening. It is formula reporting, usually based on a superficial knowledge of recent financial weather. Editors forced to reprint pages of stock and bond prices over-emphasize yesterday's static.

The media covering the stock market respond almost always to short-term noise level, not to long-term perspective. That's to be expected.

What is short-term noise? It's usually the latest economic pronouncement. The press and market analysts become mesmerized by it, to the exclusion of complexity. Often it's interest rates. Are they going up? Sometimes it's the dollar. In other cases it's a political event like an election or a piece of legislation. Everyone is looking for the most obvious explanation.

When the market's rising, the easiest reason the media offers is that billions are flowing into mutual funds—credit the yuppies preparing for their retirement.

When the market's plummeting, the most obvious blame falls on the shoulders of the central bank. But always it's Johnny One Note time.

On television the noise is deafening, because there's more of it. Every few minutes there's someone on the floor of the exchange trying to explain the market from a few hours trading. And I emphasize trading. Reporting on the stock market is a phenomenon for day traders, not investors.

Television may be necessary for traders who have begun buying and selling off the news by using their personal computers. It does a fantastic job of keeping traders up to the moment. That's why trading rooms on Wall Street are glued to CNBC. There are people who buy and sell off the breaking news. So it is a valuable service for some.

But television and even most daily newspapers don't much help investors, who may have a longer term view. Daily journalists want to hype the market of today; this feeds the traders who go in and out trying to catch the volatile momentum of stock prices. Most daily journalism isn't of great use to investors who have a three-to-five year horizon. They might glean more from profiles of successful companies than the daily stock market reports. They need thoughtful explication of the myriad factors influencing stocks and bonds. Have you ever read or heard recently a complete rundown on unemployment, Gross National Product, retail sales, housing starts, etc.? Not likely.

Stock market coverage is purely ceremonial. Nobody really knows exactly what makes the market move up or down. It's a bit of a fantasy world.

Who are the investors referred to in press reports—a few large institutions actually interviewed by the reporter or the invisible masses drummed up to back a point of view? Who are the profit-takers that cause prices to fall? Are they the same ones selling when the market rises?

Stock market reportage still has a ways to go in comparison to sports writing. The report of the Knick loss or the Yankee victory has advanced beyond the simple score. Of course, sports writers have it easier. They get to see the game in its entirety along with thousands of spectators. They can feature the pitching duel, the key hit, the stunning defensive play or the goofy error

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that was the margin of victory. A sports event has heroes and knaves, which gives it a human quality lacking in stock market reports.

The stock market is like a sports event. It has winners and losers. It was a good day or a bad one. Tomorrow is another chance. But the stock market is influenced by dozens of factors, some that aren't even visible. Mostly, the media is reporting the noise level—like the box score of a baseball game.

A financial reporter can only see the prices whizzing by on the tape, read the earnings reports as they're released. But he or she can't really know why the majority of investors are acting a particular way.

In truth, most financial reporters are outsiders. They haven't been properly trained in economics or finance, they're not paid enough to be investors themselves. They're on a tight deadline; only two hours between the market closing and the publications' need for copy. The situation calls for oversimplification. In years past I've been as guilty of taking the easy way out as the next guy. I used to call financial gurus with big reputations and hang the market's moves on them. They, in turn, had their own particular bias, whether monetary policy, politics or the mood of the country.

Life can be volatile. So can the market. Some weeks there are 15 government reports being interpreted by highly paid security analysts. Their opinions are filtered to the public through the media, often with a time delay. So, interpretation feeds upon interpretation.

To be fair, there are some in the media doing a good job. Gretchen Morgenson, a Forbes Senior Editor, has brilliantly warned of unfair market making in the over-the-counter markets and the flaws in buying mutual funds geared to stock market indexes. New York Times and Wall Street Journal columns sometimes offer sensible, consensus advice. But even august publications like The Economist have been wrong on market predictions. So has Business Week. Personal financial journals often scream their advice. "How To Make Money on the Internet," Smart Money shouted recently.

The New York Stock Exchange

It is a wondrous spectacle: the Dow Jones industrial average over 7,300. But is there a Johnny Apple or a Bill Safire to tell us how to understand it? We've had our share of illuminating showmen, its true—the sardonic Alan Abelson of Barron's or the inside scoops and tips of Dan Dorfman (required reading when he was in The Wall Street Journal, USA Today or New York magazine).

In a class apart is The Financial Times of London, whose columnists, like Peter Martin, deliver sophisticated, well-written reviews of the markets' relationship to economic developments. Here's The Financial Times's Richard Lappper on why the markets have been so favorable to investors: "A combination of tight fiscal policy and relatively loose monetary conditions in the developed world has helped create ample liquidity, insuring a strong flow of funds into bond and equity markets....Any negative impact of monetary tightening should be offset by long-term trends such as privatization, deregulation and rapid technological change." Its Monday issue is impressive for showing brief comparative results of the major global markets.

We do have plenty of information, mostly from television shows like Wall Street Week, the Nightly Business Report and the Lou Dobbs nightly business report on CNN. This is great if you're counting your chips and want to know the day's happenings. There are also plenty of talking heads. But somehow it all seems static in a frustrating way.

One explanation that's not in widespread vogue although you'd think it would be: President Clinton is bullish for the stock market. Have the financial media read former Labor Secretary Robert Reich's book "Locked in the Cabinet?" He says every economic decision is made on the basis of whether it's good for the market, bonds and stocks. Bill Clinton wanted to please Wall Street, not fight it. That's one of the fascinating undercurrents of this bull market, not very well reported. It's not the short-term noise. It's not the daily score.

But how can you blame the media? The gurus in the financial community are looking at short-term noise as well. It creates business for them.

The financial media could well get some wisdom from Warren Buffet, who wrote in 1980, "We believe that short-term forecasts of stock and bond prices are useless. They tell you nothing about the future." ■

Has the Press Lost its Nerve?

BY JAMES C. GOODALE

In the last two years ABC settled a multimillion dollar libel suit by Philip Morris; CBS initially suppressed a "60 Minutes" interview with Jeffrey Wigand, the so-called tobacco company whistle-blower; NBC and CNN settled with Richard Jewell, the man wrongfully accused of the Olympic bombing; and The International Herald Tribune apologized to Singapore's political leaders and paid a $600,000 plus libel verdict.

Has the press lost its nerve?

If it has, the single greatest reason must be the enormous costs now associated with libel defense—not only legal fees, but the risk of enormous judgments.

A plain-vanilla libel case, for example, can easily cost millions of dollars to defend, and one that is more complex, such as Scientology's recent case against Time, which never went to trial, can cost many millions—seven, in that case.

Huge costs for defending libel cases are a relatively recent phenomenon. What's the cause?

In recent years, there has been a change in attitude of judges and juries toward the press, in the structure of libel litigation itself, and in the character of the legal profession. According to Roberta Brackman, NBC News lawyer, "the whole system is out of whack."

One of the great ironies today is that despite all the protections the Supreme Court gave the press in the 1960's and 1970's, it has become very expensive for the press to enjoy those freedoms. The press's historic victory in Sullivan v. The New York Times case actually increased the cost of libel litigation, because the structure of a libel case changed. Under Sullivan and its progeny, libel plaintiffs became entitled for the first time to probe the newsroom endlessly in pretrial discovery to determine whether anyone there "entertained serious doubt" about the truthfulness of a story.

Plaintiffs' lawyers now can go on pretrial fishing expeditions with everyone connected with the story to discover whether they doubted its truth. All of this is very expensive at the extraordinarily high law firm rates of the 1990's. The practice of law has boomed in the last 15 years along with a surging economy. Corporate transactions and litigation related to them have swollen law firm coffers, made the profession more profit-driven and pushed rates up for all representation including for the press.

Time paid $7 million in legal fees according to Frank Rich, The New York Times columnist, *all* for pretrial legal work, to defeat Scientology this year in a libel case. And while the case seems dead, it is technically subject to other motions and even a possible appeal.

Not only is it more expensive if a case goes to trial, but statistics show there is also a 75 percent chance the press will lose at trial, with the verdict likely to be a seven-figure amount. In March of this year a Houston jury awarded a $222.7 million verdict against Dow Jones to a bond firm that shuttered weeks after an allegedly damaging Wall Street Journal article.

Dow Jones will appeal. According to the Libel Defense Resource Center of New York that keeps track of matters such as these, press appellants ultimately succeed 78 percent of the time in getting the appellate courts to reduce or reverse libel judgments. In the meantime, the lawyers' clocks will be ticking away. If Time had not won its case against Scientology at a pretrial stage, its legal fees might have totaled $10 to 15 million. Further, had it lost at trial the accountants would have required Time to list a probable seven-figure libel verdict on its balance sheet until the inevitable reduction or reversal on appeal.

This is an era of huge damage awards generally, but the public, and perhaps even trial judges, seem particularly angry at the press. According to NBC's Roberta Brackman, "the press faces hostile juries and trial judges in libel cases."

An inevitable charade follows: the hostile jury awards millions against the press; the trial judge confirms the award; and the appeals court overturns or re-

PHOTO: GENE MAGGIO, NEW YORK TIMES STUDIO

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duces it. In the meantime the press defendant is paying the bill.

Insurance is available to help cover these costs, but it is not a panacea. Huge deductibles mean the media company absorbs the first level of financial pain. Some insurance company lawyers are not shy in saying that settlement "is in everyone's best interest." Carriers can even run for cover when they see high legal fees coming; Time had to sue its carrier for coverage in the Scientology case. A media company that does get coverage for libel can expect an increase in premiums the next time around. There is no free lunch.

Must these costs bring fundamental change in the news business? Are we left with a press no longer robust, without courage to take on the Goliaths?

No one doubts the courage of the press to take on the politicians. Every journalist would give "his left one" to be another Ben Bradlee with a Watergate story.

Washington is swarming with reporters trying to uncover the minutiae of Whitewater and fund-raising tactics. No one fears, it seems, the politicians' lawsuits.

It's in the coverage of big business where the jury is still out. Does the press have the courage to take on big business and stay the course if sued?

According to Robin Bierstedt, Vice President and Deputy General Counsel of Time Inc., the answer can depend on whether one is talking about the print or broadcast press: "The broadcasters simply do not have the same culture as we do. We never settle our cases. They do."

The most frequently cited example of where the culture splits is ABC's settlement with Philip Morris in 1995 of a libel suit in which it issued a full-page apology and paid damages. The settlement came in the middle of ABC's merger into Disney.

According to Howard Kurtz, The Washington Post press critic, the decision was entirely bottom-line driven and a "clear black eye [for ABC] for now." Yet ABC's predicament in that case even has evoked the sympathy of hard-line print lawyers such as George Freeman, who as Assistant General Counsel of The New York Times Company enforces that company's traditional no-settlement policy: "

ABC's legal costs were approaching one million dollars a month. Even if it had won the case, the cost of defending itself would have been ruinous."

More recently ABC has shown admirable resolve, taking three big hits in the courts in the last six months in cases it took to trial. First it lost an $11 million verdict in Buffalo, then a $10 million verdict in Miami and finally a $5.5 million verdict in the Food Lion case in North Carolina. Presumably all of those cases could have been settled before trial, but ABC stayed the course.

Just as ABC's settlement with Phillip Morris came in the middle of ABC's merger into Disney, CBS was in the middle of merger negotiations with Westinghouse when it first decided not to run the "60 Minutes" piece on Jeffrey Wigand. In both cases there was widespread suspicion, never confirmed, that

A Little Bit of Self-Editing

Ira Rosen, a 1987 Nieman Fellow and Senior Producer of ABC's "Primetime Live" since 1989, has produced nearly 200 investigative stories. He and his staff have won numerous awards, including the Investigative Reporters and Editors Award six out of seven years. This year a court in Greensboro, N.C. awarded Food Lion, Inc. $1,402 in compensatory damages and $5.5 million in punitive damages on charges that in a story on the sale of tainted meat "Primetime Live" used misrepresentation in getting undercover producers with hidden cameras hired by the supermarket chain. The charges were not of libel. In fact, the judge told the jury to assume the story was correct and to consider only charges of fraud, trespass and breach of loyalty in its report. ABC says it is appealing the award. Here are excerpts from Rosen's response when asked at a Nieman Foundation seminar April 9, 1997, of the impact of the award:

What is the result of all this? I think the result is that the hurdle becomes a little higher, before you do any undercover or before there's any type of misrepresentation. Obviously there's a set of criteria we use, which is the importance of the story. But I also think there is now a new set of criteria, which is, what is the threat of a lawsuit? That is something that had been unspoken.

[Companies] are now hiring very aggressive law firms, and they are threatening to take you to court for years. You as an editor, and also as a reporter, have to say to yourself, OK,

PHOTO: JAE ROOSEVELT

the public's right to know, it's important to get the story out, etc. But then you say, Do I really want to be deposed for two weeks, do I really want to go through a trial for two months? Do I really want to do all this, in order to publish this amount of material?

Some of this becomes a give and take. [We] have reporters and producers on our show who say, "Goddamn it, nobody's going to intimidate me. I'm going to publish what I want." But then you have to pull back and say, "But is it really the case, where you want to be in a courtroom for the next year, so you can publish this amount? Or do you feel you can get the same material across maybe by cutting back a little bit?"

This is now more the kind of discussion that is going on. So, in a sense, it's self-editing. There's no great pronouncement that you can't do hidden cameras; we're still doing hidden camera reporting. There's no pronouncement you can't misrepresent yourself; we're still misrepresenting ourselves where appropriate and where it's best. But I think there's a little bit of a self-editing. ■

the impending mergers created pressure to resolve the controversies without defending the broadcasters' rights in court.

To CBS's credit, however, the Wigand piece eventually ran. While it turned out CBS's fear of a lawsuit proved misplaced, it is only fair to point out that had the lawsuit been brought, the financial impact of it on CBS and the merger could have been significant.

Both NBC and CNN have recently settled, apparently for modest amounts, with Richard Jewell, who was falsely accused of setting off the bomb at the 1996 Olympics. CNN apparently believed it had insufficient disclosable sources to support its newsgathering methods.

Tom Johnson, president of CNN News, said in an interview with Caroline Kennedy and Ellen Alderman in the Columbia Journalism Review that reporters will have to make more of an effort to put sources on the record and to "dig, dig, dig" for information on the side of the suspect. Editors, he added, have to show greater restraint in deciding where to place the story.

Kennedy and Alderman, authors of "In Our Defense" and "The Right to Privacy," for their part applauded the settlement, pointing out that the next time perhaps "the press will be more careful in gathering information and repeating stories about ongoing criminal investigations." On the other hand, Roger S. Kintzel, publisher of The Atlanta Journal and Constitution, also facing a suit by Jewell, wrote on the Op Ed page of The New York Times that he would never settle: "For us to settle a case that attacks fair, accurate and responsible reporting would serve a confusing message to our readers and undermine our credibility and reputation."

In July 1995 The International Herald Tribune, owned by The Washington Post and The New York Times companies, paid a $678,591 verdict to the three top leaders of Singapore over allegedly libelous statements about Singapore's government. The IHT had apologized before the suit began and did not appeal. William Safire attacked the payment as "honoring repression."

George Freeman of The Times believes the situation in Singapore is entirely different from that in the United States where The Times never settles. "Our only alternative would be not to challenge the judgment, but just to run. It would be like having a prestigious American newspaper running from the sheriff. And running from a court system is not terribly dignified."

All in all, it is pretty difficult to make the case that it is business as usual in the newsroom. If a particular story will cost $20 million in legal fees, an editor has to consider that fact carefully before publishing. Behaving otherwise would be naive.

Does that mean, however, the press has to be any less robust? The answer is no, as long as editors and their lawyers do their jobs carefully and well.

No newspaper or broadcaster publishes willy-nilly every story submitted to it. The press is not a common carrier providing universal access for every word written or spoken. Decisions to publish or not to publish are the daily grist of the newsroom. Editors decide what sees the light of day and what ends up on the newsroom floor. Even Justice Burger, no friend of the press, said, "For better or for worse editing is what editors are for."

Libel suits are a fact of life. They should be taken into consideration. But they are not determinative, nor should they chill.

Coverage of Scientology provides a good example. Scientology is well known to editors and lawyers as being highly litigious. Its case against Time is not the only Scientology case against a media defendant that has gone on interminably, causing unnecessary legal expense.

Yet in the face of this history, The New York Times on March 9, 1997, ran a 5,744 word investigative piece that told the facts about Scientology without mincing words. Press courage is still there.

Any good press lawyer and any good editor or producer can ensure that any good story sees the light of day in some form. The fact that some stories may not be worth the trouble to go to bat for is nothing new; it's been going on in newsrooms for years.

On the other hand, once the decision has been made to publish, whether it is in the interest of the press to settle cases is another question. After the first settlement it can be very difficult to resist settlement the next time around; and as a policy, continuous settlement damages editorial integrity.

In the annals of New York Times history, there's a famous letter written in 1922 by Adolph S. Ochs, the publisher, when he learned that his lawyer, Alfred Cook, had settled a libel case:

> Dear Mr. Cook:
>
> You know my views about settling libel suits. No need repeating them. I would never settle a libel suit to save a little money. If we have damaged a person we are prepared to pay all he can get the final court to award, and we accept the decision as a part of the exigencies of our business. I am aware that in some cases this may cost us more than necessary, but in the long run I think it is a wise policy. I am sorry you settled and did not contest even though the prospects were not encouraging.

That was good advice then and it is good advice now. ■

On-line Journalists Need Not Apply

Gut-wrenching public interest journalism, knee-scraping investigative reporting, insightful editorials—these are the makings of a Pulitzer Prize. Oh, and did we mention that the distinguished works must be on paper? This year two nominations were disqualified because they failed to fulfill the prize's print requirement: "Bosnia: Uncertain Paths to Peace," a New York Times Net series on CD -ROM, and "Our Town Charlotte," an online presentation by The Sun Herald of Charlotte Harbor, Florida. The award's administrators are reevaluating the analog-only policy, but in the meantime, prize-eyed electronic reporters can only dream on.—Wired Magazine June 1997.

The Foreign Report—Even More Vital

By Alvin Shuster

When I was Foreign Editor of The Los Angeles Times, I often told applicants, I think with a smile, that I looked for "nervous" correspondents who bordered on breakdowns when they were working, full of guilt and anxiety. The world was a big and complex place, and it was up to excited foreign correspondents to explain it all to interested readers obsessed by events overseas. The work was important.

It seemed that way as well when I was a foreign correspondent; and it seemed that way, too, to other newspapers and television networks. The lobbies of the so-called hack hotels bustled with war stories—some actnally true—and not just in times of deep crises. We were out there covering the world as it was evolving, not just when it was erupting.

The crowd of journalists working overseas has now dwindled. The end of the Cold War, coinciding with the end of big bucks for the newsroom, combined to shrink budgets for international coverage. The big papers—The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post—remain committed to extensive overseas coverage. So, too, are CNN, The Associated Press and Reuters. But the networks, among others, slash into bureaus and less space and time is now going to foreign news.

Newspaper economics aside—words from a non-publisher—the question now is whether it is really all that important for the American media to keep the world covered. After all, we no long worry about what the Russians are up to in Africa or Latin America or Cuba and whether Washington or Moscow is ahead or behind in some world corner. In terms of world diplomacy, we have learned to exhale.

Even if budgets allowed, why bother? Hasn't public interest in foreign affairs waned?

Papers and magazines still committed to overseas coverage "bother" because they realize just how crucial that kind of coverage remains, particularly in these post-Cold War days. The world in this Internet age has become even smaller; economies here, depend heavily on economies there; people dying and starving there, mean more refugees here. Sleep beckons when we hear "interdependence" and "globalization," but they are meaningful phrases that are here to stay.

Katharine Graham, of The Washington Post, said the other day that the "steep decline" in foreign coverage is leading to a less informed public and this has "profound implications both for how U.S. foreign policy is made and what the policies are."

"The lack of knowledge breeds a lack of interest," she said in a speech at the Overseas Press Clnb's 1996 awards dinner.

Therein lies the danger, of course. With Americans paying less attention to what's going on in the world, it is easier to justify cutting back international coverage.

Diminished coverage, in turn, feeds the lack of interest and compounds it. And the decline in overseas reporting, in turn, also means more reliance day in and day out, not on the correspondents in the field, but on the spin or, to be kind, the view from Washington. Not always the most reliable and most balanced source, and that is no reflection on the talents of the Washington reporters.

In general, foreign policy issues have not been a top priority in Washington and that also underscores the need for continuing overseas coverage. If Washington is not paying attention, even more reason for the media to do exactly that. In fact, foreign policy was hardly mentioned in the last presidential campaign. "Does anyone have a foreign policy question?" asked the moderator at the presidential debate in San Diego.

The challenge for those still determined to cover the world is how best to contribute to public knowledge and stir public interest. That has long been the goal of editors and their correspondents, but the need for it has become

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even more acute in these inward-looking days. The "why should I care?" question exists.

So what to do? Capture the attention of readers with better writing. More analysis and insight. More economics and business and technology. More imagination and innovation in style and subject matter. Entice readers into stories about countries and situations they "should" know about whether they want to or not.

If editors took a vote of what readers wanted to read from abroad every day, we would all be in trouble. With many stories, it's an easy call. We know. But on others, how many votes would be cast for Zaire or Argentina or even Russia? As a good chef might say, it's largely in the presentation.

More coverage of issues that range across borders: environment, nuclear arms, terrorism, fundamentalism, ethnic conflicts, plutonium and drug smuggling.

And, of course, this constant push for relevance.

What can Americans learn from the way the British handle their criminal justice system? Or the way the Dutch and the French handle drugs? Or what about imparting some new ideas on health care or immigration or welfare?

With television viewers getting less news from overseas, the job of the print media takes on added significance. And those of us not responsible for budgets could well make an argument for ever more foreign correspondents to cover this more complicated world, not fewer.

Obviously, not every story by foreign correspondents has to meet the "relevance" test to make the papers. If "American interests" and American troops are involved, so much the better. But often events and trends possess the intrinsic value of just being interesting; sometimes they tell of tragedy too horrific to ignore; sometimes the stories are just fun to read, which isn't all bad.

The opportunities for variety in coverage, for experimentation with style and ideas, have increased for correspondents in the wake of communism.

Without the need to do the once-obligatory piece on Washington-Moscow tensions and the aftermath, for example, more time between Persian Gulf Wars can be spent not only on the perceived vital events in today's context but also on life and style and cultural and societal changes that fascinate and inform—the kinds of stories that The Los Angeles Times still places regularly out front in its Column One showcase.

While the topics and the focus may have changed, the basic job has not. Foreign correspondents may live well at their home base, but they still work hard, often fly on planes that should be grounded, stay in hotels that should be condemned, leave home for weeks when the kids are sick and, to paraphrase Scotty Reston, still manage to make their deadlines without missing the point.

They are smart and, yes, some of them are even "nervous." ■

How to Explore a City

Grady Clay, author, urban journalist-geographer, and Nieman Fellow 1949, described, in a talk at the University of Missouri Department of Geography April 17, 1997, his method of exploring the cities he wrote about in "Close-Up" and "Real Places," two books on urban geography and the nature of cities. Here are some excerpts and his methodology:

With grant money and occasional time off from my newspaper, The [Louisville] Courier-Journal, I worked out a method by trial-and-error for coming to grips in quick-and-dirty fashion with any strange urban environment.

Any journalist, face to face every day with complex new situations, needs all the tools he or she can get—quick-and-dirty or otherwise. Journalism is one of the greatest speed-reading courses in the world. You have to speed-read the world itself.

My own tactic has been to find astute local experts as my guide and to keep close watch on my attention span, on my capacity for getting bored. If the route turns boring, turn off. This opens up another axiom: To Turn Is To Learn. Turning off a predictable route or familiar route increases your intensity of gaze; it opens up one's senses.

Rule Number 1: The cross section must span the full range of daily commuting, covering the full size of the "commutershed."

Number 2: It must continue in one general direction, not double back on itself.

Number 3: It should deal with the center: either the historic center, or the civic center, or the geographic center.

Number 4: You must cope with the zone or neighborhood from which comes the major sources of the exportable goods and services.

Number 5: You should explore a dying area—slums beyond recall, an abandoned warehouse district, Manson Row on the skids...

Number 6: Explore ethnic enclaves.

Number 7: Seek and explore the best addresses, where fashion and ambition dictate, where new wealthy jostle for space with old families.

Number 8: Touch and explore the Historic District, answering the question How Did This Place Come to Be?

Number 9: Pursue the main drag, notably that variation called alpha street (avenue of prime origin).

Number 10: Go for the view, preferably from a high point. Don't get carbound.

Number 11: Your cross section should be fun.

Number 12: And finally, a single trip is never enough. Try to go back and run the section again. Watch it change over time. ■

So What Is Capitalism?

By Ronald E. Berenbeim

For nearly half a century, we have not thought much about capitalism because we did not believe that it was necessary to do so. The Cold War established capitalism's defining elements in negative terms that required little or no reflection. Capitalism was the economic system that prevailed in those countries that did not have a communist government. Politically, Attlee's Britain and Peron's Argentina had little in common, but observers regarded both economies as essentially capitalistic.

The demise of the Soviet Union's alternative model has, thus far, failed to provoke any rigorous discussion of capitalism that defines its central propositions and distinguishes from among its various forms. Ignorance about the basics of capitalism has led the media, and the public that depends on it, into continuing errors about domestic, foreign and global economic change. A common understanding of capitalism's fundamentals is critical for a sensible discussion of the simultaneous cost-cutting and astronomical CEO compensation in U.S. companies, Russian corruption, successes in Poland and the Czech Republic, and the costly integration of the two Germanys and its impact on the rest of Europe.

The current view of capitalism is incoherent and it generates unrealistic expectations. It is reminiscent of the pudding that Sir Winston Churchill refused to eat because it lacked a theme. Indeed, there is a certain amount of nostalgia for the clarity of the simplistic Cold War version which contrasts markedly with the current notion that, other than Cuba and North Korea, every country is capitalistic; none more so than the resolutely communist states of China and Vietnam.

Now, for the first time in over half a century, it is possible to have a serious dialogue regarding the essential elements for an effective capitalist system. Such a discussion has not been possible for at least five decades because wartime societies work to achieve the necessary discipline to survive. The resolution of conflicts and contradictions are postponed until victory, or at least survival, is assured. In this regard, the Cold War has followed a predictable pattern. The relaxation of tensions has exposed capitalism's underlying tensions. The moral urgency of war has given way to the moral ambiguities of peace in which societies depend on political and legal institutions to resolve contradictions and to prevent the excesses that result from the mechanistic application of fundamental principles. Absent wartime discipline of one sort or another, what we understand to be capitalism at any given time entails the political and legal balancing of effective capitalism's three necessary components:

First, capitalism is committed to continuous improvement in products and services and the processes and organizations that design, manufacture and sell them. Emerson's "better mousetrap" is capitalism's Holy Grail and capitalist systems minimize the obstacles confronting those who seek it. The earliest capitalistic impulses were a response to the barriers to market entry and lack of incentives in economies dominated by medieval guilds and monopolies conferred by royal decree.

Capitalism's relentless demand for more and better products at lower prices also has negative consequences. In late 18th Century America, Benjamin Franklin argued against patent protections. He was willing to sacrifice the temporary monopoly that he might enjoy for his own inventions in order to profit from the discoveries of others. It is unlikely that any U.S. inventor would share that view today, but the limited protection and lax enforcement of intellectual property rights in many countries adopts the Franklin rationale to obtain low or no cost technology transfers.

Capitalism's premium for rapid response to market demands for new or less expensive products has also given rise to situations where companies sacrifice prudence for speed. The Dalkon

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Shield, Dow-Corning breast implant and Ford Pinto cases offer testimony to the need for more data or weighing of potential consequences before rushing to the market.

Support for individual autonomy and the freedom to pursue the objective of continuous improvement is the second characteristic of dynamic capitalism. The individual's empowerment as a self-governing entity and a moral legislator is the principle that most firmly aligns capitalism with political systems that are committed to individual liberty and freedom. Yet some of capitalism's worst sins have resulted from the mechanistic application of the autonomy principle. The unrestricted right of the powerless to strike a bargain with the powerful invites exploitation. One example will suffice: in the early years of this century, the U.S. Constitutional injunction against laws that impair the freedom of contract were used to strike down child labor laws.

These historical episodes illuminate a key problem in the capitalist coda—its insensitivity to inequalities of power. The bargaining advantages that a large purchaser enjoys with a small supplier, the informational deficiencies that a purchaser of pharmaceuticals confronts when dealing with a manufacturer are examples of inequalities that can lead to market failure if the capitalist insistence on the individual right to freely contract is not governed and, at times, circumscribed by the rule of law.

In fact, application of economist Ronald Coase's theorem demonstrates how the legal system can help to contain developing situations of market failure: Coase argued that information asymmetries regarding the safety of a product can result in excessive purchases and social costs because the consumer does not fully appreciate the risk and factor the costs associated with it into the price he pays. Addressing the information asymmetries problem by strict liability's imposition of the risk on the employer increases the price and, as a result, decreases consumer demand and attendant social costs.

The foregoing discussion offers compelling evidence of the third principle, namely, that capitalist freedom must be circumscribed within a strong juridical framework. Indeed, as Pope John Paul II argued in "Centesimus Annus," acknowledgment that capitalism is subject to the rule of law provides the necessary assurance that it will serve human freedom in its totality and that a particular aspect of that freedom will have a core which is "ethical and religious."

This juridical framework has, at times, diminished the efficiency of capitalism with regulatory encumbrances and endless litigation. It can create barriers and increase the cost of the product to the consumer. Pursued in the absence of the moderating tendencies of the first two principles, it has the same potential for excesses and abuses.

It is by no means axiomatic that a capitalist economy will succeed. In and of itself, capitalism cannot provide the essential ingredients for investor, entrepreneurial and consumer confidence. They will want to know whether it is reasonable to expect a profit, if parties are likely to perform their agreements and if courts will enforce contracts if they do not, and that products meet high standards of safety and quality. In and of itself, capitalism does not offer any of these assurances. Only an effective balance between the commitments to continuous improvement, individual autonomy and the rule of law can establish conditions in which a capitalist system can thrive.

For this reason, it is evident that the recent efforts of heretofore isolated economies to participate in world markets does not mean that they have embraced the principles that are essential to a successful capitalist system. Nor is it axiomatic that they will do so. The only certainty is that their citizens will experience capitalism's privations.

The willingness of a country's political leadership to subject a large portion of its citizenry to the harsh conditions from which capitalism has long since evolved is hardly evidence of a commitment to capitalism. Much depends on the ability of people in authentically capitalistic countries to grasp that point. We are moving toward world markets in capital and resources and in the sale of goods and services, and we are proceeding on the assumption that these markets are governed by capitalism. The certainty and reliability of billions of transactions depends on the understanding and acceptance of a set of common beliefs that command significantly less approval than the current self-congratulatory mood regarding capitalism's world-wide triumph suggests.

Capitalism's durability depends in large measure on its ability to adapt to social change, and its moral framework is a critical element in this resilience. The excesses of capitalism have generally resulted from the ascendancy of one of its basic principles at the expense of the other two. The reassertion of balance between capitalism's essential elements has invariably saved it from the fate suffered by other economic regimes. Thus, in the early years of this century, unlimited license for entrepreneurial autonomy was checked by legislation and case law that enforced quality and safety standards. Similarly, legal reform that began in the late 1970's removed much of the suffocating burden on innovation and efficiency that was the legacy of that earlier period.

History suggests that capitalism's current excesses (e.g., astronomical CEO salaries) are due to the kind of temporary imbalances from which an earlier generation of Rockefellers and Carnegies profited so handsomely. Whether capitalism retains its unique capability for self-correction is critically dependent on its leaders' sensitivity to the ethical commitments that distinguish a truly capitalistic society from those political regimes that selectively and opportunistically embrace market reforms. ■

Window on the World—Web Resources for a New Order

By Barbara Burg

The Internet has become a dynamic vehicle for the development of our burgeoning global economy. And nowhere is the impact of this globalization made more visible than on the World Wide Web.

The following selective guide is designed to assist journalists in gaining a foothold on Web-based resources relevant to this all-encompassing topic.

The Big Picture: Globalization And Competition

Economic Report of the President, 1997
http://www.gpo.ucop.edu/catalog/erp97.html

Includes numerous charts of data such as: industrial production indexes, major industry divisions, 1947-96; corporate profits by industry, 1959-96; civilian employment by demographic characteristics, 1954-96.

Globalization Studies: An On-line Resource and Forum for Educators And Students of Globalization
http://www.globalize.org/

Contains complete course documents, assignments and lecture notes for the Globalization Seminar: Trends in Economic and Social Globalization Challenges and Obstacles, taught by Prof. R. F. M. Lubbers at the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government, spring 1997.
http://www.globalize.org/globview.htm

World Competitiveness On-Line—International Institute For Management Development
http://www.imd.ch/wcy_over.html

Selections from their World Competitiveness Yearbook 1997. Analysis based on 244 criteria grouped into eight factors: domestic economy, internationalization, government, finance, infrastructure, management, science & technology, people.

Global Competitiveness Report 1997: Selections —World Economic Forum
http://www.weforum.org/enhanced/home_f.htm

Brief description and selections from the 1997 report rating 53 economies.

Economics: Theory And Practice

World Wide Web Resources In Economics—WebEc
http://www.helsinki.fi/WebEc/

Comprehensive guide to sources on the Web dealing with all aspects of economics; Methodology and History of Economic Thought, Economics Data, International Economics, Financial Economics, Public Economics, Health, Education and Welfare, Labor and Demographics, Development, Technological Change and Growth.

EDIRC Economics Departments, Institutes and Research Centers In the World
http://netec.wustl.edu/EDIRC.html

Currently lists some 1,874 economics-related institutions in 105 countries. Included are economics departments, research centers and institutes in universities, as well as finance ministries, statistical offices, central banks, think tanks, and other non-profit institutions, economics associations and societies.

Business and Finance

Gateway to Associations—American Society of Association Executives
http://www.asaenet.org/Gateway/OnlineAssocSlist.html

Includes a searchable index to find Web sites of more than 1,000 professional organizations.

Mark Bernkopf's Central Banking Resource Center
http://www.patriot.net/users/bernkopf

One stop shopping for finding sites of all Central Banks, Ministries of Finance, Currency Boards, Financial and Economic Conferences, Monetary Research Institutes, and Bankers' Institutes.

The Conference Board
http://www.conference-board.org/

Includes press releases reporting highlights from two Conference Board publications, the Consumer Confidence Index and Leading Economic Indicators.

FINWeb—A Financial Economics WWW Server
http://www.finweb.com/

Guide to electronic publications, databases, working papers and other Web sites concerned with aspects of financial economics.

Fortune 500 Homepage Directory
http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~alizaidi/directory.html

Provides alphabetical list and links to the home pages of Fortune 500 companies.

Global Index of Chambers Of Commerce and Industry
http://www.worldchambers.com/chambers.html

Links to Chambers of Commerce worldwide.

Hoover's On line
http://www.hoovers.com/

Hoover's On line, although primarily a subscription site, does offer free links to Web sites for more than 5,000 companies and brief "company capsules" which includes directory information and the latest quarterly financials.

International Business Sources on the Web—Michigan State University, Center for International Business Education and Research
http://ciber.bus.msu.edu/busres.htm

Annotated guide to carefully selected sites.

Wall Street Research Network
http://wsrn.com

Provides investment information about some 17,000 companies.

Barbara Burg is a Reference/Research Librarian in the Research & Bibliographic Services section of Widener Library, Harvard.

Employment and Labor

Bureau of Labor Statistics

http://stats.bls.gov

Included here is the Economy at a Glance: data from April 1996-April 1997; Unemployment; Hours, Earnings and Productivity; Employment Cost Index; the Consumer Price Index, and the Producer Price Index. Good site for Regional Employment Data. Examples include: "Employment status of New England states" and Regional Consumer Price Indexes.

Employment Projections Homepage

http://stats.bls.gov:80/emphome.htm

Provides data from tables such as Demographic Projections (Labor Force), The Occupational-Industry Employment Matrix, Projections of Employment and Output by Industry, Projections of Macroeconomic Demand and of Input/Output Matrices and Projections of State Occupational Employment.

Unions and Labor Organizations on the Information Superhighway

http://www.igc.org/igc/ln/hg/unions.html

Comprehensive site offering links to many individual union and organization sites.

Privatization—Federal And State Services

Privatization Bibliography/Alliance for Redesigning Government-National Academy of Public Administration

http://www.clearlake.ibm.com/Alliance/clusters/am/bibliogr.4p.html

Provides a list of books and reports dealing with a variety of privatization issues.

Privatization: Reports from the Heritage Foundation Publications Library

http://www.atr.org/heritage/library/index/k4.html

Access to 10 Heritage Foundation reports dealing with privatization.

Privatization Issue: Economic Perspectives: Electronic Journals of the U.S. Information Agency, Vol. 2, No. 1, January 1997

http://www.usia.gov/journals/ites/0197/ijee/ej5toc.htm

Entire issue devoted to privatization. Articles include: The Privatization of Monopolies, The Privatization of Public Pension Financing, Methods of Privatization and Financing Mechanisms of Privatization.

Government: Federal And State

Government Resources on the Web

http://www.lib.umich.edu/libhome/Documents.center/govweb.html

Extensive guide to Federal, State, Local and International government Web sites.

Federal Web Locator

http://www.law.vill.edu/Fed-Agency/fedwebloc.html

Most comprehensive listing of hundreds of Executive, Legislative, Judicial, and Independent Agency Web sites. Arranged by agency but searchable by keyword.

GPO Gate

http://www.gpo.ucop.edu/index.html

Provides searchable index to full text federal government publications such as the Federal Register, the Congressional Record, Congressional Bills, United States Code, Economic Indicators and GAO Reports.

Government Information Exchange

http://www.info.gov/

An extensive guide to government information. Provides a topical search index as well as browsing capability.

Council of Economic Advisors

http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/CEA/html/CEA.html

Includes the Economic Report of the President; working papers such as Job Creation and Employment Opportunities: The United States Labor Market, 1993-1996; U.S. Trade Policy with Japan: An Update; Supporting Research and Development to Promote Economic Growth: The Federal Government's Role; and Economic Indicators.

U.S.-Dept. of Commerce, International Trade Administration

http://www.ita.doc.gov/

Includes data such as State Export Facts: 1987-1996, U.S. Foreign Trade Highlights: 1995 and preliminary figures for 1996, Export Sales of U.S. Metropolitan Areas 1993-1995.

America Desk-Support for U.S. Business—U.S. Department of State

http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/business/index.html

Includes Country Commercial Guides and Country Reports on Economic Policy and Trade Practices.

U.S. Economic and Trade Policy—U.S. Department of State

http://www.state.gov/www/issues/economic/us_trade.html

Sponsored by the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EB), this site includes fact sheets and information about trade, energy, transportation, investment and communication policy.

Bureau of International Labor Affairs

http://www.dol.gov/dol/ilab/welcome.html

Assists in formulating international economic, trade, and immigration policies affecting American workers.

Child Labor Reports

http://www.dol.gov/dol/ilab/public/media/reports/childnew.htm

Three reports produced by the Bureau of International Labor Affairs about international child labor practices relative to countries that export to the United States.

Economics and Statistics Administration

http://cher.eda.doc.gov/agencies/esa/index.html

Includes complete text of Office of Business and Industrial Analysis Working Papers.

United States International Trade Commission

http://www.usitc.gov/

Offers The Industry, Trade, and Technology Review (ITTR), a quarterly staff publication of the Office of Industries, Federal Register notices, and the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States.

State and Local Government On the Net

http://www.piperinfo.com/state/states.html

Extensive links to state and local government sites.

Demography/ Immigration

Demography and Population Studies

http://coombs.anu.edu.au/ResFacilities/DemographyPage.html

Comprehensive guide to sites concerned with demography and population.

Population Index 1986-1996 On the Web

http://popindex.princeton.edu/

Published by Princeton University's Office of Population Research since 1935, this index provides abstracts from articles and books in fields such as population size and growth, migration, nuptiality and the family, research methodology, projections and predictions, historical demography and demographic and economic interrelations.

International Organizations

Official Web site locator for the United Nations System of Organizations
http://www.unsystem.org/index.html
Browse the alphabetical or classified index to find all UN programs, specialized agencies, and autonomous organizations.

European Union
http://europa.eu.int

G7 Information Center/University Of Toronto/
http://utl1.library.utoronto.ca/www/g7/index.html

International Monetary Fund
http://www.imf.org/
Includes Chapter 1: Global Economic Prospects and Policies and the table of contents of the World Economic Outlook/May 1997.

OECD
http://www.oecd.org

Organization of American States/ Trade Unit
http://www.sice.oas.org

World Bank
http://www.worldbank.org/

World Trade Organization
http://www.wto.org

Institutes and Think Tanks

Think Tank Online/ThinkLink(tm)
http://www.thinktank.com/thnklnk.html
Links to a variety of Think Tank sites and selected public affairs sites.

Policy.com
http:www.policy.com
Site provides access to many think tank and advocacy groups.

The American Enterprise Institute (AEI)
http://www.aei.org

Brookings Economic Studies
http://www.brook.edu/ES/ES_HP.HTM

The CATO Institute
http://www.cato.org

Economic Policy Institute
http://epinet.org/
The Economic Policy Institute offers analysis of income, price, employment, profits, and other economic data released by U.S. government agencies.

The Heritage Foundation
http://www.heritage.org

National Bureau Of Economic Research
http://www.nber.org/
Offers abstracts to extensive collection of NBER Working Papers.

RAND
http://www.rand.org/

The Urban Institute
http://www.urban.org

Publications/Media

FACSNET
http://www.facsnet.org/
Sponsored by the Foundation for American Communications (FACS). Site offers a variety of resources for journalists.

General Economic & Trade Issues—Newspage
http://www.newspage.com/NEWSPAGE/cgi-bin/walk.cgi/NEWSPAGE/info/d11/d6/
Daily news stories regarding Economic Forecasts, Economic Indicators, Federal Reserve, Privatization Issues, International Trade Policy, and Trade Regulation & Tariffs.

Barrons Online
http://www.barrons.com/

Bloomberg News
http://www.bloomberg.com/bbn/index.html

Business Week
http://www.businessweek.com/

Business Wire
http://www.businesswire.com/

CNNfn—CNN Financial Network
http://www.cnnfn.com/

The Economist
http://www.economist.com/

Financial Times
http://www.ft.com/

Fortune
http://www.pathfinder.com/@@VAYxvQUA6Mjg@umD/fortune/

Investors Business Daily
http://www.investors.com/

Journal of Commerce
http://www.JOC.com/
Good source for trade and transportation news. Offers headlines and complete text of two daily lead stories. Subscription required for other reports.

Media Law Materials—Cornell University Law School—Legal Information Institute
http://www.law.cornell.edu/topics/media.html
Full text of selected Federal and State statutes, regulations, and judicial decisions.

Data

FedStats
http://www.fedstats.gov
Federal Interagency Council on Statistical Policy maintains this site to distribute data from over 70 federal agencies.

Statistical Abstracts 1996
http://www.census.gov/stat_abstract/

STAT-USA
http://www.stat-usa.gov/
Fee-based subscription service sponsored by the Dept. of Commerce. Massive amounts of economics, trade, and business information.

Economic Statistics Briefing Room (ESBR)
http://www.whitehouse.gov/fsbr/esbr.html
Convenient source of data in the areas of Output, Income, Employment, Unemployment, and Earnings, Production and Business Activity, Prices, Money, Credit, and Securities Markets, Transportation and International Statistics.

Bureau of Economic Analysis
http://www.bea.doc.gov/beahome.html
Provides information on economic growth, regional development, and the Nation's position in the world economy. Data includes: National Income and Product Accounts, including Corporate Profits by Industry, Real Gross Domestic Product, Summary National Income and Product Series, 1929-96, and Gross Product by industry, annual estimates for 1987-94.

Economics Time Series Page
http://bos.business.uab.edu/data/data.htm
Business Cycle Indicators, the Survey of Current Business, Employment & Unemployment Data. In addition, includes links to other sites that provide time series data.

REIS—Regional Economic Information Series
http://www.lib.virginia.edu/socsci/reis/reis.html
The REIS data base provides local area economic data for states, counties, and metropolitan areas for 1969-1994. The REIS data base is produced by the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Social Statistics Briefing Room (SSBR)
http://www.whitehouse.gov/fsbr/ssbr.html
Convenient access to crime, demographic, education and health statistics.

U.S. International Trade Statistics
http://www.census.gov/ftp/pub/foreign-trade/www/ ■

When Couples Work on the Same Paper

It is no longer unusual for a husband and a wife to work on the same newspaper, sometimes with one in charge of the other. At a Nieman Foundation seminar February 18, Philip Taubman, Assistant Editorial Page Editor of The New York Times, and his wife, Felicity Barringer, Editor of the Monday Business Day section, talked about working on the same newspaper. Here are excerpts from the seminar.

Taubman—We've tried over the years to manage a relationship among two journalists who are under a lot of pressure and have raised two children. Maybe a good jumping off point would be the move to Moscow. So, can you describe the job offer you received from [Executive Editor] Abe Rosenthal?

Barringer—We laugh, because "job offer" was not what you would call it. It doesn't seem like a decade ago we were in Moscow. But a decade ago was a very different time in terms of newspaper management's views of two-career couples, in particular, The Times's view. At the time, I'd been at The Washington Post—I started there in 1976. I had been in a variety of jobs, as a suburban reporter, a State House reporter, an editor on the local desk and a national reporter.

At that time, I was working part-time, because both boys were under five. I was trying to figure out a way to cut back a little bit in a profession that essentially wants you on-call seven days a week, 24 hours a day. So, it wasn't a time in my life when I had the best clips to show. It became clear that the Moscow bureau would probably be [offered to] Phil. The Post had its own Moscow bureau.

The number of reporters in the Soviet Union was determined by a complex system of reciprocity, because of the Cold War. The FBI didn't want many Soviet correspondents here, on the theory that most of them were spies. The two governments agreed to handle the journalists on one-for-one basis: there would be an equal number of American journalists there as there were Soviet journalists here.

For me to get the accreditation from the Soviet government meant, essentially, the FBI accepting another Soviet correspondent here. That seemed highly unlikely. Still, I figured that I could probably go freelance because I didn't want to be full-time anyway and freelance for The Post on a two- or three-day a week basis. There seemed to be a good chance the Soviets would overlook the reciprocity issue in that case.

Phil presented this to Abe Rosenthal, who essentially said, "No way." He didn't want his correspondents living with the competition or having the competition's housing and life underwritten by The Times. He said, "No, you cannot go for The Washington Post in any capacity."

I absorbed that with a considerable amount of bitching over the dinner table, and then figured, "OK, well, I'll get stringerships for other publications." I had friends at Time magazine, and Maclean's magazine in Canada. I still remember presenting [Rosenthal] this second set of options: I could perhaps work for CBS News as a stringer or I could work for other newspapers. "No, no, no, no."

It got down to the point where it seemed my option, maybe, was to work for a weekly in the Northern Plains states. In return, Abe said, "If the Soviets will grant you an accreditation, you can be a stringer for us." But he made it very clear that it was a short-term offer, lasting only while we were in Moscow.

I was really upset by this, and complained to everybody I knew, until my oldest sister finally said, "Look, you want to go to Moscow, right? So there's a place you want to go. The road you want to take has a fallen tree in the middle of it. You can keep driving your car right into that tree, but you're not going to get where you're going. You'll have to compromise on this one if you really want to go to Moscow." So, I said, "OK," and went as Phil's spouse, with no promise of anything from the Soviets.

As it turned out, Gorbachev thought he had a good story to sell. Without anything formal being said, the Foreign Ministry created a new category of accreditation—for a journalist's spouse. Several of us took advantage of it at the same time.

So I had my accreditation. Phil's had a green stripe, mine had a blue stripe. His was renewed every two years, mine was renewed every year. But, nonetheless, I could be a full-fledged reporter for an American newspaper, and there wasn't any question of reciprocity.

When we left Moscow, I had offers from a couple of other places. The

Times made it worth my while to stay. I went to Moscow as a spouse and I came back from Moscow as a reporter for The Times.

Bill Kovach—As a couple, even before Felicity gave up her job at The Post to come to The Times, they were plowing new ground for management inside The New York Times. I had never dealt with reporters who made vacation plans that they expected me to honor when I needed somebody to do a story.

Taubman—It was a ski vacation. I remember every detail. We were determined to take it.

Kovach—You'd already made a deposit.

Taubman—You had assigned me to work on a long investigative project involving Ted Kennedy. This was in 1980, when he was running for president. And Jo Thomas of The Times had acquired some new phone records that might help reconstruct the sequence of events at Chappaquidick. Jo, Robert Pear and I worked on it for about a month or a month and a half, when this ski trip came up. I said to Bill that I was leaving for a week, and he looked kind of stunned. Nick Horrock, another editor, took me aside and said, "You know, if you want to have a career at this paper, you'd better not take this vacation." We went off on the vacation. In a sense, I wasn't aware how much chilliness there was about this in the office. The first or second day back from vacation I learned that I was not invited to attend the interview with Kennedy. The next thing I learned was that I was not getting a by-line on the story. I remember being hurt, disappointed and somewhat confused.

Kovach—You forced me to think about it. And it was the first time I ever thought about it. The idea of not working seven days a week, 365 days a year, just had never occurred to me. It really hadn't. Anyway, we started thinking about it. And it took them beating their head against the doors, and a few others. They finally opened management at The New York Times up to—grudgingly up to—thinking about the life of the people who worked there.

Taubman—My first job in management was Deputy Washington Bureau Chief. Somebody came to me not long after I'd started whom I was going to assign to work on some stories over the weekend and told me he had other plans. I stopped myself and said, "OK."

Q.—What advice would you have to reporters and papers that haven't become sensitized?

Taubman—Take your vacation.

Barringer—I sure was ambitious before the kids were born. We were married straight out of school, so we just sort of worked like hell for the first 10 years of our marriage, and then our first kid was born. Afterwards, it became clear that I wanted to find jobs that would allow me to continue to work, and to have good, challenging work, but to do it in a controllable way.

That was my answer to my family situation. But everyone who's gone through this—and there are legions of us now—has come to their own work-family solution in different ways. Phil's approach was the more direct approach, as the vacation story shows. He was saying, "This is the other half of my life, and this half of my life gets at least some weight. It's not just what the organization wants. It's what I want and my family needs."

I took the somewhat more accommodating route of looking for situations in which this wouldn't come up, or it would come up less. I do remember when Connie Chung got [to be] the co-anchor with Dan Rather. Within a year or so she said she wanted to work part-time so she could go through fertility treatments. My reaction was "wait a minute." Do you say, "Right on, you're fighting for balance, you're fighting for family?" Or do you say, "Why did you take that job if you wanted to do that? You're having your cake and eating it, too."

I came down on the latter side. But that reflected my experience. I've tried to find jobs where you could make the accommodation. You have to take one route or the other. And both can be frustrating.

Taubman—You have cyclical periods in your career where you're flying high for a while and then something happens and for some reason you fall from grace. There was a point, just before we went to Moscow, when somehow I got in the doghouse. I was never quite sure exactly what accounted for that, but I think it had to do with a perception in New York that I was not productive enough. I was working on investigative projects, so I only had a limited number of by-lines every year.

I went down to Honduras on an assignment, and finished my business, and said I was coming back. It was several days before Thanksgiving. I was told by the foreign desk that I should stay. I said, "I've done all my reporting, I'm coming back." I guess their notion was, "Well, you may be done with your reporting for that story, but there's loads of stories down there that we'd like to get done, and you should stay and contribute a couple of pieces to the foreign desk."

I took a plane home. I was soon summoned up to New York, and Seymour Topping, the Managing Editor, gave me a very stiff lecture about how, if I expected to go overseas, I had to be more productive, and I need to be more responsive to the editors. It was a behind-the-woodshed sort of session. I feared my career at the paper was winding down. If you get a lecture like that from the managing editor, it's not good news.

Fortunately, Bill was stubbornly in my camp, defending me, and Abe Rosenthal was also supportive. I survived because, in the end, Abe was making the final call.

Kovach—But the point you raise is a good one. If you do push on that door, you're going to get a judgment from that manager about your worth. And that's worth getting. It's worth pushing for that alone, because if you're working for a manager who doesn't respect your work or value your work, that's good to know. Then you can start making other calculations in your mind about what you want to do about it.

These kinds of tensions and confrontations, I think, are healthy and

good. Even if they don't work to your benefit immediately, something good, in terms of your career, is going to come out of it, in terms of your sense of where you are and what you need to be doing, and whether or not this is the place to do it. There are all kinds of intelligence that you can gather from a relationship like that, but it's always good.

I think what it does, it's always good to get into a habit of—"confronting" is the wrong word; actually, it's the right word, but I don't want to use it— engaging with your managers all the time about where you're going, what you want to be doing, what you think you can produce there. You can get a sense of whether or not you're on the same wavelength or not. These kinds of conversations should be going on all the time, and they often are not, often don't. And it's up to, I think, the reporter to initiate it, because the managers are looking at 40 or 50 people, they're not going to seek it out.

Q—I wonder if you can tell us a little about how working together shaped the way that you made decisions.

Taubman—In Moscow?

Q.—Yeah, in Moscow.

Taubman—Serge Schmemann was Moscow Bureau Chief when we got to Moscow. If I had to pick the ideal mentor for a foreign correspondent in a difficult place like Moscow, it would be Serge. He knew the place backwards and forwards and spoke native Russian, knew everybody that you needed to know as a correspondent, and was extraordinarily generous in sharing that information with me and Felicity. When Serge left I became Bureau Chief.

Then Bill Keller was transferred to Moscow from the Washington Bureau. Bill Keller and Felicity and I were a wonderful personal and professional combination.

The story was phenomenal in those days. It kept changing every day, and there were often two or three stories a day. The natural tendency of journalists to want to do the big story was easily handled because we all had big stories every day. There was never any sense of somebody getting left with the dregs while somebody else was writing for the front page.

We all had mental interests that took us in different directions. I was particularly interested in the political story in Moscow. Bill had a wonderful talent for telling the story of the changes in the Soviet Union through the experiences of people out around the country. And Felicity was interested in the sciences and arts and the intellectual life of Russia.

Barringer—Going to Moscow, working in a small bureau with your husband as your colleague, does have its own tensions. But you can get around them. Still, there were a couple of times when we would get into quite sharp arguments over coverage. I can only remember the ones in which I was right.

Taubman—We had some notable lapses. My management triumph was the [German pilot Mathias Rust's] flight to Red Square. I think my father was in Moscow. We got together a group of playwrights and people for dinner—it was an unusually interesting gallery of Russians willing to come to the compound of the Americans and foreigners and take the risk of being seen with us.

Late in the afternoon, the art teacher for the Anglo-American school, who lived in our building, came home and called Felicity and said, "I don't know why, but something told me to get off the subway tonight at Red Square instead of the usual stop near our house. And I saw this airplane in Red Square."

Barringer—She called to say, "Is somebody doing a film? I figured, you're a journalist, you'd know if someone was doing a film."

Taubman—She said, "There's a pilot who's German and he said he flew the plane in."

Barringer—She said that.

Taubman—So, Felicity dutifully reported this to her husband and colleague, and my reaction was, "No, that's ridiculous."

Barringer—It was late enough that one of the guests had already arrived.

Taubman—And he, too, thought that was ridiculous.

Barringer—He said, "Your friends shouldn't drink so much so early in the day."

Taubman—Apparently that evening in Moscow, there were a number of sightings like this. The Chicago Tribune correspondent had a friend who had come over to Moscow, and he actually saw the plane circling over Red Square, watched it land, and didn't bother to call his friend, because he thought it was some kind of courier flight.

Barringer—Western journalists heard about this all over the place. One group was at a late-night poker game—sort of six hands and two drinks into it. Then somebody said, "Hey, did you hear, one of my Russian friends called and said something about a plane landing."

The Associated Press correspondent, one of the other women working there, broke off from the poker game and filed a story. Her husband was a correspondent for Time, and he called his office, and they said, essentially, "There's nothing on the wires." AP put something out, at about 6:30, or deadline, East Coast time. I have not yet found a paper in the country that ran that story.

Taubman—Just think about it, it was possible, because it was such a closed world in those days, that we could have had an exclusive story.

Barringer—His good management

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decision, though, was to put me on the story the next day. I was so angry at him—you understand, if you've ever had the energy that comes from feeling totally furious. I did more reporting in that one day than I thought possible, and we ended up winning a publisher's award for our coverage of the affair.

Q.—I was wondering if you found it easy or harder going from a situation where you're working for competing organizations to one where you work on the same paper. Also, does The Times have a formal policy on couples in the newsroom?

Barringer—I don't think it's formal. They've tried, for obvious reasons, to keep them in separate departments, so with Phil on the editorial board and me in the business section, there's no problem. When I was at the Week in Review and he was on the national desk, we didn't intersect that much.

The Times has the virtue of being a vast organization with lots of different parts, so you can keep yourselves apart. I think if you were working on the same desk, with lots of colleagues around—particularly if one is a manager and one is not—it's difficult. Either there's the impression that the spouse is being favored or, from the spouse's point of view, that because of the effort not to play favorites, you're getting passed over. That's the downside of being in the same organization.

We were on competing organizations for five years. Generally, though, he was covering foreign policy or doing investigative reports and I was either on the national staff covering small agencies or on a local staff. So, it wouldn't have been my story stripped across the top of the front page that would mean he'd be called down to the office to file for the second edition.

There are some couples who do compete. When members of a couple do compete head to head, more power to them. I couldn't even have done that very easily. You know, when you're competing with someone, there's a certain hostility level built into that dynamic, and you can't just turn that off when you come home.

Taubman—You can get a sitcom out of that. ■

The Coming Crisis...and Focus Groups

W. Russell Neuman, a visiting professor at the Shorenstein Center at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, has held academic appointments at Tufts, Yale and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He has been focusing on the impact of advanced telecommunications and the economics and policy of new media technologies. Here are edited excerpts from a seminar he gave at the Nieman Foundation on February 28, 1997.

The crisis in journalism is not a crisis in American journalism, it's a crisis in world journalism. You may not be a real fan of capitalism, but let me tell you what capitalism did. It permitted an independent press. We figured out how to do that.

Now capitalism is going to invent a computer-based press, and if we don't figure out how to protect its independence, we've got a problem. That's the crisis in world journalism. You guys go back to the newsroom and work on it. We need a convergent and programmatic effort, which involves a deep understanding of the technology, a deep understanding of the economics, and don't reject the economics.

You will reject it offhand. Because you [are] journalists and not marketeers. You need to understand the psychology of your audience. I happened to have been trained in the social sciences instead of management and marketing research.

In my research tradition we did focus groups. We did surveys. We did depth interviews. We wanted to understand not what would sell shoes, we wanted to understand how people will understand and learn from news that may be formatted in different ways. So we used the tools of advertising and survey research and the focus group.

Among journalists, broadcast journalists especially, if you say, "focus group," they go, "Oh, God, no. Don't." Because it symbolizes commercialization and taking power away from a thoughtful editor or journalist and putting it in the hands of a marketeer who isn't interested in journalism. He or she is interested in selling shoes and peanut butter.

But those same tools can be used to protect quality journalism. And if you say, "Well, I don't want to do that. All of the decisions are going to be made by really intelligent editors and journalists. We're just going to be smart. And people are going to want it. They are going to value our judgment." Well, perhaps you're not that smart.

You need, as journalists—not as media executives—to understand the evolving tastes. You're going to figure out what it is they want, and you will find a way to protect independent serious journalism in a world of 20 MTV's. And you will. But use those tools.

...What the electronic medium allows you to do is to target a news story for different kinds of audiences. What I am encouraging you to do is to get out there and pander. Pander to taste. Pander to divergent interests of your audiences.

Our goal is not just to be good technologists, but to be good journalists and to protect what is good about the last 150 years of independent, serious journalism. It's finding a way to take advantage of what the new technologies allow us, so that we can use all of the advantages of the technologies to draw distracted MTV kids into the importance—because it is interesting and it is important—of what's going on in Chechnya, and how that parallels things in their own lives dealing with ethnicity, geography, the changing definition of the nation state (although you wouldn't use words like "the nation state," or "the changing definition of the nation states.")

There's ways in which MTV kids could be drawn into finding something important about what's going on in Chechnya. That's the challenge to you, and I think you'll be more successful at it by embracing the technologies than running away from them. ■

The National Public Radio Idea

Give Them What They Need, Maybe Not What They Want

William E. (Bill) Buzenberg's career at National Public Radio spanned more than 18 years, most of that time as a foreign affairs correspondent reporting on Latin America and Europe. For the last seven years, he served as Vice President in charge of NPR News. He stepped down at the end of February, to be succeeded by Jeffrey Dvorkin of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and this fall will be a fellow at the Institute of Politics at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Along with his wife, Susan, he is currently editing the memoirs of Richard Salant, the late president of CBS News. "Salant, CBS, and the Battle for the Soul of Broadcast Journalism" is scheduled to be published in the summer of 1998. Following are excerpts from a seminar he conducted at the Nieman Foundation on February 7, 1997.

I am leaving NPR after a fairly good run. I'm sorry to be going, but a great deal has been accomplished. There are many fine journalists at NPR, and I'm proud to have been associated with them.

Radio is a great medium for information; radio is a great medium for ideas. I think we have some advantages over television, believe it or not. Clearly, TV is the most powerful medium we have today, and it has more money than ever before. But radio is also a powerful news medium, and at NPR we may not be rich, but we can do some excellent journalism.

As an example, I was listening this morning to a piece by Edward Lifson, NPR's correspondent in Berlin. An old Nazi bunker had been discovered in downtown Berlin. In the story, you heard him slogging through the water. He described the walls and other details and suddenly you could feel what it was like inside the bunker.

On television, the reporter is inside the bunker, too, walking around, and you see it, but you're not inside with him in quite the same way. Radio envelopes you. It's in your mind, and you see the gray walls, you feel the water, and if the reporter writes about the smell you would get that too. Sound and fine writing combine to become great generators in your mind. It creates a picture that is far bigger, sharper and more powerful than a picture on the tube. We work hard on great writing and rewriting. Everything you hear on NPR is edited and sometimes re-edited. You get a very literate sound.

Now, for some things, you can't beat television. When the space shuttle explodes, you've got to see that picture. I'm not saying you can do that better on the radio. But for understanding and

PHOTO: PAULA DARTE

remembering information, and for discussing ideas and solutions to problems, radio works extremely well.

For story-telling and immediacy radio is also tremendous. Take a reporter like Anne Garrels when she was reporting in Russia. She knows her subject very well and she writes incredibly well. When Anne writes about Yeltsin and his heart problems, or about a Russian orphanage, it is very compelling journalism. You hear and absorb the entire story from start to finish. When it is well-written, the story grips you; you just keep listening. You don't get distracted; you don't go off and do something else. Your mind doesn't wander. You're held captive to hear that story. A similar story in a newspaper may also be well-written and have lots of quotes, but often it is not as compelling as a well-produced radio piece. How often do you read all the way to the end of a long newspaper story on Russia? How often do you get in-depth foreign reporting on television?

It also takes time on the air to tell a story well, to discuss it from more than two angles. There is a fierce time constraint in television. NPR is very fortunate. We have a two-hour morning pro-

gram called "Morning Edition," and a two-hour evening program called "All Things Considered." Believe me, those are four full hours a day we have to fill with pieces and interviews. An eight-minute report is a fairly hefty piece, and that is not unusual. We can also produce 20-minute pieces for "All Things Considered." We can take an hour to discuss one subject if we want. You can get a lot of information into that kind of air time. I would say four minutes is a standard NPR length.

Seven Daily Sins

A few months ago, Andrew Heyward, President of CBS News, gave a speech in which he spoke of the "seven daily sins" of commercial broadcasters. This is what he came up with: cynicism; predictability; artificiality; imitation; over-simplification; laziness; and hype. I think we all understand these and see them in commercial broadcasting.

At NPR, I've come up with a contrasting list of what I call our seven fundamentals: sincerity; unpredictability; authenticity; originality; in-depth; hard work; and distinctive content. Journalists at NPR have a belief in what we are trying to do. They are committed to it. Editors and producers at "All Things Considered" take that name seriously and look for things you don't hear anywhere else. As for authenticity, I was thinking of commentaries by Andre Codrescu, or Bailey White, who are truly authentic American voices.

About 200 people compose all of NPR News, producing programming seven-days-a-week, 24-hours a day. We try to cover Washington and the world with far fewer people than any single major newspaper. I think The LA Times has about 1,000 editors and reporters. Despite the demands to do so much with limited resources, NPR strives to produce distinctive content in all that we do. There is such a glut of information today, we have had to work hard to try to keep our distinctiveness, which is why I believe we've been successful.

Looking at the Record

When I took over as head of NPR News in 1990, there were about 395 member stations around the country. Today, there are 560 NPR member stations. More than 90 percent of the nation is now covered by public radio news. The audience has almost doubled during that period. In 1989, there were some 7.4 million listeners each week. Now, using the latest fall 1996 Arbitron figures, "Morning Edition" has an audience of 7.8 million each week. "All Things Considered" has an audience of 7.2 million. The audience for a single two-hour program like "Weekend Edition" with Scott Simon, for example, is 2.3 million each week. All together, there are about 13 million NPR News listeners every week.

Fundraising during this period has also tripled, from $7 million to about $25 million a year. I believe that number has been driven by the audience increase. There are many more businesses which want to be associated with public radio now. Because of this support, NPR has been able to invest more in the News Division, and the news budget had doubled since 1990, to more than $24 million dollars a year, which is still fairly cheap by network standards. The staff has grown by about a third. We're doing more programming than ever before. We've expanded "All Things Considered," we've added "Talk of the Nation," we're now producing 36 newscasts each day. There is a new science show and many other demands on the news staff. In the last seven years, we've won nine duPont-Columbia Awards and 10 Peabody Awards, which is significant recognition for our work.

Running a News Organization

About two years ago, my wife and I began editing the memoirs of Richard Salant, who died in 1993. Through Salant's papers and my own experience, I think I've learned some things about how to build a news organization, or conversely, how to tear one down. On the positive side, here are things I'd put at the top of the list that managers need to stress: credibility, integrity and high standards, and everything associated with those. Credibility comes from journalists weighing and deciding what people need to know and then providing that with the greatest accuracy, analysis and intelligence possible, appealing to the audience's intelligence.

On the negative side, it's clear that some managers see the bottom line as most important. High standards just get in the way of that, and depth is boring, so that should be avoided, along with talking heads. There is no dollar amount you can put on an intangible such as credibility. Therefore, to many bottom-line people, it doesn't have much value. Under this approach, you give people what they want, or what focus groups say they want, not necessarily what they need. Often what they want is entertainment, which has become so much a part of the news business. The lines have become more and more blurred. Entertainment and their spinoffs lead toward what is really an appeal to emotion, not intellect.

On the positive side, I like to think about attracting the best audience, not the biggest. Quality is not necessarily determined by size. On the negative side, ratings are everything, as everyone in commercial broadcasting is well aware. We have seen a diminution of excellent, in-depth documentaries when ratings, not audience quality, are the only thing that counts.

When building up a news organization, people are precious. You support them and fight for them. You value thoughtful people. News is a costly, hands-on business, and you need great journalists and their specialized skills. Any good news manager has to work hard keeping good people happy and working productively. You try to do this by energizing them in their work. I can't say enough about the journalists at NPR I've been privileged to work with over the years.

Over the last dozen years, we've lost about nine people who left to go into television. We've kept most people gen-

erally happy in radio for a lot less money. I think that's because they value the integrity of their work and their freedom. Scott Simon came back to NPR after a year in television. He told me that people always asked him didn't he find television challenging and radio comfortable? He said it was just the reverse. "Television wasn't challenging. The limo picked me up in the morning. I had to do a few interviews each weekend and maybe write one essay. I came back to radio because it was challenging, because I have to work hard. I have to produce a tremendous amount of material every weekend. I have to do a great amount of writing and rewriting when it isn't good enough."

Scott also said he found an unbelievable connection with the audience in radio. The mail he received in television was nothing like the smart, grassroots dialogue with his radio audience. They criticize us and they praise us and they correct us. The quality of our programming means something to them.

Newsroom Vs. Corporate Culture

On the negative side of our business, there is a management attitude that says people are interchangeable, even expendable. This approach finds that the newsroom culture gets in the way. Even though specialization is needed today in reporting on science and technology, foreign affairs, health care and workplace issues, the negative approach says mediocrity and generalists are sufficient and a lot cheaper.

There can be a culture of excellence in a newsroom, but it is fragile. When you nurture it, that spirit can do anything. It can work night and day and produce exceptional programming. But that happens only when people feel like they're giving to something that is bigger than themselves and they believe in it. If you destroy that spirit, you get something very different out of the same people. The bottom line approach suggests there are shortcuts, that you can use technology to do things so you don't need so many people. Technology is only a tool; it doesn't replace smart journalists who develop stories and explore ideas.

Salant used to say that true public service journalism is a moral enterprise, not just a business. A journalistic organization has to make money to exist, but there is much more at stake than making money. Sometimes corporate thinking has trouble understanding this idea of a moral enterprise. I think journalists do understand it.

A recent American Press Institute lecture discussed how language in our society has been taken over by the language of marketing. Journalists should be especially careful not to allow the language of the market to define their work, which corporations like to call "products." I refuse to use the term "product" when referring to NPR broadcasts or programs. Our audience is made up of citizens, not merely "consumers" or "customers," and these citizens who listen to us are not just a "market" to be exploited.

The motivation behind a journalistic enterprise or any public service endeavor is important. If that motivation is to exploit a market, or simply make money, the audience will know. They sense when sexy video tape is used to spice up a report, simply to increase the size of the audience. They will know when they are getting fact-based information which is accurate, has depth, and is meaningful in helping them lead their lives as intelligent citizens. They also know when they are getting something which is glitzy, a little slick and essentially hollow.

You asked me what's next for NPR News. It's a great news organization, much stronger than it was seven years ago. So I'm optimistic that we're going to get better still—because we need to, there is much more we need to improve.

I do think NPR will be around for a long time. I hope it will be very good because I think it's important in this country. I think we have set an important standard in broadcast journalism and, again, I'm proud to have been associated with it.

Questions & Answers

Q.—There's pressure to try to find more corporate support, right? I thought corporations are dying to buy into the credibility of public radio.

A.—Yes, that's right. Public radio has done relatively well in recent years—better than public TV, in fact—because of listener and underwriting support. Federal support has been shrinking. Only about 16 percent of all of the money in public radio now comes from the federal government. The rest comes from states and universities, but mostly from listeners and underwriters. There is pressure to bring in more underwriting from corporations and businesses, especially as federal funding shrinks even more. Today, each underwriter is limited to a basic 10-second announcement on NPR; some have suggested making that 30 seconds. Others have suggested adding music behind the underwriting credit. That would cut more time out of the programs, make them sound more commercial, as well as make more money. Right now, underwriting credits don't use music and can't even use qualitative words, like the best such and such. But because funds are tight in public broadcasting, both radio and television, there is pressure to lift these restrictions and go with what is called "enhanced underwriting." If that happens, I think we're on a slippery slope to more commercial broadcasting.

Q.—I don't get it, I mean the market's just not there, that's why there is such a thing as public television and public radio.

Five years ago you could mention the name of the company and the product, that was it. Today on public radio, you hear them make claims about what they do and what they can't do. The value of their product—that's not underwriting. That's already happening.

A.—It's true that there have been changes. Because of a lack of funding, both public television and public radio are being driven in the direction of the marketplace. Still, it is basically underwriting on public radio. You get the

phone number and a little bit more. I still don't think these on-air credits represent an out-and-out commercial compared to normal radio commercials.

Q.—The only difference is they don't break in the middle of a broadcast. I think what's happening on public broadcasting now is commercials. I don't think it's underwriting anymore. I just disagree.

Q.—The complaints against The [New York] Times, of course, is that it's a great newspaper, but very dull. Why don't you talk about one of the things on your list to balance what you think people need to know versus what they want to know so you don't go the entertainment route.

A.—You want me to give you a formula to tell you exactly what you're supposed to do?

Q.—Not a formula, but what are some of the elements?

A.—It's a balance. You're looking for important information needed by citizens. I don't really want to get into this big label debate about "public journalism" and "civic journalism." But there is an issue where public radio stations are close to their communities. People know them; they help raise money for them; they talk to them. There is an association in a community with a public radio station that I think infuses the programming locally.

Sometimes nationally we bring in pieces from our local stations and put that on the air. Often these are about issues that a lot of communities are dealing with. So that's news that's very relevant. That's not entertainment. That's not just government talking heads, that's news that people are interested in, and I think that gets into the "what people need" aspects.

Many of the requests I get for reprints or from people wanting to use the transcript and wanting to use the tape have to do with pieces that some community is doing on X arts group or X community group, or what they have done, and they want to use it and spread it around elsewhere. People are interested in that and public radio is a source for a lot of that.

Q.—Who runs NPR? Who is NPR?

A.—It's a membership organization, or system, of 560 stations. Running this system has been compared to herding cats. Of the 560 about 100 are really good news stations. They feed us information. They have their own news staffs and, in a way, that helps us with our news. I believe NPR can cover this country as well as anybody. If you had 100 bureaus around the country, I'm sure The New York Times would cover the country a little differently. I'm sure a network would. We have like the equivalent of 100 bureaus that we're dealing with.

These member stations consider that they own National Public Radio. They sit on the Board of Directors, in the majority. They elect the president. They set their own dues and they pay for the programming, which is a great subject of controversy. But the stations are the public radio system. We, meaning NPR, the network, provide national programming for these stations and they buy it from us. They really control us. There's a great deal of dialogue with all these stations.

In Boston, I always cite WBUR as a model station. It is tremendous. We would never put our own reporter full-time in Boston because we don't need to. We get all the news we need from WBUR. In fact, we've hired David Baron, Elizabeth Arnold, Andy Bowers—they're all people we've hired from Boston, which is our farm team in some respects because they hire wonderful people.

In some ways this is a crazy system, but NPR runs the satellite that hooks all these stations together. There are competing networks within public radio. You've heard of Public Radio International, and I'm sure there will be others because the satellite is open to everybody. So, it's a competitive system in a way and an awful lot of owners makes it very complicated.

Q.—I wanted to get back to what you were saying about audio communication and the impact of hearing a news event. What's the theory there about how the human mind works? The radio does leave an indelible impression. We all have heard Edward R. Murrow, the bombs falling in London, and will never forget that. Anybody who has ever been a sports fan knows how uniquely exciting it is to listen to a game or a boxing match or anything as opposed to seeing it. It never really leaves you. You receive information through your ears and not through your eyes. What is it that makes it so strong in its impact?

A.—You said it very well. I have not studied this, I have not read about this. This is the former print journalist who spent a long time in radio coming to these conclusions. But something is going on; and story-telling is very ancient. That's how things were passed on. They weren't read, they were told to you. Radio is telling you stories and those things stick with you. It doesn't go through your eyes. I often feel television—no disrespect meant—is very distracting, those pictures cutting, bam, bam, bam. You're not focusing on what is being said. You're focusing on those pictures, and they keep cutting and you sometimes miss the information because the picture is so powerful.

With radio, you get the information because you're getting story-telling or sounds that your brain can remember. You could play a tape recording of a train going past and you could close your eyes and you can see this huge locomotive. And with stereo you could feel it going through the room. You would feel like it has. That would mean something to you. But seeing it going through on a television wouldn't. Reading about a train going through wouldn't. The radio would. On radio the train is as big as a real train in your mind. It's full size.

Q.—It's your train. It's a train you know, not somebody else's train.

Q.—It's almost interactive in a weird way, because you fill in all the blanks.

A.—I think that's right.

Q.—I was wondering if you could tell us what percentage of your funding comes from listeners and if you feel that your listeners are really aware of the threat facing public radio, and if that's having any impact on the amount that they contribute.

A.—They are aware and they have contributed mightily. The Newt Gingrich attack on public broadcasting in '94 brought in a tremendous amount

of financial support from listeners. People understood that public radio was threatened; they understand that it is not mostly government financing. About 60 percent of public radio financing comes from listeners now. Not underwriting, not government, not state, but from listeners. And the pledges have gone up. The average pledge is around $68. But some people give $100, $200, $300 and more. These listeners not only value it and are satisfied with it but they really want to contribute to it and that's a pretty good check on how you're doing every day, every year.

Listener support went up a whole lot when Gingrich came out and the fear was that [the increase] was a spike and it would go back down, which has happened in the past. [But] it went up and it continued to go up. That was '94, this is '97. Stations are still setting what they call record fundraisers. They put out some number that they can't believe they'll reach and then they exceed it.

No offense meant to public television, which has its own difficulties, but radio is out-raising television in some cities.

Q.—How consciously do you feel accusations of a liberal bias?

A.—We deal with it all the time. I have to say there is less of it today than seven years ago.

Q.—Less accusation or less—?

A.—Less accusation. I get a lot of accusations from our liberal friends who think we've sold out and we're right-wing blah, blah, blah. I get a lot of that, too. We made a commitment that we can't just be someone's liberal radio network, that we are in business to do good journalism. Good journalism means being fair and being as balanced as you can and hearing commentators from different perspectives and trying to broaden the spectrum that you hear in this country.

We made that a commitment and I think we have achieved it for the most part. Bruce Drake, the Managing Editor, has been very tough on this. We're fair and we're balanced. That's our goal, and I don't think we get as much criticism as we used to.

The largest component of our audience actually considers themselves conservative. That's slightly larger than the group that considers themselves liberal, and then there's an even smaller group that considers themselves neither one. But there are many conservatives who listen to and depend on public radio. And that was one of the shocks to Mr. Gingrich, I think, when he said, "We're going to zero it out." There were all kinds of his friends who said: "Wait a minute, we depend on this. We value this, what do you mean?"

Q.—But do you talk about it when you're mixing your stories?

A.—We talk about balance a lot. It's part of the editorial discussion that goes on. A lot of it is in the choice of things. We pick controversial topics. We pick things that irritate people, that they maybe don't want to hear at all, and we will spend 15 minutes on it. We're always going to have some criticism but whatever we do we try to do it as absolutely fair and balanced and fully as we can. We run letters to the editor with plenty of criticism, and we work hard and write letters back to people who complain. It's journalism. No different.

Q.—PRI, how is that different from NPR?

A.—Public Radio International had its origin back when Garrison Keillor was just starting his show called "Prairie Home Companion." The show was offered to National Public Radio and the thinking then was, "You know, a show about a guy from Minnesota, and this mythical town, I don't know, I don't think it's going to work." So NPR said, "No thank you." Because of that rejection a new programming arm grew up from Minnesota Public Radio called American Public Radio. They started distributing "Prairie Home Companion," which was wildly successful and still is.

A few years ago American Public Radio changed its name to Public Radio International and they distribute programming. They distribute programs from the BBC. A station can pick the programming it wants and run it whenever it wants. It's their choice. It is a competitive network in that sense.

Q.—I remember vividly a report that was done about kneading composts or garbage. It was an April Fool's story. But it was done completely deadpan and completely straight and they never said a word. It was only the next day when people responded to this they said, "Folks, it's a joke." Newspapers won't do that. How do you do that without worrying about credibility?

A.—April 1st is a great tradition at NPR. In England it's also a tradition. In London every paper has their "Loch Ness Monster Surfaced" kind of story. We have had some great ones over the years. The one that really set off a lot of people was when "Talk of the Nation" [had] Nixon announcing he was going to run again. We used the voice of Nixon to say it. We had Norm Orenstein come in and comment, "boy, this is a shocker," and we did it for a whole hour. We didn't say a word about it. We had callers talking about it. People were really caught by that one.

We give ourselves that space on April Fool's Day. Scott Simon has had some of the best. The one about the pickle ranch is the one I loved—about going out and seeing the pickles growing. And there was the one about the talking salmon....

We are a serious news organization but we allow ourselves to do that. We allow ourselves to have satire and there are big disputes that go on about satire.

Q.—What is the response you get from your listeners?

A.—They seem to tolerate it. We get hundreds of letters from listeners who get the jokes and enjoy them each year.

It's a different kind of news organization. It's serious, but sometimes it's not serious at all. I think there does need to be room for fun. There's no question we all want that in our lives, right? We all need that outlet, too, so we indulge ourselves. There are people who just started listening to public radio and they hear something that's obviously self-indulgent, which we also do, and they can't stand it. I hear from them, and they say, "How could you possibly do that? I thought you were a serious news organization." We say, "Well, we've been doing that for many years. I'm sorry, you just started listening."

Q.—How do you break down your audience and this new marketplace kind

of society? Do you change in the way you report?

A.—Well, television does a lot of focus groups about what they should put on the air. I made a policy that we don't do focus groups about what we put on the air. News judgments should be made by journalists who say, "This is important. Do it, and do it for six minutes." "This is not important, kill it." "This is a one-minute, end-of-the-half-hour thing."

There is a lot of analysis of our audience. We can tell you that the average age is 42, which sounds old, but the good news is it's been 42 for 10 years. We keep bringing in younger listeners. Usually, they start when they're about 24 when they get through with college. They begin to start listening, and continue, which is good. The main differential in our audience is education. It isn't by income, it's by education. About half the audience has some college education or one or more degrees.

It's a very diverse audience, I'm glad to say. There are some focus groups, but I don't let that get into the news. My impression from television [is that] they use focus groups to say what should go on the air, and they say, "Stop doing Bosnia."

I heard this from our stations: "Gosh, you're running so much Bosnia." I ignored it. We had some great reporters there, and it was an important story, but expensive to cover. I got stations to chip in about $300,000 so we could cover Bosnia that whole year. We built a bureau in the country and we said, "We're going to do the best damn job we can," and we did it. It wasn't based on our stations wanting it. I don't think it was really based on our audience wanting it.

That's our system of give them what we think they need, maybe not what they want. It turned out to be a pretty good year, and I'm really proud of what we did. And our audience continued to grow. ■

What a Difference a Half-Century Makes

Major league baseball has been celebrating Jackie Robinson's breaking the color barrier 50 years ago by joining the Brooklyn Dodgers. Broadcasting stations and newspapers have joined in the celebration, paying homage to Robinson as one of the century's greatest athletes. It was not that way in 1947, as Roger Kahn, who covered Robinson for The New York Herald Tribune and wrote a number of books on baseball, recounts in an interview on Christopher Lydon's public radio talk show, "The Connection," on April 8, 1997. Here are excerpts from that interview:

LYDON—Roger Kahn was among the first sports writers to write about racism in baseball. In Roger's immortal book, "The Boys of Summer," he writes: "For a long time [Robinson] shocked people seeing him for the first time, simply by the fact of his color, uncompromising ebony. All the baseball heroes had been white men, Ty Cobb and Christy Mathewson and John McGraw and Honus Wagner and Babe Ruth and Dizzy Dean were white." Roger writes about it again eloquently in his new book "Memories of Summer: When Baseball Was an Art and Writing About It a Game."

KAHN—Then and now, Jackie was resolute. There was a belligerently neutral press. I'm being sort of charitable. None of the major papers would do much with him. The Tribune understandably. Stanley Woodward, the fine sports editor, did expose a shocking story, that the St. Louis Cardinals were trying to organize a strike against Robinson, and that piece of fine journalism stopped the strike. Woodward was then fired, and from that period on, for pretty much a decade, nobody wanted to touch race. The most important thing that was happening in baseball was that a few gallant blacks were enduring the most disgraceful conditions, the most dehumanizing conditions, and succeeding. And nobody wanted to cover that. The Times didn't. The Tribune, where I worked, didn't. Sports Illustrated—my goodness, Sports Illustrated was an elitist magazine.

LYDON—I was surprised by a lot of things in your new book. For one thing, to be reminded that Jackie Robinson didn't stay in the same hotels with the rest of the Brooklyn Dodgers. In Chicago, of all places. This is the 1950's.

KAHN—When they finally broke the barrier down in St. Louis they said you can stay in the hotel, but you may not eat in the dining room. And heaven forfend that you go in the pool. Because as we all know, if Jackie Robinson had gone in the pool, his skin would have run, and the pool water would have turned dark. This was the kind of indignity that he had to put up with.

LYDON—It was surprising to me to read that the greatest sports writers at the time, Red Smith notably, couldn't see the perspective here. They thought he was a hothead. They thought he was a loudmouth, a publicity-seeker. This was stuntsmanship.

KAHN—That was an extraordinary thing. The press did not rally. The first extraordinary thing was that the press boxes were segregated. Sam Lacey was a reporter for The Baltimore Afro-American. When he covered the Dodgers, he wasn't allowed in the press boxes. So the fields were integrated before the press boxes were integrated. There were no black sports writers [in the press boxes] until finally Wendell Smith began in Chicago. Women sports writers, well, you might as well sink the Constitution of the United States. If you have women in the press box, the country will collapse.

Before "Memories of Summer," I was going out to do something for a magazine. I had a woman assistant assigned to me. We went to Chicago. Bill Veck [owned] the White Sox then. It was a good Yankee-White Sox series. Melissa Ludtke was to cover one dugout, and I was going to cover the other. She was an excellent reporter. So at the end of the game we went upstairs, and there was something in Comisky Park called the Boards Room. The Boards Room is where the writers can drink free booze, courtesy of Bill Veck. So I ordered a chablis—it was something like a chablis, anyway—and I ordered one for Melissa, and the bartender came out and said to me very quietly, "Mr. Kahn, your secretary will have to drink in the hall. She's not allowed in here." I said, "She's not my secretary. She's a reporter." And he said, "I don't make the rules." So I said, "if she drinks in the hall, I will drink in the hall," and so I drank in this kind of greenish beige hall. It wasn't very pleasant and we moved on.

I called Veck, and I said, "What in the world is this?" And Veck said, "I know it's outrageous, but I don't make the rules. The Chicago baseball writers make the rules." So I said, "Bill, if you keep that rule, that rule is going to make its way into a national magazine." The next day Melissa Ludtke was allowed to drink with the other working people. That was how it was. Every inch a struggle. That was 1976. ■

'Distinctly Not PR'

By Stephen R. Conn

A recent issue of the alumni news paper of one of my alma maters, the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, described me as running a "PR business." It was only the latest in many incorrect references to what I do for a living. I am a journalist and I head a firm comprising journalists helping other journalists to get the full and accurate story. I call what my company does press and media relations. It is distinctly not PR.

One very good reason that I do not do public relations is that I would be a miserable failure at it. And with four tuitions, two mortgages, one wife and one dog, I can hardly afford to fail.

Like many editors and reporters, I have distrusted PR since my first day as a young reporter on The New York Times, more than 31 years ago. The New York region was in the midst of a severe drought and I was assigned to write the weather story. We had a major downpour and the PR man for the Weather Bureau told me the drought was over. It wasn't.

I understood firsthand why historically there had always been a wall of distrust between journalists and PR practitioners. Journalists distrust PR people because they feel that public relations professionals are generally trying to cover up or put spins on the things they don't cover up. On the other side, PR people fear that a good journalist will pierce the facade and eventually get to the truth.

In March, the "Jack O'Dwyer Newsletter," the Bible for PR professionals, told of getting many responses to its request to define PR in 10 words or less. One editor responded, "PR people get in our way." And the newsletter cited a new "extreme" school of PR, which maintains that the press "is an intruder on other people's property and should be 'shot' on sight."

Years ago I vowed that no matter how bad things got, I would never go to the other side of the wall separating journalists and PR practitioners. And I haven't, despite how some view what my company and I do. Regrettably, my alma mater has not been alone in incorrectly viewing what we do as PR. Here are some ways in which I and my company differ from PR and resemble journalists.

The day after my marriage in 1985 I formed a company with a PR man. Our announcement identified him as such and me as a journalist and said that our company would show that PR and journalism could work together successfully for common objectives. Our partnership didn't even last a year. One reason for our early demise was my insistence, as a journalist, in telling the whole truth and nothing but the truth. So help me God.

One client was a consortium of influential Mexican businessmen who were upset with their country's negative image in the American media. We were retained to find positive stories for print and broadcast. We produced a video news release on the then superstar pitcher for the Los Angeles Dodgers, Fernando Valenzuela. It showed the wealthy Valenzuela returning to his impoverished roots and working with poor youngsters in the hometown of his youth rather than to a villa in Acapulco.

The client rejected the video on the grounds that it portrayed Mexico in an unfavorable light. "We don't want Mexico to be seen as having poverty and dirty children," the client objected. I disagreed, arguing that news directors would love this heartwarming and honest piece of video. As a journalist, I had no choice but to resign the account even though it represented 80 percent of my income at the time. My PR partner, willing to edit the video to the desires of the client, remained, picking up my share of the account while also acknowledging that the video's use by television stations would have nearly quadrupled with the original footage.

Stephen R. Conn heads the New York-based Conn Communications. He was a reporter for The New York Times before serving as a press aide in Robert Kennedy's campaign for the Democratic Presidential nomination in 1968. Subsequently he was a correspondent and associate producer in public television, longtime Contributing Editor to Town & Country magazine, creator and host of the award-winning interview show, "The Pros and Conn," on New York's WOR Radio and freelance writer whose work has appeared in such newspapers as The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Boston Globe and The Chicago Tribune. He and his company have been press and media counselors to countries, corporations and non-profit organizations.

Whenever we are approached by prospective clients we tell them up front that we are journalists and not PR professionals. Once that is understood, we explain that we must agree with the philosophy, concept or product they are selling. Then we tell them that no individual or institution or product or country is perfect. My PR friends say everyone is entitled to representation. To which I reply, "That's one reason I never became a lawyer." Or a PR man.

If we like what the prospective clients are doing and if they have more positives than negatives, then we want to work with them. If they have more negatives than positives, then they need a good PR firm. I have sent many potential clients to such companies as Burson-Marsteller and Hill & Knowlton.

When I was reviewing restaurants for Town & Country magazine at another point in my journalism/press and media relations career I insisted that unlike the publication's previous reviewers, I dine incognito and not insist on free meals from the restaurant. Thus I would preserve my journalistic integrity and be able to tell it like it really was in the haute cuisine and snobby restaurants that catered to the Town & Country readership. In the course of my more than four years as the publication's critic, virtually all the restaurant advertising vanished.

The column was eliminated and I was asked to write cover stories on the nation's cities. I initially turned down the assignment when the editor told me, "You can't write these the way you did your restaurant column. You can only say positive things about the city. We have too much advertising involved." I told the editor, "I'm not a PR man. I'm a journalist."

Eventually the editor saw it my way and under his successor I went from city stories to stories on entire sections of the country and finally entire countries. A few months after the Soweto uprising of June 1976 I was sent to South Africa to write travel articles. Appalled at what apartheid was doing to the country, I refused to write any travel pieces unless the editor assigned me to write about apartheid.

"Tony told me you'd make a lousy PR man," the new editor quoted his predecessor. My cover story on apartheid ran 24,000 words and was nominated for the National Magazine Award. My one travel article, on the country's deluxe Blue Train, ran 3,500 words. In it I explained that one reason I made the 24-hour journey from Johannesburg to Cape Town was to get away for at least a day from the South African government, which had been anything but helpful in my story on apartheid. Hardly the act of a PR professional working in a host country.

More recently, in 1990, my press and media relations—not PR—company had as a client another country with an image problem. No PR firm had lasted more than two years with the Ministry of Tourism of Israel as a client since the founding of the state in 1948. Only one lasted that long. Our job was to convince tourists that there was more to Israel than desert, a couple of large cities and religious shrines, and that above all travel in Israel was safe.

In one of our first press releases, which I wrote, we told of disturbances in the West Bank and their harmful effect on travel. The client exploded and held up the release. The next day it only got worse. "Your release is almost exactly like the page one story in The New York Times," the client bellowed.

"We're journalists, not PR people," I retorted. "You want fiction, get a PR firm and see how much credibility you'll have with the media."

We lasted five years with the client. And despite the intifada, the Persian Gulf crisis, bombings and other acts of terrorism, Israeli tourism got more favorable press coverage than any time previously.

While we may have credibility with the media, we have few clients. And that's my choice. Much more often than not we eliminate prospective accounts before they eliminate us. While most of them are seeking image-makers and spin doctors, I tell them, "Our spin is the truth." And I jokingly tell my colleagues, "Our pocketbooks may be empty but our hearts are full."

Oh yes, the most recent issue of the Columbia Journalism School's alumni newspaper printed a correction of what I do for a living, saying that it "regrets the misrepresentation." But the publication spelled my name, "Stephan."

I don't know what they say in the PR business since I've never worked in that field. But in journalism we say, "I don't care what you say about me. As long as you spell my name right."

In this case, considering the alternative, I forgive the misspelling. ■

Radio Audience Wants More News

Our job is not to be conservative or liberal. It's to be good broadcasters. To show hospitality. To entertain, enlighten and inform....Radio has become more important, far more omnipresent. It's become more liberal in that everything can be discussed....More and more people are becoming factoid junkies. They are getting very brief reports from television. And they want a little more, and they want to be heard.—*Michael Jackson of KABC Radio, Los Angeles, named 1997 Talk Show Host of the Year by the National Association of Radio Talk Show Hosts.*

How Good Is Internet News?

By Tom Regan

So what can you believe—if you read it on line? Until recently, only Internet purists spent time pondering the above question. On-line media were still in an immature state, and the relative number of people using the Internet as a news source was small. Spending time separating the wheat from the chaff in on-line news wasn't something many people worried about. This is not the case anymore.

Recent stories involving so-called "Internet sources" and the increasing number of people logging on to the Net has led many journalists and citizens to question the quality of on-line news. The incident cited most often in the "What is legitimate news on the Net?" debate is Pierre Salinger's debacle with TWA Flight 800. Salinger held a press conference in Paris and announced to journalists he could prove that Flight 800 had been shot down by a missile. His proof turned out to be information that he had gathered from questionable on-line sources.

Anyone who has spent even a modest amount of time on line could have told Salinger that 75 percent of what passes itself off as "news" on the Net is either malicious gossip, deliberate propaganda, innocent musings or outright fantasies. So how do you get to the good stuff on line—news reporting that you can trust and depend on?

Two ways—the fast way and the slow way.

The fast way means trusting brand names. As more people with all sorts of interesting ideas discover that they too can become publishers on the Internet, people interested in legitimate sources of on-line news will rely more and more on brand names. A snappy looking Web site is hardly the reason that on-line versions of media outlets like The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, or CNN continue to lead the on-line "hit" parade. Mention any one of these names to someone surfing on line, and they'll probably tell you that the news you'll find on these Web sites can be trusted, because they've learned to trust the news these organizations produce at their more tradition outlets.

As a media outlet, use your brand name to establish a position for yourself on the Net and the World Wide Web in particular. Make no mistake about it, as the number of news choices on the Internet grows, people will continue to fall back on trusted sources.

So what about the slow way?

The often-ignored truth is that many legitimate people, groups and organizations denied a voice in the mass media have found that voice on the Internet. And to be quite blunt, some of these "new" media outlets do a better job of reporting on issues in their communities than the traditional brand-name media. (This is particularly true of on-line publications that cover gay communities, Native American concerns, issues from a left-of-center perspective, even religious beliefs and values.) And the only way to learn which ones are the good ones is to spend some time on line surfing, seeing what's there. You learn pretty quickly which sources you can trust and which ones you should ignore.

If more media organizations gave their reporters Internet access and cured themselves of the line of thinking that says time spent surfing on line is time wasted, then reporters would not only develop better sources of on-line information, they would help themselves, and their audience, to better discriminate between the good, the bad and the wacko on line.

Finally, a couple of illustrations to make a point about "legitimate" news from other media,and why we shouldn't be too quick to beat up on on-line news.

Recently Canadian papers were waxing eloquently about the value of the gold deposits found by a Canadian mining company, Bre-X, in the Indonesian jungles. Whole pages of copy in "legitimate" media sang the praises of this venture, while telling the public just how valuable this operation might become.

These days, those same news organizations are spending a lot of time telling the public the whole thing was a fraud and the so-called "discovery of the century" non-existent. Yet there has been very little wailing and gnashing of teeth about whether or not you could believe these "legitimate" sources of news any more, just because they had been reporting fantasies as real news for several months.

The second illustration is the infamous Time magazine story about porn on the Net. The magazine quoted a so-called Internet expert who said something like 90 percent of everything on the Internet was porn-related. (It actually is about 1 or 2 percent.) If it hadn't been for the efforts of a lot of people who know something about the on-line world posting good data to news groups and discussion forums, and bombarding Time with angry E-mail, the truth might never have come out and a deeply flawed story might never have been exposed. But did journalists write story after story of how it was no longer possible to trust news magazines, because one had printed a story so completely wrong?

In the end, the value of on-line news boils down to the same values that make news trustworthy regardless of how it is delivered to the customer. Good reporting always shows, whether it's on the Internet, the tube, the radio or in a paper. And the same is true for bad reporting. ■

Tom Regan is the Managing Editor of The Christian Science Monitor's On-line Edition. His homepage is at http://www.1.usa.com/regan/Home/tom.html

How Tony Blair Outfoxed the British Press

BY DAVID NYHAN

It was over well before the shouting. Why was Britain's May 1 general election a foregone conclusion? Because the Labor Party plotted for years to prevent the news media from hijacking the agenda and demonizing the opposition party that languished 18 years in the wilderness.

So thorough were the victors' preparations, and so widespread the collapse of the Tories, that the always-suspect national newspapers could never seize control of the campaign, and the TV journalists fell into line. Tony Blair allowed himself only an occasional rant; late in the game he denounced broadcast soundbite journalism as "a conspiracy against understanding" so brainless that "I can barely bear to watch it myself, so heaven knows what most people out there are making of it."

The freeewheeling British journalists were generally outflanked and contained throughout. Blair's spinners, pollsters and field operatives executed the game plan as if it were the Normandy invasion. The commander-in-chief fretted no more about hostile or frivolous news coverage than did Eisenhower about the weather in June of '44: it could be better, but we're going regardless.

Labor changed its colors (pink to purple), its face (Tony's toothy grin was as ubiquitous as a North Korean tyrant's), its clothes, its DNA and its losing habits. With its union-label shrinkwrapped, its ideology sanitized and its nuttier fringe players ostracized, as the ranks swelled with middle-class enlistees—defectors from Major's devalued Torydom—Blair's legions neutralized the media, and never lost control of the agenda.

There was no Fleet Street cavalry charge in the nick of time to save the Prime Minister's bacon. Revived by Rupert Murdoch and some of his fellow press barons just in time to snatch the 1992 election from Neil Kinnock, Major's demoralized Tories were no match this time for the steel-toed and concrete-jawed bully boys and bully gals of Tony Blair's American-style machine.

We don't know just what was offered and what was implied when Blair sat down with Murdoch a year earlier in a quiet little hideaway in the Southern Hemisphere. But it was good enough to win Murdoch's backing in his two mega-circulation tabloids, The Sun and The News of the World. So even though his Times endorsement remained with the lame and spavined Conservative campaign, Murdoch's boobs-and-butts-drenched tabs carried Blair's water.

Reassuring the proletariat that Tony and his friends were not the '90's version of Joe Stalin and his Comintern Ragtime Band, the Murdoch henchpersons helped level the playing field. This time it was the Tory ministers and backbenchers getting the treatment. On TV, there was the BBC's overly-fastidious second-counting, under which the three main parties got their politically correct totals of seconds of prime-time coverage. And there was the rival channels' less-formularized and more exuberant coverage. But in print as on the air, Blair's propaganda machine smothered the Tory high command. It was no contest.

Routs are easier to foresee than the outcome of fairer fights. This was never going to be a pitched battle, like 1992's, when the polls predicted a dead heat, but Major snuck back into No. 10 thanks to a media onslaught against an underdefended Neil Kinnock. Kinnock's brave but futile assault on the Tory beachhead in '92 was the political equivalent of the Allies' bungled raid against the German defenses at Dieppe. It was that disaster that paved the way for Normandy's massive invasion. This time, Blair's forces had the artillery, the air cover, the ships, the submarines, and overwhelming numbers. No way was John Major going to pull this out. And his party broke and ran even before the votes were counted.

On Europe, on the single currency threat, on BSE (mad cow disease), on ministerial misconduct, cash-for-questions (MP's taking bribes for phrasing questions in Parliament in such a way as to promote the donor's interests), Major was repeatedly abandoned not only by his own troops, but by his officer corps.

David Nyhan and England go way back: his first trip there, in 1963, to play rugby, was a bust; he landed out of season. A Boston Globe columnist and Associate Editor, Nyhan has made about 30 visits to Britain or Ireland, covering "the Pope, Bobby Sands, and four general elections." He spent a 1996 semester at Oxford as a Reuter Foundation Fellow. "On my first stint in England, six months in the '60's, I got by with a phony work permit that enabled me to drive a lorry, dig ditches for British Rail and park cars at the Grosvenor Hotel. They still have my tax money. The way I figure it, I should be eligible to vote."

It was a debacle-in-the-making long before the PM even called for the election. He'd waited as long as he could, hoping the feel-good factor would kick in. There is plenty of feel-good in the booming British economy, Europe's friskiest; but the factor never materialized. Major was trying to get his lumbering Blenheim bomber off the ground, but the gas tanks held nothing but fumes, the tires were flat, and he was trying to fly on one wing and no prayer of a shot at victory.

Only his personal popularity, probity and essential decency prevented a worse outcome. When the votes were counted, Labor had a 179-seat majority, the Tories were shut out in Scotland and Wales, and it was the worst drubbing of the party in power since Churchill's regime got hammered after World War II.

Typically in British elections, the media play a larger role in the outcome than in the United States. Britain boasts (endures?) 10 so-called national newspapers, labeled such because they can be distributed basically from London to the rest of the realm via the intricate rail network that stitches the provinces together. The BBC's broadcast monopoly is no more, and rival radio and television outlets fragmented the listening audience while offering contrasting styles, portions and fare.

Because parties and candidates are prevented from buying TV time except for rigidly-apportioned party-produced broadcasts, coverage tended to be dictated by the five tabloids and five broadsheets—though the downmarket rush initiated by Rupert Murdoch every time he moves into a market suggests to some they start calling the latter "broadloids."

Britain's top-selling "quality" is The Daily Telegraph, a staunchly conservative broadsheet owned by Conrad Black, a Canadian who is even more rabid on the topic of the European Union than Rupert Murdoch, who is pretty rabid. Someday a scholar will explain just how two foreign publishers grabbed so much clout in interfering in the affairs of Britain when it came to dealing with the neighbors on the Continent.

The Telegraph audience is unthinkingly Tory in politics, monarchist in taste, mistrustful of socialism in principle. Its editorials treated Blair with the same mixture of contempt and ordure with which The Wall Street Journal regularly bathes Bill Clinton. See if any of this sample, six days out from election, rings a bell:

"Mr. Blair may win on May 1, but not because of anything he has done in this campaign. He has looked alternately flustered and slippery. His reversals of position and disingenuous explanations have made him appear weak."

In Britain, editorials are called "leaders," but the Telegraph's may have to be called something else, because its exhortations led nobody, unless it was all a plot to demoralize the Tory legions out in the countryside, and subtly persuade them to stay home, which they did. Off the results, the paper's ferocious denunciations had no impact on the electorate. Harping on Blair's "proven shiftiness" went nowhere, just as The Journal eventually gave up using "Slick Willie" for you-know-who.

"Mr. Blair simply recognised that Old Labour was unelectable and so he has, with ruthless single-mindedness and breath-taking cynicism, created a totally artificial, media-friendly construct called New Labour...," groaned The Telegraph.

"...if his purpose was ever to raise the quality of British politics he has failed. His most recent broadsides against the Conservatives have been fundamentally dishonest." In case you failed to take his point, the editorialist concluded triumphantly that Blair is naught but "the man of doublethink."

One can only speculate how The Telegraph's bosses, nipping at their grog and pecking at the forage-tray, endured the election-night broadcasts tolling the extent of the Tory losses. For the Telegraph gang, this election was Dunkirk all over again; they brought a few men home, but these left their weapons on the beach, and the army won't be ready to fight anew for several years at least.

The Telegraph went over the cliff with Major. It harpooned him regularly for his even-handed approach to the looming question of Euro-fication. For Rupert Murdoch, however, the most powerful media mogul of them all in England as most everyplace else, elections are not about ideology, but about power. Being with the winner is in first place, and there is no silver medal in Rupert's Olympics. There is winning, or nothing.

Murdoch's News Corp. pockets a million quid a week from The Sun, whose maxed-out-mammaries on Page 3 are a staple in the low-end stable of British newspapering. Selling as many as four million copies a day, that's eight million boobs trolled before the downmarket demographic. While some of Labor's feminist intellectuals sniffed in disdain at The Sun's greasy embrace, Blair never complained.

Five years ago, The Sun savaged Labor's Neil Kinnock, on Murdoch's orders. "It was the Sun wot won it!" crowed the cheeky tabloid the day after the election. That boast made Murdoch queasy, it is said, because it highlighted the lowjinks of the Australian press baron's electoral interference.

When Rupe is around, look for money changing hands. He offered Newt Gingrich that huge (and hugely embarrassing) book contract; he did the same with Deng Xiaoping's daughter; don't be surprised if somebody close to Blair gets offered a meaty book deal; the pattern is by now well-established.

In any event, The Sun delivered, along with its Sunday sister, The News of the World. Let us say this of Murdoch, the man who's done more to accelerate the decline of journalism than any mogul extant: when he wants to help you, he helps you. Don't take my word for it; ask Tony B.

"...there is no doubting his conviction," crooned a full-page Sun headline one week before election. "Blair goes to work on a crowd like Michelangelo on a lump of marble," marveled The Sun's Washington correspondent, William Langley, fetched back on Rupe's orders to help push Labor's lad over the goal line.

Blair was pictured sitting in a pub wearing a rugby shirt, downing a manly pint with the lads. The electioneering skills of the Labor advancemen were

given due credit: "The attention to detail is dazzling. Before he made a speech to old age pensioners in North London this week his aides even remembered to crank up the volume of the loud speakers." Crank up the other ear, Gladys: I bet you could have heard him in South London.

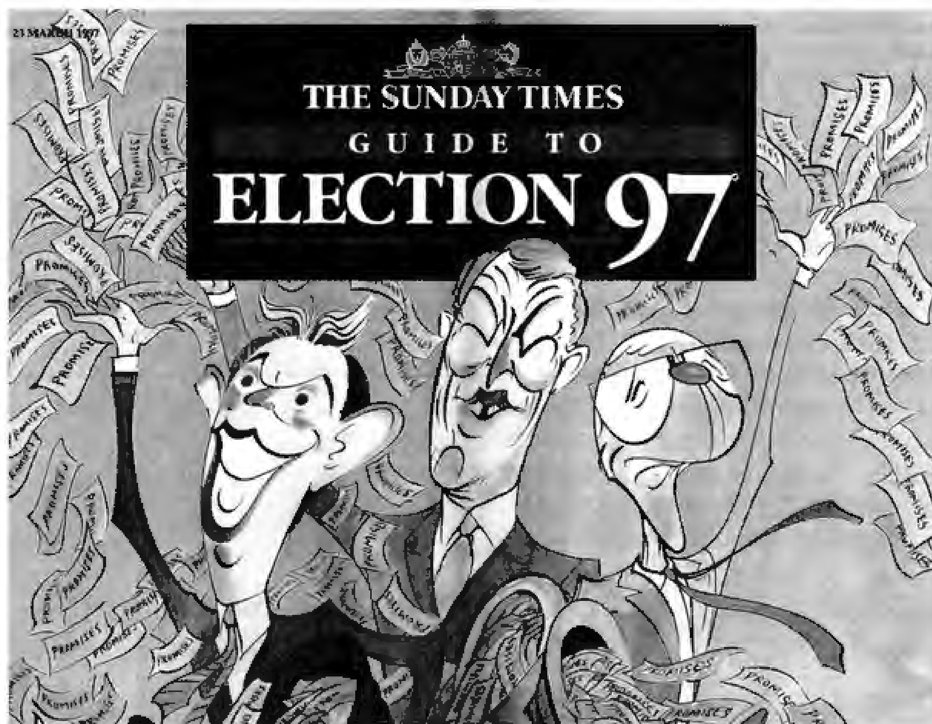
"If the snobs and claret-quaffers of the forgotten left are against Blair the rest of us should have no worries about backing him," assured The Sun's Washington expert. "Blair's acknowledgment that Thatcher was right on the unions, right on privatization and right to be wary of Europe is surely more of an act of pragmatism than treachery," he argued.

There then ensued a rather touching lament for the old days, presumably the days before Britain's biggest-selling paper drenched its Page 3 in unclad lovelies: "In speech after speech Blair argues convincingly that economic advance has been undermined by social regression. Britain is increasingly violent, self-interested and lacking in morals. Looking at our shiny new cars we see our ugly faces reflected."

I'm not sure about that. But I can tell you Mr. Langley's lament came exactly 22 pages after the reflection in all their glory of the Murdoch maiden's mammaries, a daily display that leaves feminists irate and Rupert's cash register ringing. But the important thing, Langley's three-page opus concluded, was "...Blair's victory will be everybody's." Snobs and claret-quaffers, get stuffed!

Any politician worthy of the name would rather have a big paper with him than against him. A neatly crafted barrel of gunk labeled artfully upon the competition, a timely editorial or column or puffball feature, a steady drumbeat that penetrates the lair of the always-insecure TV shot-callers and nudges them into more favorable territory for your side, all these create a better atmosphere for victory.

When the campaign grunge began to depress the amateurs who vote, The Sun leaped to the fore for Labor with a make-sure-you-vote editorial. "Our whole relationship with Europe and the world is at stake—a decision which will affect generations to come," gasped The Sun. Never mind that Murdoch's position—antipathy, really—to Europe does not coincide with Blair's more level-handed approach; The Sun was just trying to goose the lipreaders.



"If Blair is to make a **REAL** difference to you and your family, he can only do so from a position of strength."

That's laying it on with a trowel; fail to vote for Blair, and you not only let down Tony, and let down Rupert; you're letting down your own bloody kin unto the third generation. Whew! Hey, Alf: maybe I better vote twice!

Another nifty Murdochian wrinkle was the fulsome-tribute to Tony by a formerly stanch capitalist friend of the average bloke. A whole page was devoted to a panegyric in homage to Blair by Alan Sugar, a soccer mogul who owns the Spurs pro team. Once promoted as Margaret Thatcher's favorite businessman, Sugar assured the British equivalent of Joe Sixpack that Blair would neither raise income taxes nor cave in to the unions. I don't think there are any wavering capitalists who take their cue from The Sun, but Sugar's sweet words seemed aimed at reassuring Sun readers who'd been brainwashed by a decade of Murdoch's Labor-bashing.

It was a friend, Jenny Lewis, an Oxford poet, who pointed this out to me: the way the tabloids are written is frightfully like advertising copy. That is: short, simple, punchy, memorable, salacious if need be, always intended to grab your attention and move you in some direction, and if low taste or low-browness would be helpful, no problem.

The Daily Mail, which casts itself as the paper of Middle England, would have liked a stronger, harder-edged Tory than Major to boost, and it showed. The Conservative collapse made for tough hoeing in Tab-land.

If Blair had a fairy godmother in the daily press corps, she would hang her magic wand at The Guardian, as she would stash her weekend garb at the offices of The New Statesman. But the left of center broadsheet favored by teachers, academics, artists and all-round lefties wore a frown for much of last year, fretting openly about whether Labor's Lochinvar had swerved too blatantly to the middle ground to capture moderates disenchanted with Major.

It is not easy, being the paper that has to play John the Baptist to Tony's Redeemer role. Guardian columnist Hugo Young took predictable delight in The Telegraph's discomfiture, but unsheathed his Bowie for The Sun:

BBC's Graphic Report on the Election

Everything starts with the weather in Britain; where you go, what you wear, how long or how pleasant the journey. Weather is as important to daily life now as it was to William the Conqueror's invaders in 1066 and Dwight Eisenhower's LSTs in 1944.

Election Day May 1 was one of those "Oh, to be in England, now that April's there…" days, so sparkly, nifty and glorious that by midday the winner of the election, Tony Blair, was testing the mattresses at No. 10 Downing Street.

Nobody really believes the weather forecasts you get off the telly in Blighty. For starters, the BBC insists on running the same drab map of the British Isles, with a "presenter" chosen apparently as much for eccentricity as for any obviously telegenic qualities. Silly little squidgy drawings of a sun, a cloud, a rain pattern, and so on, are flung upon the map in random fashion, forcing every shepherd and traveling salesmen to squint mightily and guestimate rapidly under which silly symbol his planned route tomorrow falls. For wind, there is a hilarious assemblage of little arrows, often pointing in different directions, giving England's topography the look of a closeup of the bottom of a bowl of used rice.

Back on this side for election night (CNN was good, but C-SPAN's usurpation of the BBC all-night signal was stupendous!) I bathed in David Dimbleby's crisp, slightly disapproving air as the Labor landslide rolled across the landscape. Peter Snow, the BBC's "swingometer man" interpreting the results of the 659 separate parliamentary seat elections as they were proclaimed in real time, had spent months practicing on his new high-tech set, and the results were hilariously entertaining.

Dour Mr. Dimbleby, a sort of Walter Cronkite figure, would throw it to Peter, who'd zero in on a particular section of the map, where a blue column would represent the previous election's (in 1992) victory for a Conservative Party candidate. By some electronic magic roughly equitable to Blair's mastery of the political game afoot, the Tory column would be obliterated by some unseen electronic force, with a suitable high-techie video game sound, and an even taller red column would take its place, symbolizing a Labor candidate's victory.

It didn't take long to see the red overtaking the blue all over the map, and with swiftly flashed charts and grafs expressing the depth and extent of Tory humiliation, the viewer was served with the sort of graphics display that Eisenhower on D-Day would have killed for. It was all the more pleasing because the strengths of British television—incisive commentary, close questioning, sophisticated vocabulary and presumption of considerable historical knowledge by the viewer—have never previously included splashy, entertaining graphics and up-to-the-minute visuals.

The BBC invested $4 million in its 10 p.m.-to-4 p.m.-the-next-day broadcast, assigning 80 camera teams into the field. It was the single biggest broadcast effort ever mounted by the signature network, and a long way from the days when "Beeb" used an arrow on a block of wood to symbolize the swing vote in parliamentary races, and pollster David Butler figured trends on his slide rule, live.

Some things about the British political system make it more entertaining on election night than our own. A half-dozen parties win seats, not just Labor and the Conservatives. There are the Liberal Democrats, the Welsh and Scottish nationalists and the various warring Ulster factions. Plus, sitting ministers fell like nine-pins. In the United States, cabinet ministers are never on the ballot, where the voters can get a crack at them.

Of the dozens of results I watched, the best TV occurred when one of Major's defeated scandal-touched ministers, David Mellor, used a concession speech to denounce Sir James Goldsmith. "Jimm-eh," as he's nicknamed, was sort of the Ross Perot of the election, a cranky, fabulously rich anti-Europe candidate for Mellor's seat, who bankrolled a party that went gloriously and comfortably nowhere in the rubble of the landslide. As Mellor tried to take cold comfort in Goldsmith's repudiation, Jimm-eh and his claque in the audience chanted "Out, out, out, out" at the defeated Mellor. Great TV. ■

"The Sun, by contrast, is having a terrible election. After selling its soul to the most commercial bidder, it doesn't know where it stands. The proprietor's instruction to support Tony Blair is being obeyed without a trace of tabloid élan. The attack journalism of 1992, which helped destroy Neil Kinnock, is hammering only half-hearted nails into Major's coffin. You can tell The Sun doesn't really mean it. The paper is conflicted. While backing Blair in general, it opposes two of his more conspicuous commitments—getting closer to the European Union and giving more recognition to trade unions—and snarls regularly to that effect.

"The Labor Party set great store by The Sun's support, and Blair paid regular court to Rupert Murdoch, but the gains have been negative and the costs will come later. Having aligned itself with one of the most odious cultural enemies of a better, more decent, more communitarian Britain, Labor is already on notice that the friendship will not last."

Hmm. "…one of the most odious cultural enemies of a better, more decent, more communitarian Britain…" Well, nothing half-hearted about *those* nails, says I.

Murdoch hedged his bet, like any shrewd bookmaker at an Australian race track. His Times stuck with Major, unenthusiastically, and The Thunderer's defanged sallies in Blair's general direction were only playful swipes, intended to make it look to the Tory yeomanry as though The Times might have had its heart in it.

How's this for a sample of limp opinion-moulding?

"Mr. Blair will need to show iron resolve in facing down his own supporters if his ambitions are not to be thwarted. He has stated as clearly as possible his determination to do that."

With that brand of powder-puffery from an April 21 editorial, everyone understood The Times was just going through the motion.

Major's last months in office were like the deathwatch accorded Chairman Mao; all but the most thick-headed understood he wasn't ever coming back into the office to kick butt, and the underlings were already busy knifing each other whenever the opportunity presented.

The Independent, which has had to lay off some of the help, seemed to me a less-confident alternative to the other quality papers, possibly because of what American economists have enshrined as the anxiety over job insecurity. The Financial Times provided measured and occasionally deep analysis, but seemed determined not to alienate the noisy anti-Europe faction which grew larger in influence as the Conservative Party lost millions of moderates to Blairism. Europe's embrace—how to cover it, interpret it, cozy up to it or flee from it—is the nettlesome issue for British papers, as much as politicians.

There were a host of lesser journalistic sideshows. One BBC TV personality shed his sideline role and ran for Parliament as an anti-sleaze candidate for Labor, defeating a scandal-weakened Tory. Another BBC man. who is gay, ran and won for Labor. And The Spectator had to sack a hired writer of some local renown who got fingered for dosing himself with heroin in the toilet of Major's campaign plane. Talk about a journalist trying to scratch the surface.

British journalists clog our own press buses (battle buses, in the local lingo) for our two-year national election cycles, waxing merry over our foibles, making much sport of the rubes in Little Rock, Laconia and Sioux City. But our opposite numbers in England cannot stand the gaff of a long campaign. They are eerily over-solicitous of the major parties morning press briefings, faithfully recording the theme-of-the-day, and striving daily to catch the spinners wrong-footed, as they say in cricket.

Their election cycle? Six whole weeks? Omigod! How will we ever survive?

Boring the Public On Political Campaigns

We in this business have dumbed down campaigning to the point and it's no wonder that our readers or our viewers are bored to tears by what we write. Because we've made it boring. We have reduced everything to PAC donations and TV advertising when in fact campaign and campaign political process is really interesting if you look at it. We've ignored all that and just decided that it's PAC's and TV and we just keep saying that over and over and over again. So our editors and producers are bored by us and our readers are bored by us. There were very few papers up until very recently or networks that were intensely interested in campaign financing because we made it stupid.—Dwight L. Morris, President, Campaign Study Group, at Nieman Foundation seminar March 14, 1997.

The campaign coverage began to pall about three weeks in, and the scaremongers began searching out the merest whiffs of apathy, cynicism, and turn-off. Learned essays broke into print, by learned essayists as well as bored hacks, declaiming upon the corruption of the body politic's apparently easily corrupted political will.

Even the scandals got tiresome. Another Tory MP caught out bedding a 17-year old nightclub floozie? Another Conservative insider caught taking money from some flush influence-purchaser? The Times unmasked a Hong Kong billionaire's attempt to enlist a former cabinet minister's aid in quashing drug charges against his fugitive father. Dubbed "Golden Boy" because he "gave $1.6 million to the Tories," this particular episode makes the John Huang affair pikerish in comparison.

America is blamed for spawning most of the bad habits of democracy, even though the parties are limited to sporadic TV productions (party political broadcasts, so-labeled in the TV listings). Billboards are big in Britain, and an 11th hour Tory billboard portraying Blair as a midget sitting astride Helmut Kohl's larger-than-life lap was intended to portray the frontrunner as a willing stooge for the nefarious Hun. But everyone laughed it off, and when senior Tory figures denounced the gambit as stupid and unworthy, even that backfired in the face of poor, bedraggled Major.

The PM finished the campaign with his dignity and personal reputation intact; he went to watch the cricket while Blair moved his possessions into No. 10 Downing St. That bit was instructive to this American's weary eyes: we don't need the lengthy interregnums, and the interminable transition efforts, that accompany our own changes of regime.

There was certainly less newspaper manipulation of the outcome this time than in previous Tory victories going back 18 years. With 10 competition-rabid national newspapers dependent on street sales, there was plenty of news, scandal, and no shortage of pre-election shucking and jiving. Combined with an expanded and continually expanding TV scene, the voters got all the information and opinion they could handle, and more so.

Murdoch didn't swing it, as his brassy, and decidedly unclassy, Sun bragged last time. If any *one* swung it, Blair did; the Labor chief outfoxed the journalists at their own game, stayed on message despite whatever banana peel flap was flung in his path, and exercised impressive control over his shadow government and party apparatchiks. He won because he was the better candidate, with the better campaign; the other party perished of old age, really.

I'd have to conclude that Blair's impressive, stunning 179 seat margin (out of 559 seats at stake) was rung up by Labor not because of the journalism involved, but in spite of it. When you're riding a wave this big, nothing that's said from the press box is going to affect it much one way or the other. This was big. ■

Albania—Where Democracy Building Went Bust

By Sylvia Poggioli

My first encounter with Albanians was on the pier of the Italian port of Brindisi in March 1991. The Communist regime in Tirana was collapsing and tens of thousands were fleeing across the 50 miles of Adriatic Sea to what they believed was Eldorado. To my surprise, there was no need for an interpreter—the Albanian refugees nearly all spoke Italian, which they had learned from intense exposure to Italian television broadcasts. Before I could ask my first question, a young Albanian man said to me, "you're not dressed like Alexis Carrington," indicating disappointment that my clothes didn't meet the standards of the Joan Collins character in the glitzy soap opera "Dynasty."

Six years later, in mid-March of this year, as anarchy was sweeping through the tiny Balkan state, I was in the Albanian port of Durres and I encountered the same enchantment with the TV images broadcast from across the sea. A young man looked at me as if I were spinning tales when I tried to explain to a large group of men, who had spent three nights on the beach in the hopes of boarding a ship to Italy, that contrary to their belief there was high unemployment on the other shore. He said, "I know how good things are over there because I saw that Italian cats eat off silver plates." It took several minutes before I realized he was referring to a pretentious commercial for a pricey brand of cat food.

I began to understand even more clearly the impact Italian TV has had on the hearts and minds of Albanians when another man on the beach dismissed the possibility that Italians might not welcome the sudden influx of thousands more refugees. He said, "Of course they want us to come there, they're already preparing trailers for us. I saw them on the nightly news." I found it difficult to explain that Italian authorities were preparing trailers as an emergency measure (to deal with what became an influx of 14,000 refugees over a period of 10 days) because, for some of the men on the beach, those beaten-up old trailers were far more comfortable than their Albanian homes.

The first-time visitor to Europe's poorest country is struck by two objects that can be seen everywhere: the mushroom-shaped cement bunkers built during the Stalinist regime of Enver Hoxa as a defense against an unspecified foreign enemy and the TV satellite dishes perched on nearly every windowsill and balcony. These two objects symbolize Albania's passage from a half-century of paranoid isolation to a frenzied desire to catch up with the outside world—a passage whose abruptness perhaps helps explain a widespread tendency of Albanians to confuse virtual reality with the real thing.

When anarchy enveloped Albania and the exodus to Italy began, Italian reporters were among the first on the ground and they were immediately confronted with a double responsibility: they discovered they were reporting not only for their domestic audience but also for Albanians, who carefully monitor every TV and radio news broadcast. But the Italian and Albanian audiences often interpret the reports very differently. And the regime of President Sali Berisha went so far as to accuse the Italian media of having fomented the Albanian crisis.

Indeed, the man who first and best understood how to take advantage of the desires induced by the Western TV dream machine was Sali Berisha himself, a cardiologist and former Communist Party official from northern Albania. Elected to the presidency in 1992, Berisha quickly introduced a market economy, privatizing industries and agriculture and sharply curbing state subsidies. Inflation plummeted and the Albanian currency, the lek, was stabi-

Photo: Piero Benetazzo

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lized. But five years later, it is clear that Berisha built a mirage economy based on another dream machine—the get-rich-quick pyramid schemes which soon became the Albanian obsession. At least one person from nearly every Albanian family poured money into the schemes, with many families selling their homes and livestock. It is estimated that over the last several years, $2 billion were invested in about a dozen investment funds that gave interest rates of up to 50 percent monthly.

Pyramid—or Ponzi—schemes cropped up throughout Eastern Europe after the fall of Communism but, depending on a continual supply of new investors, their life span rarely exceeded a year. How could the Albanian schemes last so long and be so fruitful? Numerous analysts point out that the Albanian schemes were anything but a mirage—these funds were much more financially solid than the typical Ponzi scheme: there is mounting evidence that government officials were involved in some of the funds that were used to launder profits from arms smuggling, drug trafficking, smuggling immigrants to Europe, sanctions-busting and other illegal activities. But President Berisha himself appeared on state-run television to declare that "Albanian money is the cleanest in the world."

Some Western commentators have described Albanians' blind trust in the pyramid schemes as a sign of naiveté and ignorance about free market capitalism. But this analysis fails to take into account that the investments schemes were widely promoted on state television—perceived by Albanians as a sign of government approval. And in local elections last fall, Berisha's Democratic Party candidates flaunted their links to the pyramid schemes under the slogan, "With us, everybody wins."

When the schemes began unraveling in January, after competition between the funds pushed interest rates up to 100 percent, Albania was revealed to be a country with no economy. Production is virtually non-existent, agriculture has been abandoned and nearly all goods are imported. Albania's three major revenue sources are foreign aid, remittances from Albanians working abroad and illegal activities—the latter alone estimated at $800,000 a day. As the economist Gramoz Pashko told me one year ago, "Albania has shifted from a centralized production system to a free market system without production." It is mystifying what hard data had led the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to attribute to Albania a 9 percent annual growth rate and to describe the country as the "economic miracle of Eastern Europe." Assertions such as these from reputable international organizations were repeated incessantly in the official press and on state television.

With the images coming from commercial Italian TV networks nourishing the craze for instant wealth, Berisha used his own tightly controlled state TV to present himself to the Albanian people as the only politician capable of making their dreams come true. In the meantime, according to the New York-based Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, Berisha created the first post-Communist one-party state based on fear and corruption: "President Berisha's ruling Democratic Party controlled the executive, judiciary and legislative branches of government, as well as the police, security service (Shik) and electronic media. At the same time, Albania had become a haven for illegal activities." The President violated the Constitution when he sacked high-ranking judges. He had opposition leaders jailed and ordered the harassment, beating and arrests of independent journalists.

The hardest-hit independent paper was Koha Jone. Founded in 1991 as a local weekly, Koha Jone by 1994 had become Albania's biggest daily with a circulation of 30,000. At the outset, the paper supported Berisha's new Democratic Party when it was still in opposition to the Socialists. But after the Democratic Party came to power in 1992, Koha Jone began to criticize Berisha's authoritarian tendencies and the government soon started putting pressure on the paper—journalists and its publisher were arrested and publication was banned for three weeks. But, despite continuing harassment and beatings of journalists, the paper remained a strong critic of the Berisha regime, publishing articles about arms and drug trafficking and government corruption. On March 2 of this year, when Berisha imposed a state of emergency—banning publication of independent media and briefly blocking even foreign TV broadcasts from Tirana—a group of armed men believed to be Shik agents broke into the paper's offices in the middle of the night and set fire to the building, destroying nearly everything inside.

Under the Berisha regime, Koha Jone was not alone in being singled out. All independent journalists were targets, including Albanians working for the foreign media. According to Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, "stringers with Reuters, AP and the BBC were followed and received threatening phone calls. Some of them were detained by the police or had their equipment and notebooks confiscated during demonstrations. A number of them have fled the country out of fear for their lives." When I was in Tirana in March, those journalists who had not fled abroad sought refuge and protection in a hotel where many members of the international press corps were lodged. But several weeks later, when most of the foreign reporters had left, the hotel was no longer a safe haven and the publisher of Koha Jone was beaten up by a Shik agent inside the lobby.

The collapse of the pyramid schemes triggered widespread upheaval and anarchy, particularly in southern Albania, where financial investment in the schemes had been greatest. Southern rebels took up arms, blaming Berisha for their losses and demanding his resignation, and Albania became news, appearing on the front pages and TV screens of the world. But the root causes of the Albanian crisis are much deeper than the sudden disappearance of the life savings of millions of Albanians.

The first sign of a widespread discontent with Berisha's increasingly authoritarian regime was the stunning defeat in 1994 of a referendum which would have given the President much broader powers. Discontent turned to widespread anger after the May 1996 parliamentary elections, won by Berisha's Democratic Party by means of extensive ballot stuffing, voter list manipulation and physical intimidation of

opposition candidates and voters. The result was a rubber-stamp parliament in which the Democratic Party held nearly all the seats. After initially wavering, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), reported serious irregularities and recommended that voting be repeated in some districts. Berisha reacted aggressively to international media reports on the elections, railing against what he charged was a left-wing conspiracy to destabilize Albanian democracy and accusing OSCE monitors of being sympathizers of Enver Hoxa.

While the international media reported on the election fraud, criticism from the international community was minimal, especially from Western Europe. It was a particularly embarrassing situation for Germany and Italy, whose ambassadors to Tirana had actively participated in favor of Berisha during the election campaign. Only a few days before the vote, Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro visited Tirana where he publicly urged Albanians to put their trust in the "cure of the good doctor, Berisha." The United States position, however, was much cooler toward Berisha after the May 1966 elections and the U.S. ambassador was the only Western envoy to Tirana to stay away from the opening session of parliament. Nevertheless, the West did not change its foreign aid policy to Albania. The tiny Balkan state has received the highest per capita level of international aid of any Eastern European country—a total of about $1.2 billion in the last five years, equal to about 20 percent of Albania's Gross National Product. In spite of its more critical approach, the United States went ahead last summer with week-long NATO exercises, dubbed Peaceful Eagle, the largest that has ever taken place in Albania.

Numerous analysts say the West's reluctance to abandon Berisha is part of a misguided Balkan policy which placed regional stability ahead of the construction of a democratic society. At the time the war was raging in Bosnia, Berisha convinced the West that he could control the Albanian ethnic minorities in the volatile neighboring regions of Macedonia and Kosovo. The West's Balkan policy appears to have been based on the dubious assumption that the region's complex history and politics prevent it from embracing Western democratic values as fast as other parts of Eastern Europe. But human rights activists point out that the current Albanian crisis demonstrates that there cannot be stability without democracy. According to Miranda Vickers, author of a history of Albania, Berisha has gone from a bastion of stability in the region to a dangerously unpredictable element.

The West's predicament over how to deal with Berisha is the latest setback in its tendency to focus on personalities rather than on the democratic process in the Balkans. Another recent miscalculation was basing implementation of the Dayton peace plan for Bosnia on Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic, whose power has been strongly weakened by the sudden emergence of a budding civic society in Serbia. The West could soon find that it has also miscalculated in supporting Croatia's authoritarian President Franjo Tudjman, who has shown little tolerance for an independent media and who canceled the opposition's municipal victory in Zagreb two years ago. Another surprise could be in store for the West in Bosnia, where President Alija Izetbegovic appears to be moving toward one-party rule.

A year ago, after Berisha did not hesitate to use force against opposition leaders after the May 1996 elections, Gramos Pashko wrote that "the question remains how much direct and political support the West may be willing to give to the democratic process in Albania. But perhaps it has learned the risks of appeasing authoritarian leaders elsewhere in the Balkans and will be inspired to intervene before the conflict spreads." But the West stood by on the sidelines. However, in a time of global television and other forms of instant communication, it is clear that the West can no longer treat the Balkans as Chamberlain, eager to appease Hitler in 1938, treated Czechoslovakia, which he described as a "a distant country of which we know nothing." ■

John S. Rosenberg

University Magazines Facing More Stress

The genre is constantly under stress. In the last couple of years there were changes in editorships under various forms of duress at university magazines that had good editorial reputations, like Stanford and Pennsylvania. Why? In part because the financial pressures on the university administrations are growing all the time. You don't do a fund-raising campaign and then wait 20 years—you do a campaign and then do another one right away. Princeton is doing one now after about seven years. The pressure on administrations to raise money and to satisfy people and therefore on editors to create fine stories is getting bigger all the time. The pressures on universities to be comfortable with government are also huge, since they get a lot of research money and student aid money; that increases pressure on the publications, too. So to the extent that there are publications out there that are fully independent or largely independent but dependent in some way or another for financing from universities, the pressure on them will increase, not decrease. And so the small circumscribed area of freedom...doesn't seem to be getting any larger.—*John S. Rosenberg, Editor of Harvard Magazine, at a Nieman Foundation seminar, April 18, 1997.*

What Happens When the Cameras Leave

In 1986 Ann K. Cooper opened National Public Radio's Moscow Bureau. She covered the rise of independence movements in the Soviet republics, political and economic changes under Mikhail Gorbachev, the transition to democracy and other major stories. From 1992 to mid-1995 she was NPR's correspondent in Johanneshurg, covering political changes in South Africa. Her assignments also included the Rwandan refugee crisis in 1994 and other stories in southern Africa.

Cooper was chosen to deliver the 1997 Joe Alex Morris Jr. Memorial Lecture, named for the Middle East correspondent for The Los Angeles Times and Harvard graduate who was killed in Teheran in 1979. The lectureship was established by The Times, the Morris family and friends in 1982. Cooper was the 16th recipient of the honor. Here are excerpts from her lecture, delivered March 5, 1997.

I gleaned a lot of utterly bizarre and sometimes not very useful information in my years as a foreign correspondent. In the Soviet Union I collected lots of statistics. One of the first was on house fires. I don't remember how many there were each year, but I do remember the leading cause of house fires in the Soviet Union: Soviet-made TV's which, it turns out, had cardboard parts inside them and an annoying tendency to spontaneously explode. A small statistic, but a significant clue about the technological prowess of our greatly feared nuclear enemy.

I always kept a too-good-to-check file in Moscow, packed with tidbits about legendary Soviet hoarders who stocked up for fear some good would disappear from the market. My favorite from that file was the woman in Kazakhstan who was rushed, unconscious, to the hospital one day. Investigators found 250 boxes of laundry detergent in her tiny Soviet apartment, and concluded she'd been overcome by the chemical fumes.

These are the kinds of wacky stories that foreign correspondents love, because they help illustrate how the rest of the world is different from us.

Lately it seems that the biggest difference is how dangerous the rest of the world is—how so many places seem to be sliding into anarchy.

Remember Somalia? Remember when American correspondents were still reporting on what happened there? Your first order of business when you landed in Mogadishu was to bargain for a car, a driver and two or three guys with AK-47s. That used to run $100 a day or so—$50 extra if you went out of town, because the gunmen would need to add a machine gun and rocket-propelled grenade launcher to their arsenal. I never got into a shootout in Somalia, but I always wondered why I should believe that, for $100 a day, split several ways, the bodyguards would actually stick around if we were attacked.

The perils of reporting in Somalia make great stories to swap with other

Photo: Jay Roosevelt

foreign correspondents. It's definitely a macho business, and wherever the crisis is, you'll see a lot of the same faces turning up to cover it—the parachute artists, addicted to danger, whose specialty is landing and filing right away. File fast, file often.

That's become a motto for how much of the media cover crises today, like Bosnia, or Rwanda, or Liberia. We call these post-Cold War crises and assign a certain set of characteristics to them. The conflict is often ethnic in nature. It's internal—it's no longer a proxy fight between the superpowers, though it's often fueled by weapons left behind from Cold War days.

There is another common characteristic of these conflicts—the refugees they produce, and how we cover them.

This is a hot topic right now in academia. Researchers talk about something called the crisis triangle. In one corner of this triangle you have the aid agencies that move into a crisis region to help the refugees and displaced persons. Another corner—the foreign governments, who decide whether or not to intervene in the crisis. Finally, there's the media, whose coverage, or noncoverage, is believed to have a crucial impact on the other parts of the triangle. If the media are outraged enough, for instance, Western governments will feel forced to intervene. If the media cover the story, aid agencies get donations. But if the media ignore

it, so the theory goes, there's little money for aid and little will to intervene.

I went to a conference on these issues at Columbia University a while back. A lot of what was said had been hashed over in the press already—why did the media spend so much time in Bosnia, while virtually ignoring other places, like Tadjikistan? In the audience there were a lot of relief agency officials, and they were pretty indignant about the seemingly serendipitous nature of refugee coverage—and the fact that so many crises were ignored.

Then one of the panelists, Alex Jones, who does a fine public radio program called "On the Media," threw out a little bombshell. "I don't think there's too little coverage of refugees," said Jones. "I think there's too much."

Well. Imagine saying that in front of people whose agencies make their living off of refugee crises and who depend on media coverage to generate sympathy and contributions. The notion of less refugee coverage is pretty scary to them.

But Jones is right on target. There is too much coverage of refugees. Too many repetitious, numbing pictures of helpless people as they flee, and starve, and fall prey to epidemics. And too little coverage of what pushed them out, what keeps them from going home, what happens to them if, as is often the case, they spend years, and maybe even lifetimes, in exile.

Without some context, the refugee coverage we offer our audiences is really no different from how we cover a hurricane or other natural disaster. It follows a fixed formula. The first stories are always about fear, flight, mass movements of people, the sorrow, the suffering. Then you move into the aid phase—is it coming, is it enough, is it getting to the people in need. There'll always be some outrages in this phase—like the U.S. airlift that dumped packages of Camembert cheese for Rwandan refugees. Pretty soon you start working on sidebars: the orphaned kids, the Red Cross tracing program that tries to get them back with their parents, the burnout of exhausted aid workers.

And not long after, reporters and editors (and readers, listeners and viewers) get burned out, too. The cameras are shut down, the satellite phones folded up. Everyone goes home. Everyone, that is, but the refugees and aid agencies helping them.

So what have we really learned from the bulk of the refugee crisis coverage? That there's another group of miserable, displaced people in the world, who make us feel helpless and hopeless. Or maybe just numb, because we've heard it all before.

And we're not too sure how or whether these refugees differ from the last ones. What put them there, what happens to them next, whether the aid agencies made the right decisions about how to help them. These questions will get addressed in some media, the handful of newspapers with a significant foreign staff, for example. But on television, which has the biggest audiences and potentially the biggest impact to tell a crisis story, the refugees will drop off the news agenda until the next crisis.

We are a crisis-oriented business. But lately we seem crisis obsessed. Why is that? I think a couple of factors have had an impact. One is the increased access we have in the world today. You don't have to think too far back to remember totalitarian borders and restrictions that limited our reporting abilities. Less than a decade ago, I was covering the Soviet Union when a fierce earthquake shook Armenia. The next day Pravda ran a back-page, one column story about it, maybe five or six inches long, saying there was an earthquake, and there was loss of life. One of those wonderfully vague Soviet phrases that really meant, this was a biggie.

This was 1988, and glasnost was well underway, but for a few days at least the old system prevailed. You want details? Too bad, we're the Soviet Union, we don't have to tell you. And we don't have to let you go down and take a look at the damage that killed 25,000 people. In the end glasnost won and the Armenian earthquake got covered by media from all over the world. Donations poured in—food, blankets...bathing suits, always a useful disaster item.

That opening into Armenia was a watershed. Sure, they still tried to restrict our movements. But by January of 1991, when Soviet tanks tried to crush Lithuania's independence movement, the Moscow press corps was on the scene in full force, giving eyewitness reports to the world about one of the last gasps of the Soviet monolith.

After witnessing that tank assault I headed for the Lithuanian Parliament building, thinking it was my best shot for finding an international phone line. I was steered to a blacked-out room, where frightened Lithuanian soldiers blew out the match I lit, so I could try to dial the phone. I finally stumbled to another, unoccupied room, lit matches, placed my call, unscrewed the mouthpiece, fastened on my alligator clips and starting feeding to NPR the most dramatic tape I've ever recorded. It was scratchy and whooshy over the Soviet phone lines. And I'm eternally grateful to NPR for not using the bit where I said, quite clearly on tape as I stood just a few feet from one of the tanks, "I'm scared, I wanna get out of here."

Nowadays, of course, I'd probably file that tape over a satellite phone—portable, high quality, goes anywhere, can run off a generator—lets you file right from the scene. And of course, file often.

Along with our greater access to the world, satellite technologies let us report from the worst hellholes in the world. We can watch people die of ebola in Africa. We can witness the middle of the night landing of U.S. soldiers on the beaches of Mogadishu. We can land in Goma, Zaire, where a million Rwandan refugees were crushed together in 1994, fighting a cholera epidemic—and start reporting immediately on the horrors.

An hour after I got to Goma I watched a cholera victim deliver a stillborn baby—an aid worker dumped it in a grimy bucket—and sobbed as she carried it away to the trash. I'm not even sure why that moment stood out so much, there were so many other hor-

rors surrounding me. A couple of days later an old woman ran up to me in one of the camps, pleading with me to adopt her newborn grandson, whose mother had died—and the grandmother had neither food nor water to give the baby. I'm going to put him on the ground, she said. If he wants, he can die.

A friend asked me recently, "how do you cover a story like the Rwandan refugees?" I said, "on automatic pilot." I don't mean to be flip, but a million refugees in one place—who can comprehend it? Who can make sense of workers tossing cholera victims into mass graves day and night, stealing their blankets as the bodies slip into the pits? Who can pay attention, on the third or fourth or fifth day when you're driving for hours on roads lined with dead bodies, stacked just like firewood, in their neatly rolled funeral mats?

Keith Richburg of The Washington Post has just published a provocative book about his experiences as a black American reporter covering Africa. Richburg grabbed attention mainly for his argument that black Americans should not idealize Africa, that its problems cannot be explained away as legacies of colonialism and Cold War.

But Richburg has another message familiar to reporters who covered Rwanda, Somalia and other hellish stories where the victims of famine or war or genocide were always too numerous to count, or even comprehend. Richburg writes, it's not the death itself, although that is bad enough. It's the anonymity of death in Africa, the anonymity of mass death. Does anyone care about their names? Does anyone at least try to count them, to record the fact that a human being has passed away from the earth and someone may be searching for him? Or is life so tenuous here that death scarcely matters?

If Richburg is frustrated, imagine our audiences, when we present them, day after day, with more scenes from fetid refugee camps, more nameless people suffering and dying.

You could blame technology, I suppose. When it was harder, physically, to file a story, foreign correspondents had more leeway to do their basic reporting and reflect a bit before delivering the definitive story. Now, with satellite technology, it's easier to file—but far more costly. A TV network easily runs up bills of $3,000 a day for one crew covering a foreign crisis. To justify that expense, the crew has to deliver fast, and often. And what's the easiest thing to deliver? More dramatic scenes of refugees and their plight. The details get lost—like the fact that among the one million Rwandan refugees whom we all pitied in 1994, there were thousands, maybe tens of thousands, guilty of genocide.

But let's not blame technology and its expense for not doing our job. The technology should be neutral.

Now some journalists did do that with the Rwandan refugees. And what they found, by digging, by going back repeatedly to those nightmarish camps, was that the Rwandan refugees were an incredibly complex story. It cost aid agencies about a million dollars a day to run their camps—a million dollars a day, for two and a half years.

A lot of that money was stolen, or wasted. Over time huge markets grew in the camps and supposedly free relief food was one of the items on sale to refugees. So was homemade beer, and Pepsi Cola and imported whiskey. There were video parlors, restaurants, a slaughterhouse, barber shops, tailors, money changers—just about everything you'd find in an African village.

But that camp, called Kakuma, was a commercial backwater compared with the Rwandans in Goma. Why? Because on their way out of Rwanda, the refugees looted the country. Many were in government, and they helped themselves to government money and then used that to start thriving businesses in the refugee camp. They also rearmed themselves to retake Rwanda. Meanwhile, any refugees who wanted to go home, to get out of the dreadful camps, were intimidated, or even killed, to prevent them from doing so.

Lots of ambiguities here, right? Lots of moral issues that never got explored during the period of crisis coverage, when the emphasis was on people fleeing, suffering, dying. I'm not arguing that we shouldn't cover the crisis. Of course we should. But we need to give it context, to think every day about what is new, or what hasn't been told. And we need to go back, and back again, and explore issues like those posed by the Rwandans. Those reporters who did go back learned that among the aid agencies working in the camps, there were fierce debates about the morality of helping a refugee population that included genocidal killers.

These were enormous issues, involving a humanitarian project that cost the world billions of dollars. They are hard issues to present on television, perhaps, but they must be presented if news consumers are ever going to understand that refugees are not just helpless people who need food. They are products of complex processes, and decisions on how, or even whether, to help them cannot be made based on pity alone.

I think the first time this ambiguity really came home to me was in Somalia, on a day when I was traveling with American soldiers doing a kind of hearts and minds project in Mogadishu. The idea was, send some dentists and doctors and other soldiers out to help people at random, who needed a tooth pulled, or a wound treated. It made me a little teary to watch their good deeds—and I guess that was the point. It was a public relations project—not so much for my benefit, but for the Somalians.

But then the project moved on to its last stop of the day, where the soldiers gave out bags of grain. In no time there was a mob, and they were angry and hungry, and completely unaware that this tiny gift of food was supposed to win their hearts in support of the international presence in Somalia.

I asked one of the soldiers if this was what it was always like. Usually worse, he said. Yesterday, the mob broke through and it was chaos. Then he shook his head, puzzling over precisely what he, and the international community, were trying to do there. He said, we're helping. But we're not helping. You know what I mean?

I knew exactly what he meant. We want to help. But we can't do it if we don't understand what's really going on. And we're not going to understand if the media don't explain it. ■

Books

He's Come a Long Way From Yield Curves

Bloomberg by Bloomberg
Michael Bloomberg and Matthew Winkler
John Wiley & Sons Inc. 261 Pages. $34.95.

By Bill Barnhart

Would-be media mogul Michael Bloomberg begins the afterword of his autobiography as follows: "The question I know you've been pondering is: Why did he write this book?" A team of psychiatrists might be able to fathom an answer, but less clinically trained readers of "Bloomberg by Bloomberg" are left with the fact that he did.

It would be easy to dismiss this effort by a former stock and bond salesman and his journalistic sidekick, Matt Winkler, as the kind of Wall Street megalomania that went out of style at the end of the 1980's. ("I dated all the girls," Bloomberg informs us at one point.) But far more interesting and useful insights emerge between the covers of this premature and unremittingly self-congratulatory account.

Journalists looking for over-arching themes in today's bull market in financial assets will learn much by studying the strangely childish character of Michael Bloomberg as he and Winkler present it. And there is an even more important lesson for journalism itself.

For decades critics, including many corporate executives, have disdained the shift in the U.S. economy from manufacturing to service—taking in each other's wash, they say. Despite the seeming inevitability of this shift, no one, including the nation's Dutch uncle, Alan Greenspan, knows how to measure the impact of the change. Productivity? In a service economy, who knows what it means? Is so-called knowledge work creating better standards of living or simply erecting pink ghettoes populated by clever but delusional wage slaves serving a new generation of capitalist elites?

Nowhere are these questions more apt than in the industry generically known as the news media. And today's news media industry has no more fascinating practitioner than Michael Bloomberg.

In a transparent bid for sympathy, Bloomberg repeats throughout his book that he was "fired" by Wall Street powerhouse Salomon Brothers in 1981. That anyone handed $10 million and told to disappear can evoke images of being fired and unemployed tells a lot about Bloomberg and the world in which he lives. Setting that aside, Bloomberg to his credit vowed at age 39 not to clip coupons. He wanted to be "a player," as he told his then-wife in one of the more smarmy anecdotes.

At first, Bloomberg determined to go into business with a computer-based service that enabled bond traders more readily to calculate yield curves and other esoterica of the bond-trading business. It was hardly an endeavor worthy of displaying your name boldly in New York City train stations but was definitely a value-added service, to use the vernacular. And even Bill Clinton knows the value of the bond market.

In the days before the Internet, Bloomberg delivered his service on proprietary terminals, boxes with odd-looking keyboards that came to be known as Bloombergs. With financial backing from Merrill Lynch, Bloomberg did what he does best—sell—and soon Bloomberg boxes joined the already cluttered array of screens beaming rays into the eyes of financial traders throughout the United States and in other parts of the world.

Having plugged in his own direct link to financial trading desks and charging more than $1,000 a month for the connection, Bloomberg realized quickly and correctly that he was not in the financial data business but the news media business. After Wall Street Journal reporter Winkler wrote a flattering article about his operation, Bloomberg hired Winkler, and the two began taking in journalists.

Media moguls everywhere need content that can at least be labeled objective, and Bloomberg is no different. Bloomberg understood nothing about the skills and sensitivities of journalists, but Winkler did. Most of all, journalists long to be abused and loved. No problem, said Bloomberg. Legend has it that any job applicant who inquires about vacations or other employee benefits during an interview at Bloomberg is rejected politely but firmly.

Today, Bloomberg L.P. employs 3,000 people, many of them journalists beginning their careers or in the autumn of their careers. Someday one of them will betray the faith and write an intriguing story about "Camp Bloomberg." In the meantime, Bloomberg has challenged the traditional wire services—Dow Jones, Reuters and The Associated Press—with remarkable speed and thoroughness.

To what end? Bloomberg has become the leading developer and benefactor of serious financial journalism—goals virtually ignored by journalism schools and other media organizations, despite the obvious importance of the economic story today. His small but rich and powerful cohort of customers demands timeliness, accuracy and expertise in reporting things financial. Bloomberg strives to provide it and, by the way, to do nothing in his news operations that deflates his customers' assumptions about the metaphysical primacy of maximizing returns.

To obtain credibility and the dog-tag credentials required to cover economic news at its source, Bloomberg installed terminals, with their treasure-trove of background and timely information, in traditional newsrooms for a token price—an uneasy bargain that spreads his full-fare customers' message to an audience far beyond Wall Street.

All of this definitely has made Bloomberg a player, the goal he promised his wife and achieved after losing her. In addition to its basic service, now being offered through standard personal computers as well as Bloomberg boxes, the company has operations in television, radio, books and magazines—all blaring the name "Bloomberg." He's come a long way from yield curves.

Others, including Microsoft Corporation's Chief Executive Officer, Bill Gates, also are busy hiring journalists to help sell their products and their names. Bloomberg has shown the way to the new world in journalism, one even less likely than the last one to comfort the afflicted or afflict the comfortable. ■

Bill Barnhart is financial markets columnist for The Chicago Tribune.

Democracy and the Unrestrained Market

Everything for Sale
Robert Kuttner
Alfred A. Knopf. 410 Pages. $27.50.

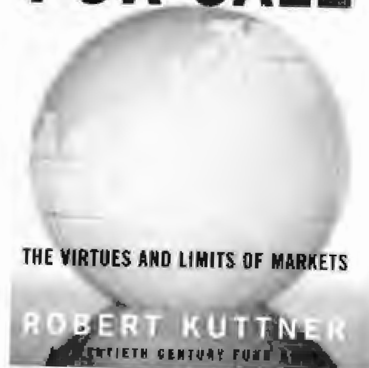
By Lynda McDonnell

When bankrupt Albanians became gun-toting anarchists early this year, I heard one chilling explanation of how this impoverished people came to entrust its meager savings to pyramid schemers. The Albanians believed that this plunger's construct of greed, chance, hope and catastrophe was the essence of capitalism.

Albanians' naiveté is understandable. During years of Communist rule, they were forbidden to own cars, wear beards, talk to foreigners and otherwise engage the outside world. Golden promises and desperation can easily overcome good sense in such circumstances.

Economics writer Robert Kuttner believes Americans have also developed a dangerous naiveté about the risks and rewards of unfettered capitalism. Fed by Reaganomics, University of Chicago economists and the worldwide dominance of Big Macs and Nikes, we are bedazzled by the creative destruction of the competitive marketplace, even when we are sometimes its victims.

In "Everything for Sale," a book written with the support of the Twentieth Century Fund, Kuttner contests the notion that unrestrained markets are the surest route to the most robust economy and strongest society and that the best government is that which governs least. "The less government is able to achieve," he writes, "the more it seems a bad bargain." Kuttner also raises profound questions about how a market that is unrestrained and increasingly inequitable can mesh with democracy. "How does the market, whose first principle is one-dollar/one-vote, properly coexist with a political democ-



racy whose basic rule is 'one person/one vote'?" he asks.

Kuttner undertakes his task with intellectual breadth and gusto. He recalls recent failings of markets—junk bonds, the savings and loan collapse, the role of program trading in deepening the 1987 stock market plunge, the derivatives' fiasco in Orange County. After each episode, government was called on to set limits or help cover losses.

Yet government programs aimed at common people clobbered by economic change, such as aid for family farmers or retraining for workers displaced by trade, have been trimmed over time. Five years of welfare aid is considered sufficient for poor families. And in the persistent arguments over minimum wages in Congress and state capitols—pitting companies' wish to set wages that reflect marginal productivity against workers' need to live—capital usually prevails.

Kuttner is not content to recite financial history. As a sometime teacher, he laces his text with economic lessons. Taste is not necessarily the "revealed preference" assumed by economic theo-

reticians, he argues. Rather taste can be fickle, manipulated, based on misinformation. The decline in smoking demonstrates the malleability of taste, he notes, and the power of government to influence public tastes. Fundamentalist free-marketers and ivory-tower economists are Kuttner's favorite targets: "In sharp contrast to Adam Smith, many advanced students of economics in this century have been startlingly innocent of the actual institutions of commercial life; they were simply virtuosos at the math."

The real word provides plenty of fuel for Kuttner's argument that a mixed economy with vigorous private sector and selectively interventionist government can produce a robust economy and fairer, happier society. Hostile takeovers were sometimes goads to better management. But often they were merely ways to cannibalize thriving companies. Hillary Clinton's failed health-reform plan sought to use private-sector managed care as a vehicle for universal coverage. But the plan was attacked as Big Government, HMO's were left to the market and even their creator, physician Paul Ellwood, now worries that they often give short shrift to qualify of care.

At one point, Kuttner describes his book as a tour of economic theory and experience. It's a good analogy. Imagine this as a tour headed by a peripatetic guide of formidable intelligence. The tour members rarely have time to digest one sight before he's trotted on to the next. Kuttner's travelogue encompasses Thomas Aquinas and Milton Friedman, George Orwell and Gresham's Law. The casual tourist can be overwhelmed by the display. Sometimes you just want to stop for a beer.

Kuttner fails to tackle some of the problems that government controls and protected markets can produce. Without competition, what is the correction for burned-out teachers and mediocre public education? If means-tested aid programs can't find political support, how can one create broader-based aid, for working families, say, when tax cuts are de riguer and faith in government is low? What are the proper amounts of trade and immigration, given the competing desires to hold down prices, adapt to changes in comparative advantage and provide for citizens' welfare?

Kuttner is a firm believer in the mixed economy where markets are competitive enough to be efficient but oligopolistic enough to have money to invest in innovation. He believes also in a government that prods, regulates and sometimes redistributes. He doesn't answer where the lines should be drawn, nor should he be expected to. Each industry and circumstance is its own. How much concentration and deregulation is good for the telecommunications or banking industries? That is too big for even him to answer.

Kuttner reminds us there's a difference between efficient allocation of financial resources and the adaptive efficiency of new technology. Like Joseph Schumpeter, he believes that new technology is the source of true long-run growth. But it's hard to encompass innovation in econometric models. It's also hard to ensure full information for consumers. Anyone who has labored through a dinner-time pitch from a long-distance company knows the fully informed consumer is a myth. Who knows if 10 cents a minute is the best deal? I'll opt for the frequent-flyer miles.

Kuttner has put together a useful compendium of argument and example to challenge today's "fundamentalist" faith in free-market economics. In the end, the Albanians blamed their government for their ruin. The government had ignored warnings by the World Bank, after all. Despite the treacherous ways of capitalism, the Albanians expected their government to protect them from thieves and scoundrels. ■

Lynda McDonnell is a former economics writer who now covers poverty and social policy for The St. Paul Pioneer Press. She is a 1980 Nieman Fellow.

Values, Freedom And the Internet

Virtuous Reality
Jon Katz
Random House. 214 Pages. $21.

Set aside four errors in one sentence (Nieman misspelled twice, a reference to a non-existent "special report" and calling curator Bill Kovach "William.") Blame the editor.

Set aside, too, the author's annoying habit of dropping dashes in sentence after sentence. (The reader begins to count them instead of reading.) Again, blame the editor, but trace the habit to the writer's haste and journalistic background.

Set aside also the chapter headings in hard-to-read LED display type and the drawings that are supposed to be humorous. (Remember, Jon Katz is a contributing editor of Wired magazine.)

Fortunately, Katz does have something important to say: that the media revolution is good for the world, that it is bringing more information to more people and that people, including children, should not be restricted in the use of the Internet. Responsible parents, he says, should worry more about getting kids on line and less about the dirty pictures they may occasionally find once they get there. ■—*rhp*

How Anti-Semitic Was Nixon?

Crazy Rhythm:
My Journey from Brooklyn, Jazz, and Wall Street
To Nixon's White House, Watergate, and Beyond...
Leonard Garment
Times Books. 391 Pages. $27.50.

By Richard Dudman

One of Leonard Garment's many good yarns begins with a jazz evening at the Nixon White House in 1969. It was a 70th birthday party for Duke Ellington and included a concert of Ellington compositions. The idea was that the Voice of America would record the affair and broadcast it around the world. Garment, a jazz clarinetist and saxophonist besides being a White House lawyer and policy consultant, got the assignment of carrying a film print of the concert to the Moscow Film Festival.

Henry Kissinger, then running Washington's side in the Cold War, gave Garment specific instructions as to how to deal with Soviet officials. They would know about Garment as a long-time Nixon friend and advisor and would try to pump him for information about the new U.S. President. Kissinger, in perhaps the first surfacing of the "madman strategy," told Garment to reveal that Nixon had a crazy streak, that under stress or challenge he could be unpredictable and capable of the bloodiest brutality.

In the meantime, though, something new had been added to the mix. Nixon had put Garment in charge of an innocuous and now long-forgotten project called the National Goals Commission. Suddenly the Russians would have a chance to quiz the manager of what they saw as an American Five Year Plan. Sure enough, Garment found himself at the Moscow Institute for United States Studies, being worked over by "eight or ten chunky, impressive-looking individuals, including what I'm sure were several K.G.B. veterans."

Georgy Arbatov, the top Soviet specialist in U.S. affairs, led off: How come a free-enterprise Republican administration, in the world's major anti-communist power, was switching to central planning? Wasn't this an admission of capitalism's internal contradictions?

As the Soviet technicians and spies leaned forward to hear Garment's response, he plunged into a fast-talking riff about his own life, his Russian father, the family's struggle out of poverty, his early interest in socialism, music and law, and his entry into the dangerous American culture. Then, getting to Arbatov's questions and drawing on dimly remembered Marxist literature, he gave them a double-talk analysis sprinkled with aphorisms like "All circles can be squared," and "There is no such thing as a contradiction, only a constrained grasp of complexity."

After an hour and a half of this, Soviet hosts began to wilt, muttering to each other. They perked up when Garment, remembering Kissinger's instructions, began delivering the message. Reviewing his years of work and friendship with Nixon, he told them that Nixon was a "dramatically disjointed personality," capable of generosity but also barbaric cruelty when challenged. He said years of bashing by political and media enemies had made the President more than a little paranoid.

"At his core, I said, he is predictably unpredictable, a man full of complex contradictions, a strategic visionary but, when necessary, a cold-hearted butcher. So it went. Talk, talk. Scribble, scribble. I was, as jazz musicians say, cooking."

When it was over, the Russians thanked Garment warmly. They obviously had found the meeting wonderfully productive. "And so it had been," writes Garment. "Because, strange to say, everything I said about Richard Nixon turned out to be more or less true."

The book spins one yarn after another, telling a lot about Nixon and

how the Nixon White House worked—just as Robert Reich's "Locked in the Cabinet" gives insights into Clinton and the Clinton Administration. The two men, indeed, display striking similarities. Garment and Reich were both personal friends and loyal aides to their presidents. Both describe flaws as well as merits in their presidents. Both, being known as liberal Democrats, encountered suspicion and hostility among some White House colleagues.

Garment calls himself an "ethnic icebreaker": "I was one of a handful of Jews in my generation who squeezed through the keyhole of the tightly closed Gentile fraternity of Wall Street lawyers." He met Nixon as a fellow member of the old-line firm of Mudge Rose and soon saw Nixon as his ticket out of the often dull practice of law. He invited a crowd of Brooklyn lawyers and judges—mostly Democrats—to what turned out to be Nixon's political coming-out party. Nixon was a big hit. People sensed that he was once more on his way to the presidency. The next day, Garment told Nixon about the lavish praise from an unlikely source and predicted flatly that Nixon would become

president. The remark registered, and Garment was a self-declared "founding member of the nonexistent Nixon campaign team."

As a sort of White House liaison with various entities that needed special help, he vied with State Department Arabists and helped scuttle a punitive peace plan that Secretary of State William P. Rogers was trying to impose on Israel. When American Indians occupied Wounded Knee Garment prevented a bloody government assault with the help of a wise Army colonel and a young Indian lawyer whom he had cultivated. Garment says they had bonded when he asked the man which tribe he belonged to. He said he was a Sioux. Garment: "That's funny—you don't look Siouxish."

Over the strong objections of White House conservatives, Garment helped persuade Nixon to create an independent Legal Services Corporation. He worked with Clarence Mitchell of the N.A.A.C.P. to save the Voting Rights Act from conservative attack. He resisted Pat Buchanan and Charles Colson and the others who were playing on Nixon's dark side and doing his dirty work.

So what was a nice Jewish boy doing in a place like that? For one thing, Garment was used to ordinary watercooler anti-Semitism. He considers it a human constant. He rates Nixon at only 15 to 20 on a scale of 100. True, Nixon was a champion hater—but, "to my mind, an equal-opportunity hater." He particularly hated the left, many of whom were Jews, "but I do not think that was the defining personal characteristic that got Nixon's personal bile flowing."

Garment denounces The New York Times's handling of a 1974 story by Seymour Hersh reporting on a leaked transcript of a taped conversation between Nixon and John Dean. The story quoted Nixon as referring to government investigators as "a couple of Jew boys." Nixon, livid, swore he never used those words. Garment checked the tape and found the less "virulent" phrase "Jewish boys," but it was Dean, not Nixon, who used it.

According to Garment, Clifton Daniel, The Times Washington Bureau Chief, refused to listen to the tape unless he could hear a number of other tapes. Hersh consulted internal Times memos on the incident and says the White House would permit Daniel to listen to only a short segment of a single tape. The tapes at the time were the subject of bitter legal and political struggle as to whether they should be released.

A recent week's search by specialists at the National Archives turned up no use at all of either "Jew boys" or "Jewish boys," but many Nixon references to various political enemies as "Jews." The specialists also recalled instances when Nixon used the word "kike," but could not find them on tape or transcript. One problem is that the tapes are not yet computerized for quick and easy search.

Aside from that incident, the bottom line on Garment is that Nixon was a respected friend and, on the anti-Semitism scale, "better than most, worse than some, much like the rest of the world." ■

Richard Dudman, Nieman Fellow 1954, was a reporter and correspondent for The St. Louis Post-Dispatch for 31 years in St. Louis, Washington and abroad. He now lives in Ellsworth, Maine.

A Disappointing Look at Television

The Electronic Media
An Introduction to the Profession
Peter B. Orlik
Iowa State University Press, Second Edition, 1997. 684 Pages. $52.95.

You won't find discussions of ethics, morality, community service or the pitfalls of the hidden camera in this voluminous introduction to the professions of electronic media (read TV). This is a textbook aimed at the student who needs lingo and the smattering of substance that will prepare him or her for that crucial job interview.

There is a lot of ground covered in these many pages, and from time to time I found myself engrossed in some of the explanations about the early history of radio and TV and the government efforts at control and regulation. But these bursts of historical illumination quickly flickered out, like a firefly's shining on a hot summer evening. The entire discussion of FDR's use of radio during the depression is but two paragraphs long. Similarly, the lashing that television news took from Vice President Spiro Agnew, prior to his own disgrace, is covered in less than two pages. Even technical explanations are pretty skimpy. There is enough information for casual cocktail party conversation or for a hurried job interview, but not enough depth to shape a young student's sense of responsibility.

What this book does well is to offer 50 personal profiles by people who are working in the electronic media in all manner of assignments from president, news director, media researcher, weather reporter and operations manager. The authors of each of these profiles meticulously explains what they do, the underlying skills needed and why their jobs are satisfying.

Even though this new edition of the book was published in 1997, I found the treatment of emerging electronic media such as High Definition TV, the World Wide Web and Interactive TV to be quite disappointing. The discussions do not explain what additional skills are required to enter these upcoming areas. Take on-line journalism on the WWW for example. The book does not explain that Web pages have to be created on a computer using the HTML (Hyper Text Mark Up) Language.

The book has one inexcusable flaw, an error-prone index. For example, Fred Friendly's name is cited on 10 pages in the index, but it appears in only three pages of the text.

Considering the book's cost and lack of depth, one might have wished for less. ■—*Lewis Clapp*

A Tick-Tock Tale of Bosnian Massacres

Endgame:
The Betrayal and Fall of Srebrenica,
Europe's Worst Massacre Since World War II
David Rohde
Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 440 Pages. $24.

By Thom Shanker

In March of 1993, I loaded up a car with fuel, food and colleagues, and set out from Belgrade toward eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina, where a major Bosnian Serb military offensive was showing every sign of success in its design to frustrate the United Nations peace plan du jour for assigning the strategic area to control by the Muslim-led government in Sarajevo.

At the border, the bridge over the Drina River to Zvornik, several dozen cars with other correspondents were backed up behind a convoy of 14 aid trucks and their armed escorts from the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). The Bosnian Serb border guards were blocking all transit. Just six days before, the U.N. commander in Bosnia, a French general named Philippe Morillon, had bluffed his way through Serb lines and entered the besieged Muslim enclave of Srebrenica, raising the U.N. flag over the hungry, demoralized inhabitants and declaring, "You are now under the protection of the United Nations. I will never abandon you."

As we arrived at the border, we learned that Morillon had left Srebrenica to personally escort this first aid shipment to the 60,000 Muslims then huddled inside the Serb circle of siege. Although UNPROFOR orders required armed escort of humanitarian aid, Morillon capitulated and ordered the vulnerable convoy into Bosnia without military protection. Correspondents were barred by the keepers of the bridge from chasing Morillon and the aid trucks—except my carload, which had secured a pass to Pale, the Bosnian Serb capital, to interview Radovan Karadzic, president of the rump republic. But once over the Drina, we simply turned left, toward Srebrenica and the story.

Three and a half years later, in August of 1995, David Rohde, then with The Christian Science Monitor, now with The New York Times, used the same sleight-of-hand to enter eastern Bosnia when other correspondents could not, and uncovered the Pulitzer Prize winning story of how Western capitulation, in a chain unbroken from that day in March 1993, had resulted in the humiliation of UNPROFOR, the fall of Srebrenica and the massacres of an estimated 7,000 of its inhabitants.

On that and subsequent trips into eastern Bosnia, Rohde was the first to confirm and document the mass graves holding the slaughtered victims of Srebrenica. On a final trip in October, Rohde was arrested, convicted of illegal entry, jailed for 10 days and threatened with an espionage charge that carried a possible sentence of 10 years or even death. With negotiations underway in Dayton, Ohio, and an appearance that peace—or at least a fragile armistice—was at hand, the Clinton Administration pressured the Serbs into setting Rohde free.

Surprising for a young journalist, and to his great credit, Rohde has written a book that is only tangentially about his traumatic incarceration and kangaroo trial, but instead is a focused and disciplined tick-tock tale of, as he so correctly terms it, the betrayal and fall of Srebrenica.

The foreign correspondent in me has nothing but respect for the way Rohde has laid out in great detail the spinelessness of the United Nations bureaucracy, the confusion among its military forces and the absence of Western will to make good on the promises to the Bosnian people. His research ranges from refugee camps to the corridors of power of NATO governments and halls of powerlessness at the U.N. In this retelling of dithering and of decisions left unmade, Rohde makes a strong case that few Western institutions—with the possible exception of the Western press corps—survived the Cold War with any sense of clear mission in a changing world. Correspondents first exposed the concentration camps, the program of systematic mass rape, the massacres and mass graves during the war in former Yugoslavia. If a world that had pledged "never again!" after Hitler's genocide of the Jews of Europe turned its back on Bosnia—well, we had done our job of reporting the facts on the ground.

The foreign editor in me, however, has a few complaints with the book. In reportage of this sophistication, a false breathlessness in some of the writing hits a pitch that is far from perfect. "Camila and Ahmet tore out of the room....She and her husband sprinted down the stairs and burst out the front door." Such language undermines the inherent dramatic power of the facts Rohde has so carefully marshaled. One can also quibble that much of Rohde's perspective on events in Washington comes, according to his footnotes, from the news weeklies and from Bob Woodward's books. Those are first-class sources, to be sure, and Rohde notes that he has reconfirmed the inside information he first read elsewhere. And I personally would have appreciated some greater exploration on the role that American intelligence—through surveillance photography and communications intercepts—could have played in warning of a Bosnian Serb mobilization and of plans to capture the entire

UN-declared "safe haven" of Srebrenica.

Although Rohde's choice of a half-dozen real-life characters as vehicles for telling the many facets of his story is a wholly accepted nonfiction form, he lets some of his "voices" speak without subjecting their narrative to a full critical analysis. Not that they are lying, or that there is only one version of the complex and emotional events surrounding the collapse of Srebrenica and the subsequent massacres. But I can share the best advice I ever received about war reporting, which came from my former foreign editor, the late Jim Yuenger. "True stories of combat defy retelling," he said. If you have to ask what that means or how that aphorism must be applied to reporting from a war zone, then you have never been in combat.

Those minor dissents aside, Rohde's book can take its place with honor on the shelf of volumes on the war in former Yugoslavia penned by journalists. As Rohde so correctly notes, "The attack on Srebrenica and the subsequent executions had emerged as the turning point in the war." NATO was shamed into action. Croatia was given an "amber light" to go ahead and retake a large horseshoe of its territory that had been captured by the Serbs. Emboldened Muslim forces advanced. And, with their portion of Bosnia shrinking from 70 percent to 50 percent, the Bosnian Serbs, under orders from their payrollers in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, agreed to the Dayton Accords.

The fall of Srebrenica turned Western opinion. David Rohde's reporting did what the best foreign correspondence is supposed to do: supply accurate and timely information for the debate. This volume, which grew out of that reporting, is a powerful and important book, not only about the war in former Yugoslavia, but about international politics in the post-Cold War world. ■

Thom Shanker is Foreign Editor of The Chicago Tribune. He covered the war in the former Yugoslavia from 1992 to 1994.

Will It Be Black Coffee or Mozart?

Booknotes
America's Finest Authors on Reading, Writing, and the Power of Ideas
Brian Lamb.
Times Books. 418 Pages. $25.

Here's a wonderful book for browsing. Whenever you get writer's block you can thumb through these 150 interviews to discover how authors, including journalists, get their work done. The interviews are based on appearances on C-Span's Sunday evening show "Booknotes." The show's host, Brian Lamb, edited the transcripts for the book.

Andrew Ferguson, Senior Editor of The Weekly Standard, follows the old routine:

"You make lots of coffee, and you sit down in front of the [computer] screen, and you just type out a word. Then you go and talk on the telephone. You go get some more coffee, you come back, and you make yourself type out another sentence. Then, if you're at home, you rearrange your ties or you clean off your dresser. Then you go back and do it again. You make another phone call. And pretty soon your editor's on the phone saying, 'Where is my copy? I need your column.' So then you sit down and you just do it. It's very unpleasant."

Not unpleasant for columnist George Will. "I love it," he told Lamb. "To me, it's more fun than anything. It's a tactile, physical pleasure." He turns out 125 columns a year for Newsweek and newspapers and writes books when he gets "impatient for someone to write them for me."

Will told Lamb that he uses a big Montblanc pen. But later he slipped on the ice and fell, breaking his right arm. With his writing arm out of commission he pointed to his wife's computer and asked, "How do you turn that thing on?" He wrote 12 columns in 15 days, faster than he could write by hand. "Haven't filled my fountain pen since."

How about inspiration? David Halberstam listens to blues, or Vivaldi or Mozart. When the historian Doris Kearns Goodwin was working on "No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II," she filled her study with pictures of the President and his wife, of Rosie the Riveter, of women going to work in the factories,"so the ambiance felt like "World War II."

Michael Kelly, now the Editor of The New Republic, while a freelance in Iraq during the Persian Gulf War, filled 40 or 50 notebooks, writing every night that he could, not just notes but "longer things, reflections, and so on." He saved everything and eventually had three large bags of luggage. The result was a book, "Martyr's Day."

Is there a story you have been holding inside? Don't throw away your notebooks. Read how Jack Nelson, The Los Angeles Times's chief Washington correspondent, finally told his story of the Ku Klux Klan's campaign against the Jews: "Terror in the Night." He had covered civil rights in the Sixties and had saved all his notebooks (he could even read them!), all his documents, even a crucial tape recording. With the aid of the Freedom of Information Act he got other documents. The book was published in 1993.

Some of the ideas seem obvious. For example, this tip from Thomas Friedman, The New York Times columnist, which he picked up from David Ignatius, Editor of the Outlook section at The Washington Post: Make sure you write the story so the reader will feel compelled to turn the page.

The writer looking for help will keep turning these "Booknote" pages. ■ — *rbp*

The Road Not Taken by The Washington Post

Personal History
Katharine Graham
Random House. 644 Pages. $18.

By Robert H. Phelps

Grizzled journalists have long advised aspiring reporters that the key to success is to choose the first job not on the basis of a publication's reputation but on the teaching power of an editor willing to work with them.

In her memoirs Katharine Graham shows how this traditional advice can be adapted to publishers—editors, too. In the process she demonstrates, without saying so, how close she came to deciding on a course far different from the one that has made The Washington Post one of the most influential newspapers of the country.

Graham's growth from a vulnerable, timid young lady, made insecure first by her mother and then by her husband, into a hard-headed leader willing to take risks is the story line that runs through this book. Her story is far more than the transformation of The Post into a money machine admired by Warren Buffett, although that is detailed. It is far more than a collection of anecdotes about the rich and famous, although plenty of them are chronicled. It is also far more than a replay of her courageous support of The Post's exclusive reports of the Watergate scandal and the paper's follow-up to The New York Times on the Pentagon Papers. She has covered all these subjects and in her quiet way told the world how The Post became a great newspaper.

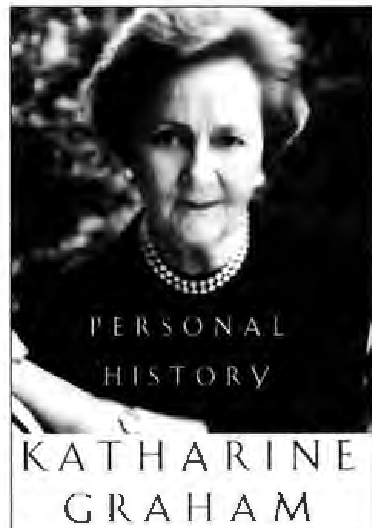
Almost lost, however, is the road not taken when she made the critical editorial decision in the two years after her husband's suicide. For after she decided the editorial department needed invigorating Graham's first choice to run the newsroom was not Ben Bradlee of Newsweek but James Reston of The New York Times. It was natural that she should turn to Scotty Reston. Philip Graham had tried a number of times to lure Reston to The Post. The Grahams were so close to Scotty and Sally Reston that they had "willed" their children to the Restons in case of death. When Phil Graham died Katharine turned to Scotty for advice. "Take the joint over," he told her. In the summer of 1964 in a letter to Scotty and Sally she appealed to him:

"I have thought hard about our talks. They have been indefinite only because I wanted to work out what was best for you, since what is best for us is to have you here advising me and advising us, and being part of The Washington Post. My hopes are that you can consider coming to us at this point in your lives....I am arguing hard that you can be with us; that we have always wanted you and want you even more now that we are without Phil."

At the same time Walter Lippmann, apparently at Graham's request, talked to Reston and advised him to join The Post. "He argued," Reston wrote in "Deadline," "that The Times had long since been established as the foremost newspaper of the nation and that there was little I could do there except carry on the tradition, whereas The Post was just on its way to becoming a great newspaper and I could make a larger contribution by accepting Kay's offer."

Reston explained to Lippmann, his mentor, that he was not much of an executive (as he demonstrated four years later when he became temporarily Executive Editor of The Times) and in a gentle refusal to Graham wrote, "I just can't do it."

In December she had lunch with Ben Bradlee, the Newsweek Bureau Chief, because she feared The Post affiliate might lose him to a television network. When she asked Bradlee what he would like to do in the long run he stunned her by responding: "Well, since you asked, I'd give my left one to be Managing Editor of The Post." She replied that they could eventually discuss the matter but not soon. However she did not know Bradlee. By the next summer he had moved into The Post newsroom and on November 15 became Managing Editor.



What would The Post be like if Reston had taken over editorial direction of The Post? No one knows, of course, but it is fair to speculate because Graham's memoirs make clear that she desperately wanted Reston at her right hand, although neither she nor he mentioned any title.

Would Bradlee have wanted to join a Reston team? Probably. Reston, Bradlee wrote in "A Good Life," was his "hero" as a reporter, as he was to many Washington journalists. But would Reston have agreed to Bradlee's hiring? He certainly would have been tempted by Bradlee's energy, but his iconoclastic approach to life would have raised suspicions in a man with a Calvinist background.

Assuming, however, that Reston would have gone along with Bradlee as Managing Editor, there would certainly have been clashes over the Style section, with its trade in gossip, rumors and half-facts and Sally Quinn's endless cutting-up of personalities. Reston's sense of good taste and personal privacy would have been offended.

What about the story that above all has made The Post famous—Watergate? What would Reston have done if experienced, trusted Post reporters told him, as they told others, that those youngsters, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, were way off the mark? Would there have been a clash with Bradlee, who gave the two unstinting backing? Undoubtedly. Reston would have reined the two in. Reston had a deep respect for the Presidency that Bradlee did not share.

In fact, of the Bradlee imprint, the only major item on which the two would have agreed was the Pentagon Papers story. Both liked stories based on leaked documents (Reston's first Pulitzer Prize, for coverage of Dumbarton Oaks, was based on leaked Chinese documents).

Speculation can go on and on. Which man would have had the greater influence on Graham? Reston, undoubtedly, given his long, close relationship with the Grahams. The result would have been a Washington Post with different journalistic standards than those associated with Bradlee, but less readable, far less interesting and certainly less influential. ■

Robert H. Phelps is Editor of Nieman Reports.

A Warning on Coverage of Asia

The Coming Conflict With China
Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro
Alfred A. Knopf. 245 Pages. $23.

By Richard Halloran

The authors of this excellent but somewhat uneven book come straight to the point in an early passage, asserting: "China is an unsatisfied and ambitious power whose goal is to dominate Asia, not by invading and occupying neighboring nations, but by being so much more powerful than they are that nothing will be allowed to happen in East Asia without China's at least tacit consent."

A few paragraphs on, they elaborate: "China during the past decade or so has set goals for itself that are directly contrary to American interests, the most important of those goals being to replace the United States as the preeminent power in Asia." They contend that China seeks "to reduce American influence, to prevent Japan and the United States from creating a kind of 'contain China' front, and to extend its power into the South China and East China Seas so that it controls the region's essential sea-lanes."

Richard Bernstein, onetime Hong Kong and then Beijing correspondent for Time magazine and now a book critic at The New York Times, and Ross H. Munro, a long-time Asia hand now at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia, make a powerful case. Their warnings should reach high into President Clinton's White House, State Department and Defense Department, where policy on China has been floundering since the 1992 election campaign. Members of Congress and their staffs who deal with foreign affairs should take heed.

The Bernstein-Munro cautions should especially be noted in the European-oriented foreign affairs establishment spread down the East Coast from Boston to Miami, in the board rooms of corporate America where little but potential profits dance on the table, and in the halls of academe where many scholars see China in rosy hues.

Finally, print editors and television executive producers responsible for foreign and security coverage should digest large portions of this book promptly. Bernstein and Munro are mildly critical of the coverage, for instance, of economic disputes between the U.S. and China. "The American press," they say, "has picked up on only a small part of the overall Chinese strategy, namely the battle over China's pirating of compact discs, movies, and computer software programs."

The findings of the authors have already attracted some attention. An extract of their book has appeared in Foreign Affairs, the journal of the Eastern foreign policy elite, and the columnist George Will has looked upon it favorably. The Far Eastern Economic Review reports that the book has been translated into Chinese for circulation within the Communist Party but not to the public. An official in Beijing said Bernstein and Munro would be denied visas if they tried to visit China.

For the last couple of years, a steady

flow of books on China has appeared to argue widely divergent predictions on where China is heading. They can be divided roughly into three schools:

Fractured China: The world's most populous nation and perhaps most difficult to unify, China will split apart as it has repeatedly from the dim beginnings of time through the warlord period of the 20th Century. Laments a Chinese expatriate: "Why must Chinese always be fighting Chinese?"

Benign China: With swift economic growth rates for the past 20 years projected to continue for at least another 10 years, a democratic China will devote its new-found wealth to raising the standard of living for its 1.2 billion, soon to be 1.5 billion, people and will integrate itself into a global economy.

Aggressive China: Beijing will use its wealth to acquire a powerful and modern military force to intimidate China's neighbors and return Asia to the days of the Middle Kingdom when Korea, Japan, Vietnam and other Asian nations would be reduced to vassalage and Europeans and Americans would be seen as outer barbarians.

"The Coming Conflict with China" clearly fits into the third school as did Alastair Iain Johnston's "Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History," published two years ago. In that academic treatise, the Harvard scholar found that China was more likely than other nations to use force to settle disputes.

Bernstein and Munro are on their game in chapters contending that the Chinese consider America to be their prime enemy and that Beijing seeks to replace the United States as the foremost power in Asia. They are effective in skewering the Clinton Administration for an "amateurish, fumbling, and inconsistent policy toward China" and in exposing the machinations of the New China Lobby led by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

They are cogent in assessing the nature and importance of Taiwan's future and the need for the United States to maintain that island's separation from the mainland pending a peaceful and amicable reunion. Lastly, the authors have several pertinent suggestions for coping with an aggressive China.

Bernstein and Munro miss their footing, however, in some observations about Japan and fail to summon enough Japanese voices to prove their points. Similarly, an imaginary war game between China and America in 2004 borders on the ludicrous because there is no way China can acquire enough military power to challenge the United States in less than a decade unless President Clinton retires another third of the armed forces.

Most Americans balk at the idea that another nation could perceive the United States as being an enemy; it just goes against the fundamental image we have of ourselves. Bernstein and Munro are persuasive, however, in asserting that China "has decided that American power represents a threat, not just to China's security but to China's plans to grow stronger and to play a paramount role in the affairs of Asia."

"In interviews we conducted with Chinese strategic thinkers in 1996," they write, "there was little effort to disguise the consensus view that China and the United States had become rivals, and that the rivalry will intensify as China becomes stronger." They quote a senior Chinese analyst: "In the coming fifteen years there won't be fundamental conflicts between the United States and China, but after that fundamental conflict will be inevitable."

With China already having the world's second largest economy when measured by the World Bank's purchasing power parity, Bernstein and Munro believe that "China's economic power and leverage will push it to greater aggressiveness, further defiance of international opinion." They foresee "a kind of corporatist, militarized, nationalist state." Compared with other Asian nations, they say, "China is already by far the most powerful country in Asia."

The authors say that China's leaders have mocked President Clinton's policy on human rights. In the inner councils of the ruling Communist party, "they argued that the human rights question represented an opportunity to confront the United States, demonstrate its lack of resolve, and get away with it."

The authors save their harshest judgments for what they call the New China Lobby, "a multifaceted, loosely correlated network actively encouraged and manipulated by China mainly by promising or withholding money." They maintain that "Kissinger is only the best known and most prestigious of a group of former senior officials who have been cultivated by China."

They charge that Kissinger's view of China is "almost identical to the view put forward in public statements by China's leaders themselves" and conclude: "We think they are lying and that he is wrong."

Bernstein and Munro assert that "America must have Japan as its partner" but overestimate Japanese willingness to be a full partner, especially in military matters. The authors seem reluctant to accept their own finding: "After a half century of pacifism, Japanese self-perception may simply not permit the country to accept a genuine great-power role, even in its own backyard." Change "may" to "will."

On the war game, Bernstein and Munro say that China will triple its submarine, amphibious and surface forces by 2004 and do it in secret. Absent a mobilization on the scale of the United States in World War II, that would be physically impossible. In secret? Not with U.S. satellites, submarines and spy planes watching China round the clock, to say nothing of American, Japanese, Taiwanese, Korean, Russian and dozens of other nations having thousands of travelers in China at any given moment.

The Bernstein-Munro prescription for coping with China is unsurprising but nonetheless practical. They would like to see Washington define American interests in Asia and China, maintain a stable balance of power, encourage China to be a responsible international citizen, and induce China to become democratic.

But they don't hold out much hope that any of this will happen. ■

Richard Halloran, formerly with The New York Times as a foreign correspondent in Asia and military correspondent in Washington, writes about Asia from Honolulu.

Coping With the Travails of a Science Writer

A Field Guide for Science Writers
The Official Guide of the National Association of Science Writers
Edited by Deborah Blum and Mary Knudson
Oxford University Press. 287 Pages. $25.

By Harold Schmeck

Science writers can't help envying other journalists who can often put their leads concisely in plain and dramatic English, such as:

"U.S. Air Force planes today bombed the outskirts of Baghdad."

Imagine trying to write that story if you knew that most of your readers had never heard of Baghdad, had no idea why we should be attacking that city and, in fact, didn't quite know what an airplane was.

That is the kind of problem science writers face daily. The work involves reporting the news of the most complex and esoteric subjects that exist in today's universe. These complexities must be made understandable and exciting to editors and readers who are alike totally ignorant of the subject matter and often don't give a damn about it.

While laboring to make the esoteric clear and compelling for these know-nothings, the science writer must also be impeccably accurate for students who might have their horizons widened by the story and for the experts whose research brought that field of science to life in the first place. It is a special craft of news writing that requires both grim determination and wide-eyed optimism.

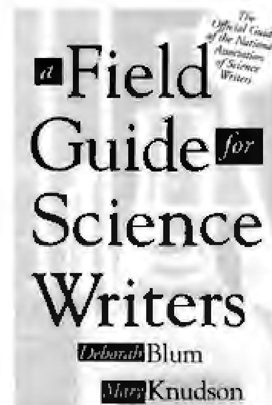
Yet all veteran science writers know that we have the only game in town. The reasons for this go beyond the excitement of the chase. Science stories are not the side-issues and cute little space fillers that some editors still think they are, but in fact are the basis for most of the crucial twists, turns and watersheds of 20th Century civilization. We live in a complex world and ignorance is dangerous. Consider these examples:

Global warming, the AIDS virus, Alzheimer's disease, cloning, mad cow disease, space stations, nuclear energy, nuclear weapons, fallout and pollution, heart transplants, the uses of DNA analysis in the justice system. Those are only a few of the obvious examples. They are also cases in which mainstream journalists have jumped in with both feet (sometimes in their mouths). But all the background and the real reporting was done years earlier by science writers.

"A Field Guide for Science Writers" is an attempt to introduce the joys and agonies of this field to prospective newcomers. It is also well worth the attention of all other journalists. Much of the advice is cogent for anyone who is trying to tell readers—or viewers—what is really going on in the world. There is also a lot of useful information on markets, contracts, sources and other items of interest to all writers.

But, of course, the main focus is on the writing and the research that good writing requires. Do you hate mathematics? So did Victor Cohn, veteran science writer and editor for The Washington Post. But his chapter on statistics slices away the jargon of that field and explains why we all must, and can, deal with that subject. As he makes clear, all news writers including political reporters, sports writers and everyone else needs to know how to combat news sources and pollsters who are dedicated to lying with numbers.

Other chapters cover different basic skills of reporting. Do you do your homework before an interview to learn something about the subject you are going to cover? As Patrick Young makes clear, it is a vital necessity for science reporters and good advice for anyone



else. A science reporter who starts by asking a biologist "what is a gene?" is likely to be shown the door faster than you can say "nucleotide sequence." Young is presently a freelance writer. Earlier he worked for some of the major news organizations and has written several books. He, like many other veteran science writers, usually writes out a list of questions that need answers before the interview and checks them from time to time to make sure something vital isn't being ignored in the flow of conversation.

Altogether, the book is a collection of essays that offer advice, anecdotes and some fascinating historical perspectives.

The National Association of Science Writers is a professional organization founded in 1934 by a handful of news writers who could see the future beckoning. NASW now has some 1,800 American members and some from other countries. About half of the members write primarily for independent magazines, newspapers, radio and television and other news outlets. Most of the other members work for such organizations as universities, government agencies and corporations involved in medicine or science.

For neophyte and potential science writers the book has useful hints on writing for all kinds of markets—newspapers, magazines, books, radio and TV, as well as specialized fields such as technical publications and work for universities, government agencies and corporations concerned with science and medicine. The advice comes from more than three dozen people, all successful in the fields they discuss. Several are Pulitzer Prize winners.

For science writers and everyone else, some of the contributors offer eloquent ideas on why journalism is really worth the candles that we all burn at both ends.

An example is the piece by Laurie Garrett, currently a medical writer for Newsday. She has covered epidemics of dangerous infectious diseases and won a Pulitzer Prize in 1996 for reporting on outbreaks of the deadly Ebola virus. She started covering the AIDS epidemic at a time when the White House seemed to find the whole subject too distasteful to be discussed, let alone funded. Even some good newspapers persisted for a long time in rating the epidemic as less compelling news than baseball strikes and attempts to develop an artificial heart.

The volume also includes several useful appendices on sources of information, including Internet resources and data bases, scientific organizations and meetings and science communication courses and programs in the United States.

Being a collection of essays by widely diverse people, the book is uneven. Some of the contributions are painfully simplistic and self-congratulatory. A few offer advice that must have been current when writing was still done in cuneiform on wax tablets. The book also shortchanges discussion of the reality of career opportunities in science writing today. While it is probably true that readers rate science stories as among the most popular subjects, newspaper science sections are dwindling. People who watch these trends say the number peaked at about 100 around 1989. There are 40 or fewer today, many of which have degenerated into "health" pages with little or no science and mostly safe, news-free "advice." In contrast, as the late Carl Sagan noted in a brief foreword to the book, most newspapers, including many that should know better, still carry daily astrology columns.

Among the most thought-provoking chapters in this book are Laurie Garrett's and those by Sandra Blakeslee of The New York Times on brain research, Ron Kotulak of The Chicago Tribune on the related issue of behavioral research, also the chapter by Boyce Rensberger of The Washington Post on all aspects of covering science for newspapers.

Another of my favorites is the piece by an anthropologist who is also a professional science writer. She explains her career in writing by quoting a journalist friend: "My personal muse is the gas and electric bill."

The anthropologist, Meredith F. Small, is now an associate professor at Cornell University. She finds some of her scientific colleagues still suspicious of her continuing work in science writing. But she persists, saying "the dance is to keep a foot in both camps"—keeping up with the literature both academic and popular, going to scientific conferences and maintaining friendly relations with both sides.

"The payoff to this mambo," she says, "is access to the cutting edge of science, enlightening conversations with scientists who are open to interviews, and the fun of putting together a story that will excite and inform the public.

"More important, at those conferences you suddenly have two groups of interesting colleagues to hang out with at the bar." ■

Harold Schmeck, retired and living on Cape Cod, covered science for The New York Times for decades. He has been "a card-carrying member of the National Association of Science Writers since 1959."

From 'Road Rage' to 'Net Rage'

Grooming, Gossip, and the Evolution of Language
Robin Dunbar
Harvard University Press. 240 Pages. $22.95.

Robin Dunbar, Professor of Psychology at the University of Liverpool, traces gossip from chimpanzee grooming to coffee breaks. Human beings, he suggests, developed the language of gossip to hold together diverse groups. After all we cannot pick lice off each other like our primate cousins. Bringing us up-to-date, he notes that information superhighway proponents have hopes that wide access to the Internet will bring people together. Dunbar sees a more likely impact on people:

"They are more likely to be abusive when angry and more likely to make suggestive remarks in passing. What happens is somewhat akin to the 'road rage' with which we are becoming increasingly familiar. Cocooned in their metal fortresses, people in cars escalate into anger much more quickly than they would had they been involved in an altercation as pedestrians on a sidewalk; cut off from direct face-to-face contact, where subtle cues are read rapidly and carefully, they lose the control that social interaction normally imposes in the interests of cooperation and bonding. Separated even further by the apparent anonymity of the computer link, there is even less to constrain us. The inevitable result will be 'net rage.' Safe in the knowledge that our opponent cannot get at us, we feel confident about escalating fights we wouldn't dare risk in a car, never mind in a face-to-face encounter." ■—*rhp*

Sharks and Barracudas in Washington

Locked in the Cabinet
Robert Reich
Knopf. 338 Pages. $25.

By John Harwood

Robert Reich has been writing, and talking, about economic inequality and how to ameliorate it for a long time. It was a major theme of his Kennedy School course that I took during my own Nieman year (1989-90), back when it appeared as if Republicans would hold the White House for the indefinite future. He takes up the cause again in his engaging new memoir of life as Bill Clinton's Labor Secretary.

But the real subject of "Locked in the Cabinet" is the political culture of Washington in the 1990's. And it's here that Reich offers insights of real value—and bite—for the journalists who observe and take part in it.

A witty and facile writer, he takes aim at the capital as a "one-company town." "Politicians, journalists, bureaucrats, lawyers (and) lobbyists" play different roles in the same business, as his wife, Clare Dalton, puts it, and "all that really counts is your rank." Recounting a dinner party featuring prominent media figures and the odd-couple pairing of then-AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland and Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, Reich says they "are bound together by the same social glue that binds everyone in this room together: power and celebrity." That's painting with a broad brush, but with a strong element of truth nonetheless.

Lower down on the pecking order, workaday reporters are "sharks" and "barracudas," poised to devour those caught on the wrong side of a feeding frenzy. "Ever since Watergate, the operating assumption in newsrooms across America is that hesitance to reveal anything is a sign of a cover-up," he writes.

His complaints at times are overdrawn or disingenuous. And Reich's implausible reconstruction of dialogue has led some figures in the book, including Kirkland, to say they were misquoted. Indeed, a recent Slate magazine article has even called into question the fundamental accuracy of his discriptions of certain events. Still, any reporter who has covered the federal government, the presidential primaries, or a major trial, will recognize unflattering aspects of our collective behavior on these pages.

He also evokes some sympathy in describing the difficulty, and frequent indignity, of attempting to communicate a public message in an increasingly fragmented and unruly media marketplace. OK, so cameos with Jay Leno, if vaguely demeaning, aren't so rough; as Reich points out, his cursory mention of school-to-work apprenticeships on "The Tonight Show" may have fallen on more ears than did hours of Congressional debates. Less obvious was the payoff from his appearance on one of the truculent talk radio shows that rose to fashion a few years back, in which irate callers pelt him with cartoon-quality questions.

Not that he spares politicians, or his longtime friend Bill Clinton. He describes the suffocating cocoon of aides and scripted appointments that circumscribe the daily lives of high-ranking officials, limiting their contact with the people they're supposed to serve. Inside "the bubble," he says, "I'll never be forced to re-think or re-evaluate anything."

Especially revealing are depictions of the chaotic nature of White House decision-making, in which the upper hand goes to whoever manages a last whisper in the ear of a vacillating president. Occasionally it's Reich, though not often enough to suit him. Worried that memos aren't reaching his old Oxford classmate, he begins sending them via Hillary Rodham Clinton on unmarked stationary. In one plaintive phone call, then-Transportation Secretary Federico Pena asks how Reich finds out what's going on in the White House. The Labor Secretary soon reveals one answer: from CNN, whose broadcast breaks the news of Clinton's new chief of staff to Reich and several other top administration officials.

The media's power to influence events, for good or ill, is a consistent theme. He confesses that potential public relations flak from a network television report propelled him to overturn the department's decision to bar the employment of a minor league batboy as a violation of child labor laws. The next year, Reich set out to embarrass an Oklahoma tire factory by showing up, TV cameras in tow, to announce a crackdown on safety violations. The move backfired when the company threatened to close the plant altogether, and The Daily Oklahoman helped turn public opinion against him with a front-page story and editorial. Reich shows how he goaded a reluctant White House to commit to a specific minimum-wage proposal by simply wandering into the press room following a presidential speech and taking questions on the subject. Other times, he reports rue-

Locked in the Cabinet
ROBERT B. REICH

fully, he makes a lot more news than he intends to. In January, 1994, his careless answer to a question about yet-unreleased employment data, reported on financial wires, drove down interest rates on Treasury securities and triggered a furor among Wall Street traders. He decided not to answer such questions again.

The purposeful maneuvers he describes paint a cynical picture of life on the political high wire. Here are administration advisers limiting Reich to respectful non-answers in his Senate confirmation hearings and junior White House aides ordering him to accompany the president on conteot-free out-of-town photo opportunities. One tiresome feature is Reich's unremitting self-righteousness; that quality, found in equal measure among those who don't share his policy views, helps explain the savage tenor of political combat in Washington that Reich deplores.

Most unflattering to the president is Reich's portrayal of his expedient reliance on poll-driven campaign strategist Dick Morris. The "crass politics" that drove Clinton's decision to sign a GOP-passed welfare reform bill leave the Labor Secretary "sick to my stomach" and afraid it will render a Democratic election victory pointless. Reich doesn't oppose the black arts of politics in principle; after a State of the Union speech, he urges pollster Stan Greenberg to report back to Clinton that electronically wired "dial groups" loved presidential references to expanded education and training. It's just that public opinion too often seems to drift away from Reich's priorities rather than toward them.

At the same time, he offers a useful caution for all of us who cover public affairs. More than we normally admit, the public opinion indicators that political and journalistic elites use to shape their decisions are written on sand. "The 'center' is a fictitious place lying somewhere south of thoughtless adherence to the status quo," he writes at one point. In the breathless interpretations of the GOP's sweep to power in 1994, after all, who predicted that the Republican Congress would soon be sending Clinton legislation hiking the minimum wage? That's something to keep in mind in considering Reich's own enduring passion. His disappointment is that the first Clinton term did little to narrow the long-term economic gap between Americans with high skills and education and those without them. Budget constraints suggest the second term won't do much better, at least on the terms of Clinton's original policies.

"The creeping menace of widening income inequality threatens the nation's stability and its moral authority, but the crisis is building too slowly to summon the trust necessary to deal with it," he writes. That should not stop the press from devoting the resources that this story deserves, whether or not Reich's solutions are the right ones. ■

John Harwood, Nieman Fellow 1990, is a political correspondent in the Washington Bureau of The Wall Street Journal.

Letters

Japanese Trust Government

To the Editor:

Melvin Goo's article on health care in Japan, as well as Martin Gehlen's on Germany, [Spring 1997] read well as appendages to the articles on U.S. welfare program. On its own, however, the article on health care in Japan is rather tough reading because of the technicalities involved, even to me, a regular subscriber to the Nihon Keizai Shimbun, from which Goo has quoted rather extensively.

Goo has done a good job by adopting a comparative approach. Therein lies the nub of the matter, in fact. It seems to me that your view is that even in welfare matters the adversarial role of the press is iudispensable, but the typically Japanese attitude is that the government can be basically trusted in such long-term technical matters and that the press may be expected to perform a vigilante function.

Joe Kazuo Kuroda
Tokyo,
Nieman Fellow 1957

Too Few Women Writers

To the Editor

I was just looking through the Nieman Reports on environmental journalism, and couldn't help but noticing something—of 18 authors, only four are women.

I just don't understand how this can happen, when there are so many women in journalism, and particularly science and environmental journalism, today. SEJ is filled with female writers. My graduate school class (NYU's science journalism program) was made up of 10 women and only two men. Yet men are the ones who are asked to write for your report, with the exception of some women, who, in two cases at least, were chosen because they also represent an ethnic group.

I'm not a rabid feminist, believe me. But when I see such imbalance I do feel compelled to bring it to the attention of someone who perhaps could make an effort to do better in the future.

Catherine Dold
Freelance writer
Boulder, Colorado

Nieman Reports attempts to tap a variety of writers but does not balance assignments on a statistical basis. However, we can do better. A check of the last nine issues found women wrote 63 articles to 216 by men and 16 book reviews to 52 by men. Interestingly, the Society for Environmental Journalists says that about 35 percent of its members are women.—The Editor

Shelf Life of Journalism

BY MURRAY SEEGER

"Masterpieces of Reporting" is a noble effort at making available to new audiences a cross-section of reporting and writing dating back more than a century. Journalism Professor William David Sloan of the University of Alabama and Cheryl S. Wray, a freelance writer, plan two more volumes of the same literary genus.

The editors are advocates of the common sense rule that "the best way to write well is to read good writing." Thus, this paperback volume (Vision Press, $24.95) could be a handy tool for teachers of journalism or practitioners interested in seeing how others have done it. No working journalist could argue with the premise of the book but, naturally, we can all argue about the selections the editors have made.

We could also argue that it is pretentious to call any journalism a "masterpiece" since so little journalism has enduring shelf life. Can anyone except historians imagine reading 20 years down the road current reporting on the Clinton Presidency?

The 70 pieces in this new volume include some truly memorable work while other pieces have value as historic records or collector's items. In making their selections, the editors have taken "the absolute best" culled from other collections of journalism and the lists of Pulitzer Prizes.

To test the editors' judgment, I went to the wonderful Library of America volumes of "Reporting World War II," 1938-1944 and 1944-1946, published in 1995, and "The New Yorker Book of War Pieces" dating from 1947. The major difference is that "Masterpieces" is an eclectic collection with no theme and great variations in quality.

It is interesting to read the original description by Henry Morton Stanley of The New York Herald of his expedition to locate the long-missing Scottish explorer, Dr. David Livingstone, in Africa. This is a famous incident in journalistic history, but the flamboyant writing style of Stanley in 1872 is no guide for anyone trying to write a narrative today.

Similarly, H. R. Knickerbocker's 1930 interview with Stalin's mother for The New York Evening Post, while a great reportorial coup at the time, is not superior to hundreds of other interview stories. Showing that "undercover" reporting is hardly new, Nellie Bly of The New York World in 1887 gave a vivid description of the hospital treatment she received as a pseudo mental patient.

On the other hand, there are stories that must be collected in books in order to preserve their quality as "the first draft of history." There is still a chill in the anonymous, straightforward New York Tribune report of an 1859 slave auction in Savannah, just before shots were fired at nearby Fort Sumter. The Tribune's editor, Horace Greeley, put his paper into the crusade against slavery as few editors battle today.

Irvin S. Cobb's description of the 1906 murder of New York architect Stanford White is a model of police story writing with tons of detail and just the right amount of color. Carried in The New York Evening Sun, the article was the first chapter in a long saga that echoes today with the recent publication of a memoir by one of White's descendants.

Still, the two Library of America books have greater value for the history they contain and for the journalistic quality of their selections. Here is a valid early draft of history as well as "literature in a hurry," Kipling's description of journalism.

Selected by historians, these collections include raw wire copy and longer articles taken from magazines and books. War is, of course, a great story that can hardly be embellished. The bylines in these collections include the names of men and women whose careers dominated journalism and literature for much of the postwar era.

For action, there is nothing better than the ground-level reporting of Ernie Pyle of Scripps-Howard. The Library uses 11 of his pieces to describe the U.S. Army breakout from its Normandy landing area. Fifty years later these pieces read wonderfully well and prove Pyle's wisdom in avoiding the generals and concentrating on the junior officers and GI's. "Masterpieces" carries only one of his articles.

There is the short Associated Press bulletin filed on May 7, 1945, by Edward Kennedy announcing the German surrender in violation of a military-imposed embargo. In the next piece, A. J. Liebling of The New Yorker defends Kennedy and explains that the real issue was that military permitted only three American journalists—the wire service reporters—to witness the historic scene. The news, meantime, had been broadcast by U.S. government and German radio services.

"The truth that if you are smart enough you can kick yourself in the seat of the pants, grab yourself by the back of the collar and throw yourself out on the sidewalk," Liebling wrote. "This is an axiom that I hope will be taught to future students of journalism as Liebling's Law."

There is a lot of Liebling and other New Yorker journalism, including John Hersey's classic "Hiroshima," in the Library of America collection and none in the "Masterpieces," a real failing. "The New Yorker Book of War Pieces" is especially rich, making us nostalgic for the magazine of decades ago in contrast to its contemporary shallow shadow.

Everyone interested in the health of print journalism can learn from all of these volumes. There are dozens of examples of the good writing and reporting that newspapers and serious magazines must offer if they are to survive as major factors in the contemporary communications marketplace. ■

Murray Seeger is a 1962 Nieman Fellow.

NIEMAN NOTES

COMPILED BY LOIS FIORE

The Poet as Journalist

Danny Schechter, a Nieman Fellow, invited his friend, the poet Allen Ginsberg, to read to his Nieman class on December 5, 1977. Schechter believed that there was a synergy between poetry and journalism and that Ginsberg was really a journalist masquerading as a poet, or at least a poet journalist, something he never claimed to be, but might have been, objectively speaking. The session didn't go well. Perhaps it was an off-night on the Charles. The usually calm and calming Ginsberg exploded into a non-tantric tantrum. When Ginsberg died April 15 Nieman Reports asked Schechter to reminisce. He responded Ginsberg-style.

PHOTO: © ELSA DORFMAN. HTTP://ELSA.PHOTO.NET

This poet sees through and all around the horrors he partakes of in the very intimate details of his poem. He avoids nothing but experiences it to the hilt.—William Carlos Williams, Introduction to Allen Ginsberg's "Howl," 1956.

Allen Ginsberg In The House

BY DANNY SCHECHTER

"Who are you Nieman Fellows anyway,
are you for real?"
he asks in an angry aside,
evening reading with chemistry congealed,
Signet Society, Harvard, circa '78,
as event organized to breath poetry
on skeptical classmates &
elevate journalism with the
fire of prophecy misfires
Big journalism yawns back
empty faced, minds on empty
while Ginsberg, with boyfriend Peter in tow,
spews words at unimpressed scribes,
with the chill of distance and disconnect
freezing conversation, precluding exchange,
stultifying debate, triggering tantrum
Literary light flickers
with no one to change the bulb
It was clear:
he was from that other world
beat beatnik beaten down,
big deal dissident,
gay jew Buddhist crazy
playing Whitman to those
who fetishize facts
sometimes mistaking them
for truth.
None of us knew then—
Allen Ginsberg had 19 years
left to share our air
& fertilize fields of fury
a poet among us
heralded at last in death
making front page,
New York Times,
his Howl hailed
verse of the century,
with obits crisscrossing the
mediascape singing praise
for a gentle spirit and
inquiring mind that
won legitimacy only
after final breath
in residence in this skin
Coming up at 11:
Heaven
He's off to Tibet
for his latest reincarnation
this American dreamer
who had Presidents in tears…
in Prague
and wordsmiths
worldwide reaching for
thesauruses of acclamation
Hail and Fairwell
But Wait!
Journalists wait
Producers Wait
Op Ed columnists and
J School teachers, Wait
Editorial Writers and
NPR Radio editors, wait
Consider Ginsberg anew
for a qwik minute
Think
of what he had to
say to us and for us
think of his question
that nieman night
who are you?
which is another way of asking
what do you see
& how do you see
Do you feel what you see
and say what you feel?
Ginsberg sang songs we sing
who what where when why how
Questions he asked too
in other ways
beyond headlines

burying the lead
on the jump page of
nuance way back
in the back of the book
Take a breath now and
see him—that bearded weirdo
as one of our own
See his words sprout wings & fly
when you read them aloud:
'negro streets at dawn'
'america I've given you all and now
I'm nothing'
'Are you going to let your
emotional life be run by Time
magazine'
throughout the verses,
again and again,
reality sandwiches
commentary on media deceit
war and peace,
pentagon madness
soulless politics
loveless culture
urging us on—
take the leap
imagine other ways of being,
doing, caring
Allen Ginsberg from lower east
side ny
hipster and hopester
language provocateur
rock & roller with and without
music
looking for detail in the details
looking for what's being left out
and finding it again and again
not on safe surfaces or
formula foolishness
not in official sources
or approved resources
rejecting all isms
not the least-journal-ism
and yet when he checked out
the facts of his life checked out
yes, he could be a caricature
a contradiction, sometimes a
clown
celebrity anti-hero icon
lecture bureau radical
listened to more than heard
an amusement more than a threat
In a beavis butthead dumb &
dumber era,
when nothing sticks, he stuck
Think of a life's causes and cares
in that theater of words
chants for sane drugs and sane
love
for an end to plutonium plutarchs
vietnam shame, lies in high places
Could he not have not been a
regular
on dreary pundit shows
with fred barnes and the boys
sunday mornings beat the press
could he not have out
chancellored Chancellor
or watched weather with Willard
on "Today"
balanced the unbalanced on
Crossfire
and given PatB a run for his
metaphors
There are other Ginsbergs out
there, friends,
off the wall voices clear as a bell
oozing truth power's way without a
dinky cable channel to call their
own.
Allen Ginsberg was a cable channel
on his own
was a million poems
was one of the best minds of his
generation
was an investigative reporter
without portfolio
was a guide into the American
darkness
without a press card
without an outlet
without a pulitzer prize
no network would have him
no magazine pension plan insured
him
no schoolyard of fact checkers
no control room of know it alls
no media merger
no beeper
no cellphone
no nieman
He was never
acquired or downsized
disneyed or murdoched
Before logos and branding
he branded himself
Always there with
the news
we never knew
Anchor of GNN—Ginsberg News
Network
The poet ahead of The News
with The Times never quite able
to catch
up. ■

Danny Schechter's latest writings on media issues, including an account of his 1978 Nieman year, can be found in his just published: "The More You Watch, The Less You Know: Media Adventures/(sub)merged Hopes/News Wars" (Seven Stories Press, 1997).

—1947—

Henry H. Hornsby died at St. Mary's Hospital in Tuscon, Arizona, on February 7, 1997. He was 86. Hornsby was born in Clay County, Kentucky, and for the last 13 years of his life lived in Green Valley, Arizona. While a student at Berea College he worked in Kentucky as a newspaperman and eventually landed at The Lexington Leader-Herald as a top editor.

Paul L. Evans died of cancer at his home in Norris, Tenn., on February 13, 1997. He was 82 years old and a native of Alpena, South Dakota.

Evans was Director of the TVA information office from 1952 until his retirement in 1974. After he retired he did volunteer work in Norris and was active in the local historic society. In 1983, he and his brother-in-law, John Lain, a retired University of Tennessee journalism professor, edited "Norris, Tenn., 1933-1983," a history of the town.

From 1937-50 Evans held several writing and editing positions, including Executive Editor of The Daily Republic in Mitchell, S.D. He was named head of the journalism department at Ohio Wesleyan University in 1950 and held that job until he joined the TVA.

His wife died in1994. He leaves one son, twin daughters, a sister, three brothers, eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

—1967—

James R. Whelan is now the President and Director General of Silver Standard Mexico, S.A., and of Mineral Silver Standard, S.A.—the first, the Mexican subsidiary, the second the Latin American subsidiary, of Silver Standard Resources, Inc., of Vancouver. He writes, "As the name implies, it is a silver mining company, one which recently celebrated its 50th anniversary and which has operations all the way from Siberia to Bolivia. How a wayward journalist came to preside over a mining company is a tale for another day. Apart from this unabashed (but environmentally friendly) pursuit of the earth's riches, I also am engaged in

23 Selected for 60th Class of Nieman Fellows

Twelve American journalists and 11 international journalists have been appointed to the 60th class of Nieman Fellows at Harvard University. The new Nieman Fellows and their areas of interest are:

Charlotte Bauer, 37, assistant to the editor, Sunday Times, Johannesburg, South Africa. She will study popular culture in the Third World, the history of modern art and classical literature. Her fellowship is supported by the United States-South Africa Leadership Development Program.

Howard Berkes, 43, correspondent based in Salt Lake City, National Public Radio. Will study public policy issues.

Uri Berliner, 40, staff writer, The San Diego Union-Tribune. Will study how the new economic climate affects our working lives. His fellowship is supported by the Louis Stark Fund. The fund, established in 1959 to honor Stark, a pioneer in the field of labor reporting, has supported eight previous fellows.

Christine Chinlund, 45, editor, Focus section, The Boston Globe. Plans to explore "social journalism," the moral thread in current events.

Philip J. Cunningham, 43, freelance writer, based in Tokyo. Will study Asia, political science and philosophy.

Cara DeVito, 45, video journalist, NBC News, New York. Will study the developmental concerns of adolescents, including moral and ethical issues.

Joe Hallinan, 36, national correspondent, Newhouse News Service, Washington, D.C. Will study the history and ethics of punishment and the evolving use of prison.

Nam-Chin Heo, 45, political editor, The Joong-ang Ilbo, Seoul, Korea. He will compare methods of political and social conflict resolution in Korea and in the United States. His fellowship is supported by The Asia Foundation and The Sungkok Journalism Foundation.

Yin Hui, 33, producer, journalist and writer, China Central Television, Beijing. She plans to study communications theory, feminist thought and environmental issues. She is the recipient of the 1997-98 Chiba-Nieman Fellowship in memory of Japanese journalist Atsuko Chiba, late columnist for the Yomiuri Shimbun and Nieman Fellow '68. Funding is provided by The Atsuko Chiba Foundation, Inc.

Julia Keller, 40, television critic, The Columbus Dispatch. Will take courses in history, philosophy and cultural studies to explore the technology of literacy.

Françoise Lazare, 31, staff reporter, Le Monde, Paris, France. She plans to study, from an economics viewpoint, geography, the structure and role of the state, and demography.

Marcelo Leite, 39, special reporter, Folha de S. Paulo, Brazil. He will take an interdisciplinary approach to the study of sustainable development in the Brazilian Amazon. As the 1997-98 Knight Latin American Fellow, his fellowship is supported by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

Phillip W. D. Martin, 42, senior producer, The World, WGBH Radio, Boston. Will focus on race, historical anti-Semitism, multi-culturalism, foreign affairs and education.

Jim Meek, 46, editorial writer and columnist, The Chronicle-Herald, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. He plans to examine, retrospectively, an election campaign and its coverage, and how literary texts fit into their historical era. He is the 1997-98 recipient of the Martin Wise Goodman Canadian Nieman Fellowship created by friends in the United States and Canada in memory of the late president of The Toronto Star and Nieman Fellow '62.

Seda Poumpianskaia, 32, freelance journalist, Moscow, Russia. She will focus on present-day Russian culture, its changes and its place in the modern world, and will also study ethics. Her fellowship is supported, in part, by The Freedom Forum.

Carlos Puig, 33, information editor, Proceso, Mexico City. He plans to study economics, American contemporary history and the U.S. political system.

Tatiana Repková, 38, freelance journalist, Center for Independent Journalism, Bratislava, Slovakia. She will study media business, management, communications, economics, political science, international relations and European history. Her fellowship is supported, in part, by The Henry Brandon Memorial Fellowships and The German Marshall Fund of the United States.

Bryan Rich, 32, senior international producer based in Burundi, Common Ground Productions. Will investigate the relationship between ethnic relations in the United States and the content of media programming.

Joe Rodriguez, 45, editorial writer, The San Jose Mercury News. Will focus on contemporary Mexican literature, film and popular culture, with an emphasis on the urban novel.

Kathryn Strachan, 32, health writer, Business Day, Johannesburg, South Africa, and Health Systems Trust. She will study how various countries formulate health policies and the ways in which health reforms filter down to the community level, and will also study modern literature, film criticism and theory, and philosophy. She is supported by the 1996 Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation Award for Excellence in Health Journalism.

David Turnley, 41, photographic correspondent based in Paris, The Detroit Free Press. Will take classes at the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Research, the Kennedy School of Government, and will study Russian, filmmaking and drama.

David Welna, 42, Mexico Bureau Chief, National Public Radio. Will study the relationship between the United States and Mexico, music theory and creative writing.

Chen Xiaoping, 35, former correspondent for the short-lived Economics Weekly, Beijing, and has worked in the offices of The New York Times. He will focus on press freedom and press reforms in China. ■

putting together my seventh book. Prior to coming to Mexico, in 1995, I had served two years as Visiting Professor at the Institute of Political Science of the University of Chile, teaching a graduate course on comparative government. Who says a journalist can have but one arrow in his quiver? P.S.—I also contribute an occasional article to newspapers and magazines in these latitudes. Old habits die hard."

—1969—

Paul Hemphill's new book, "Wheels: A Season on NASCAR's Winston Cup Circuit," is now out. Published by Simon & Schuster, the book looks at the growing popularity of stock car racing and follows the 31-race 1996 Winston Cup season, the drivers, and the culture of the racing world. Hemphill has written many other books, including "Long Gone" and "Leaving Birmingham."

—1970—

Larry L. King's latest book, "True Facts, Tall Tales & Pure Fiction" was published in May by the University of

Texas Press, Austin. UT Press also will publish in 1998 a collection of his personal letters, compiled by Richard Holland, Curator, Southwestern Writers Collection, Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, where more than 17,000 of King's letters—going back some 45 years—are on deposit.

—1974—

Ned Cline, after 30-plus years of daily deadlines as a reporter, editor and editorial writer/columnist, has traded all that for an annual deadline. This spring, Cline resigned his job as a member of the editorial page staff of The Greensboro, N.C. News & Record to launch a new career. His first project is researching and writing a profile of a North Carolina businessman who has been active in public life and successful in business. The project could take up to a year to finish.

The subject of the book is a man named Marshall Rauch, grandson of Hungarian Jewish immigrants who came to New York in the 19th Century to find a better life for themselves and family members who followed. Rauch came South for college in 1940, enrolling at Duke University, and never left. He has run a series of successful businesses, most notably as a nationwide manufacturer of Christmas tree ornaments. He has also been a state senator and was one of the leaders in his hometown helping keep and maintain peace through the turbulent years of the civil rights law enactments. He has also been a major benefactor to universities in the state and has provided free college educations to young people in economic need.

Once the Rauch book is finished, Cline will look toward other projects—maybe books, maybe other things—that will prove rewarding and informative. He has also begun some educational projects with the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. "I had a wonderfully rewarding newspaper career," Cline said of his career change, "but I was just anxious to try other things. So far, the daily deadline has not been missed at all." His E-mail address is NClin@aol.com.

A Remembrance of Totty Lyons

This note from John M. Harrison:

Just a couple of days before the Winter issue of Nieman Reports brought the saddening news of Catherine (Totty) Lyons's death, I cleaned out some of the miscellany that I had deposited in the book cases in the study of the condominium to which I moved almost two years ago. Among the things I came across was a copy of the report I had prepared on my Nieman year (1951-52), which concluded:

"So, finally, a word of appreciation to Louis and Totty Lyons, the keepers of the Nieman menagerie, who do such an unbelievably wonderful job of it. For the advice and assistance they've given us, for the pleasant hours at 44 Holyoke House and 4 Shady Hill Square, and for the privilege of knowing a couple of really swell people, the Harrisons are eternally grateful."

Those words were written 45 years ago, but they hold up with no need to change them today, and they summarize my thoughts on learning of Totty's death at 90. What a great lady she was! And what a superb diplomat, managing to keep relative peace in that menagerie of young journalists and their wives, who were in the midst of a heady, though sometimes frustrating, experience.

Diplomat that she was, one of Totty's most memorable qualities was her candor. She refused to put up with phonies and despite her velvet glove, the iron hand within it dealt with them summarily.

She was no militant feminist and she knew well that John Harvard was essentially a misogynist. Yet she managed to get in a lot of licks against sexism in high places. Nieman wives owed her a great debt. Most of them knew and appreciated it.

Yes, Totty Lyons was a great lady, and we who knew her are truly grateful for the privilege.

—1977—

José A. Martínez-Soler has won his suit against government-controlled Televisión Española for unfair dismissal from his post as New York Bureau Chief by José María Aznar, Spain's conservative Prime Minister.

Aznar was one of six candidates Martínez-Soler interviewed before last year's election. In the interview Martínez-Soler asked about the Popular Party's "Jurassic Park" wing of extreme rightists who are incorporated into Aznar's Conservative Party. The question evidently infuriated Aznar, who seemed nervous and ill at ease on camera. He was elected in a close race.

Martínez-Soler was only eight months into a two-year contract as the New York Bureau Chief when he was dismissed. The obvious political vendetta, and the underlying threat to freedom of expression in public-owned media, caused an outrage in both the Spanish and international press.

During the trial, video tapes were played of interviews with Aznar and former Socialist Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, which reminded some viewers of the Nixon-Kennedy presidential debates of 1960. The judge upheld Martínez-Soler's civil suit, ordering Televisión Española to pay severance.

As an independent journalist, Martínez-Soler had clashed with the former Socialist government and during the democratic transition had worked with the centrist government of Adolfo Suarez, Spain's first democratically elected prime minister following the Franco dictatorship.

In 1976, four months after the death of Franco, Martínez-Soler was kidnapped, tortured and subjected to a mock execution for writing an article critical of Spain's Civil Guard. (Two decades of democracy later he was merely dismisssed.) Later that year he was awarded a Nieman Fellowship. "Now I was awarded the 'Aznar Fellowship,'" he joked after the trial.

He is currently studying for examinations for a full university professorship and writes a weekly business column for Spain's second largest newspaper "El Periódico de Catalunya" of Barcelona. His wife, **Ana**, also a former journalist, has founded a con-

sulting company, M. W. Research, that researches business opportunities between Spain and the United States. Eldest son Erik, who was a freshman at the University of Maryland, will be continuing studies next fall at the University of Madrid while Andrea, 12, and David, 9, have readapted to Spanish schools.

"We have had a very difficult time," Martínez-Soler commented, "but thanks to the moral support of our friends from around the world and from the Nieman Foundation we were able to weather the storm."

—1979—

Peggy Simpson continues to work overtime in Warsaw, covering business and economics for Business Week, Business Central Europe (an economics monthly), Central Europe Portfolio (a stockwatch bi-monthly newsletter) and Media and Marketing Central Europe (a British quarterly). She also reports for CBS and Monitor radio and writes a weekly business and political column for Warsaw Business Journal.

Margaret (Peggy) Engel has traveled with her husband, **Bruce Adams**, to 45 states, researching baseball parks for their book, "Ballpark Vacation," $16.50, published by Fodor's. Accompanied by their two children, Emily, 10, and Hugh, 7, they visited 85 ballparks and countless science centers, amusement parks, children's museums, zoos, vintage diners, historic sites and other attractions on their 25,000 mile odyssey. They will be visiting other Niemans while on a press tour this summer to Atlanta, Louisville, Indianapolis, Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia and the West Coast. This all got started with a trip to Fenway Park in her Nieman year with Adams, who was a Fellow at the Institute of Politics. Nieman **David Lamb**, '81, who did a wonderful book on the minor leagues, was, Engel says, a big help in planning the trip.

Engel is Director of the Alicia Patterson Foundation.

—1981—

David Lamb, who covered the Vietnam War for UPI in 1968-70, returns to Vietnam in August, this time to Hanoi to open a Los Angeles Times bureau. He and his wife, **Sandy Northrop**, will be there for two years.

Gerald M. Boyd was named Deputy Managing Editor for News at The New York Times and **Gene Roberts**, Nieman Fellow 1962, will leave his position as Managing Editor at the end of September to return to the University of Maryland. He will be succeeded by Bill Keller, the Foreign Editor.

Boyd joined The Times in 1983 and covered the Reagan and Bush Administrations as a White House correspondent. He was named Metropolitan Editor in 1990 and Assistant Managing Editor in 1993. While on the metropolitan desk, he oversaw coverage of the World Trade Center bombing, which won a 1994 Pulitzer Prize. As DME, Boyd is in the highest editorial position ever held by a black at the paper. Roberts was national correspondent for The Times and then National Editor until he left to become Executive Editor of The Philadelphia Inquirer in 1972. During his 19 years there his staff won 17 Pulitzer Prizes.

—1984—

Bruce Butterfield, reporter for The Boston Globe, was named winner of a Gerald Loeb award for business and financial journalism for a four-part series that ran last September. The series detailed the recovery of the Malden Mills Industries Inc. textile plant in Metheun, Mass., after a disastrous fire in 1995. The series traced the owner of the company's struggle to stay in business and to build a new mill. Six Loeb awards were given for print journalism and three for electronic media. Butterfield won the category for newspapers with circulation over 400,000.

The Loeb Foundation also named **Paul Solman**, Nieman Fellow 1977, a finalist in his category for coverage of the 1996 presidential campaign. Solman is business and economics correspondent for public television's NewsHour with Jim Lehrer.

—1988—

Eileen McNamara, columnist for The Boston Globe, won the 1997 Pulitzer Prize for commentary after only 18 months as a columnist. Earlier this year, McNamara also won a Distinguished Writing Award from the American Society of Newspaper Editors. Her column appears twice weekly in the Metro/Region section. Globe Editor Matthew V. Storin said, "It's astounding that after only 18 months, Eileen has won two major prizes as a columnist. But it's also a tribute to the fact that she writes what she believes in and reports it out thoroughly beforehand. Eileen has the courage of her convictions, and I think our readers recognize—and respond to—the genuineness of her passion." At her celebration at The Globe, McNamara said "I'm a product of Boston, and more specifically The Boston Globe." She said she is in awe of the "ordinary people at the heart of this city" who let journalists like herself tell their stories. "I'm always amazed to hear the words, 'Come in and sit down.'"

McNamara has been at The Globe since 1976 and began her career there as an editorial secretary. She went on, as a reporter, to cover everything from the state juvenile justice system to Congress. She also published a book in 1995 about the malpractice case against Harvard psychiatrist Margaret Bean-Bayog and the death of Paul Lozano.

McNamara's husband, **Peter May**, is a sportswriter at The Globe; they have three children.

—1992—

Melissa Ludtke writes:

On the same afternoon that our Nieman softball team played its only game, an event that would jump-start my post-Nieman life was occurring on the West Coast: Vice-President Dan Quayle was giving his "Murphy Brown" speech. This topic of unmarried motherhood was one I'd thought a lot about during my Nieman year; from a per-

sonal perspective, I was trying to decide whether I would try to have a child on my own; from my professional vantage point as a journalist who reported on children and family issues, I realized that few circumstances were as profoundly influencing the lives of children as the changes in the ways in which families were being formed and children were being raised.

The Vice-President's timing could not have been more opportune for me. After our good-bye picnic at the Lippmann House two days later, I headed for my computer. Within a week I sent a proposal for a book about unmarried motherhood to my agent, and a few days later Random House offered a contract. The publisher's rapid decision was helped along by the extraordinary media coverage the Vice-President's remarks ignited. For me, this contract meant that uncertainty about my post-Nieman life was over. (I had left Time during my Nieman year because of downsizing at the magazine and did not have a job when my Nieman ended.) Now I had a book to write.

Five years later, my book—"On Our Own: Unmarried Motherhood in America"—is being published by Random House. A six-city book tour will begin in New York City at the end of September. Accompanying me on this tour will be my daughter, Maya, adopted in China in June. Though I adopted her on my own, I already feel as though my Nieman classmates are part of her family. On the day I saw my daughter's photograph for the first time, classmates **Deb Amos**, **Stan Grossfeld** and his wife, **Stacey Kabat**, had dinner with me and saw Maya's three-month old face, too. **Bill** and **Lynne Kovach** press me for news of Maya whenever we bump into each other in Cambridge. When I am in China in June, **Marcus Brauchli** (and, I hope, his wife, **Maggie Farley**) will be joining Maya and me in Beijing. This fall, as we travel around the country, Maya and I will be on the look-out for other members of our Nieman family.

Mark Seibel is back to full-time newsroom work at The Miami Herald: he's now Assistant Managing Editor for Special Projects. The job, he says, "will run the gamut from journalism to strategic projects like better use of on line and better liaison with El Nuevo Herald. I'll still be Editor of the International Edition, but no longer will have to worry about marketing and advertising...We'll be printing in nine countries by May. When the last three sites are set up and operating, I'll assume my new duties."

—1993—

Dieudonne Pigui will be moving to West Africa in July to become the principal communications officer with the African Development Bank, a multinational development institution. Pigui's principal duties and responsibilities will be to act as the bank spokesperson with the media, to organize interviews and press conferences for the bank managers, and to publish a quarterly news review and a monthly newsletter. He will be living in Abidjan, which is the capital of the Ivory Coast.

—1994—

David Lewis was one of a CNN team that recently won both a National Headliner Award and a Joan Shorenstein-Barone Award (not given out by those serious fellow-Fellows at the Kennedy School) for their work on the series "Democracy In America." The seven-hour series examined the major issues facing the country as it approached the 1996 presidential election and profiled the candidates who were battling to lead. The Shorenstein-Barone Award is given for excellence in Washington-based reporting on political issues.

—1995—

George Abraham sends us his E-mail address in Doha, Qatar. It is: pamelag@qatar.net.qa

—1995—

Leslie Dreyfous's book, "Getting a Life: America's Challenge to Grow Up," has been published by Gold Leaf Press. The book is based on Dreyfous's cross-country travels over six years as a New York-based national writer for The Associated Press. A personal reflection interwoven with the stories of citizens, "Getting a Life" looks both at America's relentless obsession with finding this elusive thing called "happiness" and the equally deep yearning for community, connectedness, a true sense of home. It is about a country—and so many individuals—coping with what amounts to a national adolescence. Dreyfous finds great disaffection, but still more she finds tremendous resources, a great many people who have found ways to dig in.

Dreyfous, her husband, **Jack McCarthy**, and their newborn recently hit the road again, picking up stakes to relocate from West Virginia to California.

—1997—

Robert Blau was one of seven reporters from The Chicago Tribune who won the 1996 Madeline Dane Ross Award for the series, "Gambling With Life." The award is given for best foreign correspondent, in any medium, showing a concern for the human condition. "Gambling With Life" was a global investigation of the complex issue of why people have children that they are going to be ill-equipped to raise. Stories came from Africa, Brazil and Ireland, among other places. Blau wrote the Chicago piece, the only U.S. city covered, about a mother and her 13 children on the West Side. He also wrote an article on Cambodia. The series was a Pulitzer finalist.

J. Anthony Lukas Dies at 64

J. Anthony Lukas died June 5 in his apartment in Manhattan. He was 64. The cause of death was not immediately disclosed, but apparently he committed suicide. Lukas, who won two Pulitzer Prizes, had just finished a book about a politically charged murder trial in the West at the turn of the century. A 1969 Nieman Fellow, he also wrote the crtically acclaimed "Common Ground" and "Don't Shoot—We Are Your Children." ■

Washington Reunion

By Susan Dentzer

In any other profession, the occasion might have been little more than a busman's holiday. But since our profession is the ever-engaging news business, a recent gathering of Nieman Fellows at a new museum devoted to the world's news media was a banner-headline event. On March 22, roughly 100 Niemans and guests from the Washington area joined the 1997 Nieman class at the Freedom Forum Foundation's newly opened "Newseum" in Arlington, Virginia. Hosts for the private tour of the museum and the reception and dinner that followed were Peter S. Prichard, the Newseum's Executive Director, Nieman curator Bill Kovach and Jack Nelson, Washington chief correspondent of The Los Angeles Times and Nieman Fellow '62. As it happened, the evening turned into an impromptu Nieman seminar on how technological shifts and societal transformations are changing the very face of news.

The $50 million, 72,000-square foot Newseum bills itself as the world's only interactive museum of news, and Niemans found plenty to interact with that evening. On display for the inaugural exhibition were such artifacts of the trade as columnist Ernie Pyle's typewriter and the announcement of the start of the Civil War that ran in The Charleston Mercury. In attractions geared more to the public than to hard-edged Fourth Estate cynics, visitors could touch video screens and listen to the likes of Walter Cronkite opine about their craft—or live out their aspirations to be the next Peter Jennings by performing their own TV news "standups" in front of live video cameras.

Perhaps more gratifying for Niemans was the Newseum's News History Wall, an interactive "wall" of photographs and other displays that recognizes the work of 557 distinguished journalists. Among those featured are Lucius Nieman, whose bequest to Harvard originally endowed the Nieman program, as well as 17 Nieman Fellows ranging from former Chicago Daily News reporter Ed Lahey (NF '39) to former Des Moines Register Editor Geneva Overholser (NF '86) and Curator Kovach (NF '89). Other Niemans also featured were Harry S. Ashmore '42, Hodding Carter Jr. '40, Maria Jimena Duzan '92, Tim Giago '91, Ellen Goodman '74, Anthony Lewis '57, Peter Lisagor '49, Catherine Mackin '68, Bob Maynard '66, Jack Nelson '62, Eugene Roberts '62, John Seigenthaler '59, Tom Wicker '58 and William Worthy '57. Compelling, too, was a block-long video news "wall" featuring excerpts from the day's news.

The multiplicity of news media on display at the Newseum seemingly set the stage for a spirited after-dinner discussion that evening. Following remarks by curator Kovach about ongoing activities at the Nieman Foundation, several former fellows asked about the wisdom of including television journalists in the Nieman program given the allegedly low-brow content of much of what appears on TV. Kovach defended the presence of TV journalists, noting that in his experience Niemans from the video world were no less committed to maintaining and advancing high standards of news reporting than their print counterparts.

Photo: Milwaukee County Historical Society

Lucius Nieman (1857-1935) was 25 when he bought into The Milwaukee Journal. In 1919 he won a Pulitzer Prize for hiring translators to expose German propaganda in the German-American press during World War I. His $1 million endowment to Harvard University established the Nieman Foundation. "Only a journalist has office hours," he said. "A newspaperman never rests."

Kathryn Kross, '95, a producer at "Nightline," also rallied to the defense of TV journalists as Niemans. She reported that her year at Harvard had deepened her resolve to present more serious and topical material on the popular ABC late-night show. Kross pointed to one tangible result in particular: a recent piece she had produced with Nightline correspondent Robert Krulwich on the controversy over the growth of "defined contribution" pension plans, such as 401(k)'s, versus more traditional "defined benefit" plans and the implications of this shift for America's workers—not exactly the standard fare of downscale tabloid television.

In the end, both the Newseum tour and the give-and-take after dinner underscored the dynamism of our profession. Surveys show that roughly 70 percent of Americans now get their primary news from television; as a result, excluding TV journalists from the Nieman program would seem a sure-fire recipe for rendering the program irrelevant to today's journalistic world. It may be a long way from Ernie Pyle's typewriter to talking heads on video screens, but the Newseum served to remind us that our business constantly reinvents itself for new generations of journalists and for a changing public that, come what may, still relies on us to chronicle and analyze the news. ■

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