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# NIEMAN REPORTS

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VOL. XLI, No. 1, SPRING 1987

ANNE WYMAN describes the agony of deadline writing —  
and the ecstasy when the work is completed.

JAMES H. OTTAWAY, JR. calls for a more balanced concept  
between newspaper profit and journalistic excellence.

HERB BLOCK accepts the Elijah Parish Lovejoy Award with  
cogent words about Freedom of the Press.

MARIO M. CUOMO addresses the New York Press Club.  
He both chides and praises reporters on their responsibilities.

THOMAS WINSHIP censures the inadequate coverage of  
environmental problems in the print media.

## BOOKS

RICHARD COHEN writes a moving review about a disappearing people.

ROBERT COLES on the rich who toil not neither do they spin.

RICHARD DUDMAN on prize-winning newspaper writing.

H.D.S. GREENWAY on the war that went on and on.

RAY HOLTON on labor, unions, and CEO's of the steel industry.

MICHAEL JANEWAY on the history of the Harvard University Press.

ROBERT MANNING on two reviews about an astonishing picture magazine.

PASQUALE MICCICHE on Russian journalism under the czars.

MORTON MINTZ on healthy readers or wealthy newspapers.

JAN STUCKER on newspaper women who made and make journalism history.

WALLACE TURNER on an inspirational walk in an Arkansas potato patch.

# The Great Engine

Of the Corporation of the Goosequill — of the Press . . . of the Fourth Estate. . .

There she is — The Great Engine — she never sleeps.

She has her ambassadors in every quarter of the world — her courtiers upon every road. Her officers march along with armies, and her envoys walk into statesmen's cabinets. They are ubiquitous.

— William Makepeace Thackeray  
1811-1863

In the years since Thackeray wrote this definition of the working press, members of the Fourth Estate have continued their restless travels to all points of the compass. Reporters have filed stories from icy polar regions and stifling tropics, from mountains of dizzying altitude and the opaque darkness under the sea, and from global battlefields and the frontiers of scientific laboratories. Some journalists have already applied to NASA to be the first who can file under the simple dateline: Space. Meanwhile, others of their colleagues busily follow the twists and turns of political trails, boardroom policies, and breaking news. This is the norm, historically.

Today the news behind the news is less its ubiquity and more its newsgathering circumstances. Freedom of the press is threatened by governmental constraints — the degree of severity being in direct proportion to the country of origin. Now the Great Engine's journey toward truth is beset with difficulties and the well-being of the messengers is at risk.

Irony in the extreme exists when a reporter's situation develops into

a duplication of those reported upon — i.e., when journalists themselves are targets for violence or are detained or imprisoned. (In fact, the increase of such incidents has fostered the formation of several organizations that monitor the safety and professional health of the "Corporation of the Goosequill.")

What is new and unusual is not only the frequency, but also the universality of peril engendered by reporters on "routine" assignments. To be sure, the Great Engine never sleeps, but it proceeds with caution along every road.

In this issue of *NR*, we arrive at the domestic arena, where the profession is well served by Mario Cuomo's brief on the state of the press, its force for good, and the present dangers to its freedom.

Herb Block, a long-time champion of those who wield modern goosequills, brandishes the foil of political cartooning as a weapon to guard against attackers of the First Amendment and abusers of human rights.

Tom Winship exhorts the Fourth Estate to regain its leadership role in setting the agenda for healthy growth and calling attention to the important "social, economic, and psychological concerns of the day."

James Ottaway examines the diversity of newspaper ownership, whether from a stance of private privilege or public trust.

Anne Wyman kicks at the tires and looks under the hood of the marvelous press machine to see what makes it go. Writers who drive at a slow pace share their techniques for getting started in the deadline race.

Reviewers in the "Books" section are the "courtiers upon every road," including the way to the complexity of the U.S. steel industry, the gains

and losses of university publishing houses, and the social responsibility of advertising tobacco products. Stories about stories provide an anthology of prize-winners, and early members of the Fourth Estate — some are women — march across the pages. A question is raised regarding class structure: How democratic is our democracy? Two "coffee table" books encapsulate the past fifty years. The American convulsion that was the Vietnam War is viewed anew by a senior correspondent. On the other side of the world, another journalist uncovers the taproot of his identity.

Let there be no doubt that officers of the Great Engine "march along with armies." In "Nieman Notes," news items about Nieman Fellows, the martial cadences are pervasive. One alumnus in South Africa has been detained and jailed without charges — again. Another in Peru was held briefly, interrupting his pursuit of a guerrilla story. In this country, a publisher from Central America lives in enforced exile. A foreign correspondent in the Middle East and several colleagues were set upon by a group ordinarily stereotyped as "innocents" — but this band of children had accurate throwing arms and attacked the journalists by stoning them. One Nieman was struck severely, his blood spilled out; he lost consciousness, and had to be taken to the hospital.

These envoys of the marvelous machine did not walk into "statesmen's cabinets." Their stride was into the line of fire.

Violence, along with the Great Engine, is ubiquitous.

T.B.K.L.

# NIEMAN REPORTS

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# Writing Under the Gun; Getting Started

Anne C. Wyman

*Reporters, novelists, and poets have adhesive bonds — writers block and deadlines.*

I really began thinking about this talk during the World Series.

All reporters live with deadlines. In fact, it's axiomatic that reporters won't write until the deadline is facing them. But these were deadlines of a different order of magnitude. Most of the games ended after midnight — two in the playoffs and one in the Series went into extra innings. And losses turned into wins, or vice versa, in the last minutes.

In that infamous game Game 6, the Red Sox were within one strike-out of winning, three times in the second half of the 10th inning. (Top of 10th was 3-3. Sox got 2. Then Mets got 3 on wild pitch by Bob Stanley and Buckner error.) It was a game the Sox couldn't lose — But they did — 5-6.

And, every morning, there would be ten stories in the *Globe* — for people who had watched the whole thing on television. Working under that kind of pressure, I think you go into a kind of overdrive. Stories are written before the game and during the game. And then they're rewritten entirely after the game.

Anne C. Wyman is assistant Metro Editor of The Boston Globe. She gave this talk to the Examiner Club, in December at the Union Club in Boston.



The *Globe's* sports editor, Vince Doria, told me the writers had 45 minutes — sometimes as little as 10 minutes to do it — writing on portable computers, filing by telephone to a special copy desk in the sports department in Boston.

People develop a 15-minute writing mode or a 30-minute mode, he said. "If you get stuck, you have your note, facts, words, here's what was said. You get started." The news writers can sometimes add a top and a bottom to the running story and save the rest.

But for a columnist like Leigh Montville, writing an essay about what happened in the game as a whole is much harder. Leigh told me that he wrote 44 columns in 24 days, including 3 Sunday columns and 3 about football.

The press box was extremely crowded, wires everywhere. "The guy on the left of you would be humming," he told me. "The guy on the right would have a tic. People would be passing coke back and forth over your head. You do what you have to do. But it's like running a race with your foot in a bucket."

And then, as we kept talking, he said, "It's when you think you're really going to do something good, that you're in trouble."

To a degree, this is the daily fare of newspaper people. It's why Thornton Wilder once wrote that "reporting — which can be admirable in itself — is poles apart from shaping concepts."

But writing under the gun this way

isn't exclusive to journalists, or even to writers. Painters, musicians — probably judges and politicians — also have have to do it and I imagine they also have trouble getting started.

For novelists and poets — and painters — the pressure to write may be more personal than professional.

"Matisse the man," said his biographer, Pierre Schneider, "existed only to house and fuel the ruthless painting machine of Matisse the artist." Matisse himself said he was "driven" and noted he was following the instructions of his childhood to "hurry up."

In an article about Edmund Wilson last summer, Joseph Epstein asks why Wilson wrote in so much detail and in such a trivial way about his own marital sex-life. The reason, says Epstein, is that Wilson was a Grapho-maniac. "Nothing really existed for him until he recorded it."

After finishing his third book, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, Joseph Conrad, who was 40 at the time, spoke of "the revulsion of feeling before the accomplished task," but he said, "I understood that I had done with the sea and that henceforth I had to be a writer."

And then you have an author like Hervey Allen who wrote *Anthony Adverse*. James Thurber, who knew him, said Allen told him, "he could close his eyes, lie down on a bed, and hear the voices of his ancestors. Furthermore, there was a sort of angel-like creature that danced along his pen when he was writing. . . ."

"He wasn't balmy by any means,"

says Thurber. "He just felt he was in communication with some sort of metaphysical recorder."

Contrary to popular opinion, very few newspaper writers have a metaphysical recorder. In fact, there are wry posters about stress here and there in the City Room. And a recent in-house booklet on writers block drew something like seventy entries from writers who had suffered the disease, including the editor, Jack Driscoll.

Coming in to work the other day, I ran into Ellen Goodman and asked her about it. She said, "I haven't suffered from it very much; reporters don't. . . . You just lower your expectations. . . . Writers block is for those who want every word to be perfect. . . . You can't do that and stay in newspaper biz. . . . You just want to get it in the paper. If it isn't very good — if it's a B instead of an A — you hope people don't read the paper that day . . . and go on to the next . . . that's my philosophy."

William Buckley is famous for writing his three weekly columns in 20 minutes apiece.

In an article for the *Times* — which he says took him about one hour to write — Buckley notes that John Kennedy is reported to have thought for 15 hours a day for six days about how to respond to the Cuban Missile Crisis. . . . He should have followed his initial impulse and bombed hell out of them, Buckley suggests.

He notes that Anthony Trollope wrote 250 words every 15 minutes in longhand. . . . If he had had a Kaypro computer he could have written not 3,500 words a day but 16,800 words a day, Buckley says.

Another prodigious writer, Georges Simenon wrote 150 novels as Simenon, plus 350 under other names. His first novel, published when he was 17, was written in 10 days. . . . He told interviewers from the *Paris Review* there would be a two-day preliminary period. He would check his calendar, consult his doctor, then write steadily — a

chapter each day — for not more than 11 days. If he got interrupted, he threw away the previous chapters and never returned to that novel.

But, if there are speed writers, a lot of journalists — daily and otherwise — suffer over their prose.

Reviewing a new biography of Red Smith in the *Times* last June, Wilfred Sheed commented that "The uninitiated might think the sports guy merely has to pump his way round and round the same old sports calendar — 'Making it new,' in Ezra Pound's words — every time around. . . . Column writing can be deceptively, and for Smith, excruciatingly difficult — harder in some sense than a sonnet a day, because it has no fixed form. . . .

"Sometimes," she said, "I have two ideas; one is not strong enough to carry the column so I have to spot weld. . . . I think I'm not logical. . . . It's all pick and shovel. And making sure you know what you're talking about."

*Globe* columnist Martin Nolan contrasts her with Art Buchwald "who got it down to a formula." Of course, says, Nolan, Buchwald makes it up; he doesn't have to be concerned with the facts. McGrory is out and about talking to people hearing things. She writes and rewrites and rewrites again.

Getting started — what deMaupassant called the act of "getting black on white" — is the hardest part. It reminds me of flying where people

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Ellen Goodman: "Writers block is for those who want every word to be perfect. You can't do that and stay in newspaper biz . . . you just want to get in the paper."

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"Since a good lead paragraph will sometimes deliver a whole column for you on a platter," Sheed wrote, "Red really agonized over these. But he never took the second paragraph for granted either. . . . One occasionally wished he would take his hands off the controls and let 'er rip. But his search for the perfect sentence precluded that."

Mary McGrory writes an 800-word column three times a week — and has done it since 1960. Each column takes her four hours in writing time alone. I called her up and asked her about it.

"I bleed," she said. "I put things in the wrong order. Sometimes I write all the way through and find the lead is at the end. . . . A lot of people have it all in their heads. I don't know what I'm going to write till I start putting it down.

would say the difficulty is taking off and landing.

Ritual helps. Ernest Hemingway supposedly sharpened twenty pencils. Willa Cather read from the Bible.

Recently I met *Globe* columnist Charles Claffey in the office on a Saturday. He was just back from a swing through the South for a piece on Southern writers, and said he had come in to get his mail and type up his notes, so he could start writing without distraction on Monday. . . . Since I doubt if he got through his mail or finished his notes, I took the visit as part of a ritual — getting in touch with his desk, planting the scene where he would soon be writing in the front of his mind.

And there are rituals that have to do with the material.

Henry James, who wrote 20

novels, 112 stories and much more, said his inspiration came in the form of "the precious particle . . . the stray suggestion, the wandering word . . . the vague echo. . . . The novelist's imagination," he wrote, "wincing as at the prick of some sharp point."

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Mary McGrory: "I bleed. . . . I don't know what I'm going to write till I start putting it down."

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Frank O'Connor depended on four-line "treatments." Otherwise he felt his concept had not been reduced to its ultimate simplicity. He said he wrote "any kind of rubbish that will cover the main outlines of a story. Then I can begin to write."

Nelson Algren, on the other hand, finds his plots simply by writing page after page.

But what are you writing about, in the end? One of the biggest obstacles is lack of confidence in the truth of your vision or in your ability to translate it.

I really responded the other day, when I saw an article about Vance Bourjaily, author of *A Game Men Play*, saying that he's still bothered — 16 years later — by his failure to write a play based on a visit he made to Biafra with Kurt Vonnegut.

Bourjaily recalled being "treated as if we were the entire diplomatic, journalistic, and cultural presence of the United States. It was a charade, played on one side by courteous men to help evade despair and on the other, by a couple of middle-aged white novelists with no power to help."

Joyce Cary's first published novel, *Assisa Saved*, did not appear until he was 40. He'd written many novels before but was never satisfied. "They

raised political and religious questions I found I could not answer," he wrote. . . . The best novel he ever wrote — about a million words of it — he said, "is still kicking around upstairs."

I once spent a week at the *Globe's* expense traveling around the edges of Scotland looking at the impact of offshore oil in relation to proposed development off Georges Bank.

After flying over some quiet North Sea rigs and some fields resodded for sheep — all showing no signs of harm — I met with the head of the Aberdeen Trawlmen's Union. I was sure that he'd be an enemy of oil.

But he told me things had never been better. The rigs provided a rich ground for fish. The business had brought 24-hour access to Aberdeen Harbor which had formerly been shut off from the sea by a massive lock that was closed at low tide. There was at least one new hotel in town, a new department of oil technology at the University of Aberdeen, and new life in the old town.

fifteen years ago when she was working on her biography of Lyndon B. Johnson, telling a small group of us that the hardest thing for her was to stop doing research and start writing.

You're still looking for the perfect quote, the nuance that makes the story come alive, that fact that puts it all into perspective, that shifts the whole focus of the piece, broadens or narrows it.

The danger, of course, is to get so bogged down in research that you no longer know what you're trying to say.

And so some journalists — Rudyard Kipling was one at various points in his life — rely on fallout. Kipling said he never took notes, except for names and addresses, believing that what he didn't remember was not worth writing.

Ultimately, on a newspaper — but I suspect in every piece of factual work — a deadline forces you to go with what you have.

But what DO you have? You start off writing a piece — let's say —

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James Thurber in speaking of Hervey Allen, author of *Anthony Adverse*: When writing, an "angel-like creature danced along his pen. He wasn't balmy. . . . He just felt . . . in communication with some sort of metaphysical recorder."

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I figured *Globe* readers wouldn't believe it. And I couldn't prove it by a week's visit. I worried, too, that my standing as chief editorial writer would give my view more weight than it deserved. I told my colleagues what I'd seen and felt and it influenced what we said, but I never wrote directly about that trip. And I still feel like a coward.

That brings up the subject of research. When do you cut it off?

I remember Doris Kearns, maybe

about animal intelligence; your sources tell you the measure is animal language; but language quickly gets to questions of jokes and lies among animals. Researchers talk about self-awareness — and you're back to intelligence.

In the end, on that project, my editor became so fascinated with the intelligence aspect that he insisted on leading the piece with a rather iffy detail about bees being able to pre-locate a source of food that was

moved away from the hive, not in increments of twenty feet each day, but in multiples.

That lead meshed oddly with the rest of the story and made me uncomfortable. Perhaps I should have rewritten the piece — which was certainly a B, instead of an A.

Another way to get stuck, of course, is to become too preoccupied with the way you write.

Francois Mauriac said the younger novelists are too obsessed with technique. "This preoccupation hampers them and embarrasses them in their creation," he said. "A novelist spontaneously works out the techniques that fit his nature."

And Henri Peyre, the French scholar at Yale, notes that critics "have more than once driven gifted writers into discouraged silence."

In a book called *Writers and Their Critics*, he observes that Herman Melville — after an initial success with *Typee*, *Omoo*, *White Jacket*, *Moby Dick* (1851) — was misunderstood. Melville wrote in a letter to Hawthorne, "What I feel most moved to write, that is banned — it will not pay."

Peyre also relates that the critics said *Swann's Way* was "not a novel" and called it eccentric, decadent, obscure.

"Keats," Peyre wrote, "was not killed by a few venomous reviews. . . but is it unreasonable to suppose that a little more recognition would have encouraged him to write more poetry in the last years of his life. . . ? Would not Beaudelaire have composed more *Fleurs du Mal* between 1857 and 1867, and perhaps more of his amazingly penetrating articles. . . ?"

There are more recent examples, too. In separate articles in *Time* magazine this summer, the magazine noted that, while the prolific Graham Greene stayed in view, Eric Ambler spent years between books and, like one of his characters, eventually slipped into the fog [of Hollywood].

It is noteworthy, perhaps, that the review of the new Ambler biography

was a single column. But horror story writer Stephen King got a cover story.

And, in that article, King is quoted as saying that writing is "a matter of exercise . . . if you write for an hour and a half a day for ten years you're gonna turn into a good writer."

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Wilfred Sheed on Red Smith: "Column writing can be deceptively, and for Smith, excruciatingly difficult — harder . . . than a sonnet a day. . . . Red really agonized. . . ."

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For all its faults and travails, writing appears to be something its practitioners will not give up easily.

Even Leigh Montville, who was angry and disappointed about the ordeal he'd been through for the World Series, said he'd never swap jobs, even to be a news writer. "What's the loss of a ball through your legs to a guy like Buckner," he said, "compared to a guy who is told that his wife has cancer."

For the obsessed Georges Simenon, "Writing is not a profession, but a vocation of unhappiness." Thornton Wilder said, "Writing brings you perhaps not so much pleasure as deep absorption."

"The act of writing," James Thurber told the *Paris Review*, "is either something the writer dreads or actually likes. . . . And I actually like it. . . . Even the rewriting's fun. You're getting somewhere, whether it seems to move or not." (On the other hand, *The Train on Track Six* was rewritten fifteen complete times.)

William Faulkner told the group at West Point, "A demon drives you to write. If a writer has to rob his mother, he will not hesitate; the 'Ode to A Grecian Urn' is worth any

number of old ladies." (He rewrote *The Sound and the Fury* five times. It was still not complete till fifteen years after the book was published. But he always said it was his favorite book.)

Tilly Olsen has said she was unable to write for years because of commitments to her husband and children. That's been a special problem for women writers, I think.

It's one Olsen shared with Ellen Currie.

In her twenties, Currie had been published in *The New Yorker*, recommended by Katherine Ann Porter for a Yaddo Fellowship, and signed for a novel by Dial. Then she was struck with a writers' block that lasted for twenty years — until she attended a poets' workshop for women and eventually a writing course at Columbia University.

Her novel, *Available Light*, was published last year, when she was 55. It is an acclaimed first novel.

In part, Currie blames the fact that she had an ailing, elderly mother to care for. In part she blames the contract — echoing what Leigh Montville and Ellen Goodman say about having overly high expectations.

"I had such a tremendous thing to deliver," she said when I called her up. And, talking about meshing family commitments and writing, she said the problem is that "the work is so voluptuous, so tempting, so consuming. . . . If you're going to do it, you must do the best you can."

By the time she was free to write, Currie told me, the block was "burned in." Yet somehow, she felt she had progressed as a writer in spite of the block. When she began this novel she said she felt sure of what she was doing.

Now Currie dreams of giving up her job at J. Walter Thompson and writing full time. "It's terrifying, yes, but I've been so terrified in my time, I can't believe I'll be that afraid any more. People say writing is lonely. I don't know. If you've never had the chance, it seems like paradise." □

# Quality, Profit, and the American Newspaper

James H. Ottaway, Jr.

*What effect does "media merger madness" have on newspapers?*

**T**he first question we were asked to address is "Where is the ownership of newspapers going?"

The concentration of newspaper ownership has been much criticized during the twenty-six years since I went to work on the police, fire, and hospital beat at our first New England newspaper in Danbury, Connecticut.

Newspaper research expert John Morton at the brokerage firm of Lynch, Jones & Ryan, keeps the closest count of our concentration. His February 1986 tally of U.S. newspaper groups, using his broad definition of a group as two or more newspapers owned by the same company, totaled 156 groups owning 1,186 dailies with 49,773,000 paid circulation. That group count represents 70 percent of the 1,676 daily newspapers published in America at the end of 1985, and 79 percent of

their total 62,776,000 daily paid circulation.

It is interesting to note that publicly-owned newspaper groups published fewer than one-third of group newspapers with less than one-half of total group circulation. At the beginning of this year, public companies owned 280 newspapers — only 17 percent of all dailies — with 24.3 million circulation, while private groups ran 906 generally smaller newspapers with 25.4 million circulation.

I cite these numbers because they dramatize the considerable diversity of newspaper ownership that still exists in America today. The largest group in numbers of newspapers is Thomson Newspapers with 96 dailies and 1.5 million circulation. That's only 5.7 percent of all daily newspapers and 2.3 percent of total daily circulation. The largest group in total circulation, the public Gannett Company, owns 92 daily newspapers with 5.7 million ABC net paid circulation. That's only 5.5 percent of all U.S. daily newspapers and 9.0 percent of total daily circulation.

The American newspaper remains very diverse in its ownership and leadership when compared to other major industries or to anti-trust law definitions of undue concentration.

My opinions about the state of our profession, about the quality of newspapers in and out of group ownership, are certainly open to criticism as self-serving and biased. As chairman of a newspaper group, I live in a glass house, and should not

throw stones. But too often I think we suspend critical judgment of ourselves and our peers. My remarks are not given with any righteous sense of journalistic perfection within the Ottaway group of newspapers. I have a mixture of pride and daily discontent with the quality of our newspapers. I know we can and should do better, and preach that attitude to our publishers and editors.

There are excellent, publicly-owned newspaper groups run by people whose first purpose is to produce newspapers of journalistic excellence and vital public service, believing that readers, advertisers, and profits come as a result of their pursuit of high quality. Knight-Ridder Newspapers, winning seven Pulitzer Prizes this year, is a good example.

There are also some publicly-owned newspaper groups, dedicated primarily to the pursuit of profits for stockholders, which publish some very low-quality newspapers.

There are excellent family-owned community newspapers run by newspapermen and women who care deeply about the quality of their newspapers and the good of their employees and communities. They treat their newspapers as public trusts, not as private privileges of profit. In New England, I think of Rick Warren in Bangor, Maine; and in Massachusetts of the Rogers and Luceys in Lawrence; of Scott Low in Quincy; of Dick Steele and Bob Achorn in Worcester; and in Ver-

*James H. Ottaway, Jr. is chairman and chief executive officer of Ottaway Newspapers Inc. He is also senior vice president of Dow Jones and Company, publishers of The Wall Street Journal. He gave this talk before the Newspaper Group Panel at the Fall convention on October 7, 1986 of the New England Newspaper Association in Vergennes, Vermont.*



mont, of the Mitchells, father and son, in Rutland and Barre-Montpelier; of the Millers in Pittsfield; and of heroic Betty Ellis in Manchester, Connecticut.

Other good family-owned newspapers represented in this room could and should be mentioned, but I cite the amazing success of Betty Ellis in Manchester as a wonderful example of an excellent, new family-owned newspaper, run for quality first and profit second. She has surpassed the established local newspaper, which was run downhill by Duane Hagadane and the Scripps League Newspapers, whose first concerns were to throw out the unions, cut the staff, newshole, and local news coverage, and raise their profits.

Today Betty Ellis' *Journal Inquirer* has paid circulation of 43,800 and the Scripps' *Manchester Herald* has dropped from its 15,780 circulation in 1978, when Betty invaded Manchester, to 9,400 net paid in March of this year. "Quality *does* pay," she says.

Unfortunately, there are also some privately-owned newspapers that are just as poor as low-quality newspapers published by some groups — private and public. It is very hard to make general statements about the quality of American newspapers today that accurately apply to all.

The tougher question we should ask is, "What effect is concentration of newspaper ownership, the so-called media merger madness, having on the quality of American newspapers, on our editorial content and public service, and on public perceptions of the job we are doing to help democracy work and our free-enterprise economy flourish?"

Concentration of ownership must magnify both our virtues and our vices, but our problems run deeper.

I think we all suffer from professional schizophrenia. We are newspaper people and we are business people. We seek to print the truth and we seek to make profits. Some-

times these goals conflict; at all times they compete for our time and concentration. Which comes first? Which is more important? How do we strike a healthy balance between our search for newspaper quality and our need for sufficient newspaper profit to finance that quality?

And how do we balance the demands of our time and energy from at least five different businesses that we run: editorial, advertising, production, circulation, accounting, and data processing?

In groups of family-owned independent newspapers, we are all in a complex business in which it is very easy to lose track of our first priority and purpose, which I think should be to make better newspapers, not just to make more profits.

group newspapers, whose daily excellence is unpublicized.

Along the way, I also read a lot of very poor newspapers, with little local news, no enterprise reporting, and a dull sameness in the wire service budget stories and photos they use to fill too much of their small newsholes.

Most of us don't have time to read many different newspapers every day. But if you travel, you find great diversity, much good and much bad, in American journalism. This diversity reflects newspaper publishers' professional schizophrenia, our conflict between making more profits and making better newspapers.

There are disturbing trends in our industry that we should criticize and study more carefully and more

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## An eight-week traveling sabbatical leads to "an odyssey in search of editorial excellence."

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There are many encouraging trends in our profession today, many greatly improved newspapers we rarely hear about.

Last summer I took an eight-week sabbatical and traveled the country in what I called "An Odyssey in Search of Editorial Excellence." I visited some of the best newspapers I could find and asked a lot of questions of good editors about how they produce superior daily newspapers. I did not visit our newspapers or those in the largest public groups.

It was an exhilarating and encouraging experience. From Concord, New Hampshire, to Longview, Washington, from Fredericksburg, Virginia, to Escondido, California, I found commitment to first-class journalism in small to medium-size newspapers, in single family-owned, in private- and publicly-owned

often. I would like to speak about some of these trends in our profession, some of the practices of buying and selling newspapers today, which reduce the quality, slow the growth, and threaten the future of too many American newspapers. Too many for the good of us all.

The most damaging trend, I think, is the predominance of the profit motive over the search for truth, editorial quality, and public service in more and more newspaper owners, publishers, and managers — buyers and sellers, group and independent.

Too many of us talk about newspapers as "our product" — in unconscious revelation of a manufacturing mentality — instead of "our public trust" or "our special responsibility under the First Amendment."

The invasion of investment bankers into the buying and selling

of American newspapers has led to too much talk about "realizing asset values" or "building asset values." We ought to be publishing newspapers; not running banks!

The high market value of newspapers and the dynamics of the marketplace have forced unfortunate family fights which have led to the sale of independent newspapers that did not have to be sold for tax or economic reasons. I think it is a sad trend. Too often it has led to a reduction in the quality of daily newspapers.

negotiations between newspaper publishers with common principles and backgrounds in our profession — sellers and buyers — sometimes brought together by brokers whose only business was newspapers and who knew newspaper people and the profession well.

The result of these high auction prices for newspapers today is the growing ownership of newspapers by some groups which have profit-oriented priorities, low editorial quality standards, accumulated earnings and current cash flow

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## The heightened profit motive over the search for truth, editorial quality, and public service in owners, publishers, and managers is a damaging trend.

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I emphasize strongly that this is not always the case. Many well-run groups greatly improve the newspapers they buy. I think we have. But too often in recent years, some groups, public and private, have paid prices that were so high, with multiples of revenues or net profits that were so high that severe cost-cutting, gradual or immediate, reductions of staff, newshole, local coverage, news quality, and reader service, have been required for the purchaser to make a reasonable return on such expensive investments.

Where some selling families have enjoyed excessively high prices, the employees, readers, advertisers, and communities left behind with less public-spirited new owners have suffered lower quality journalism.

Every situation is different, but more and more in today's seller's market, newspapers are sold to the highest bidder in "controlled auctions" with selected groups submitting offers to investment bankers, lawyers or accountants, instead of the old-fashioned way of private

which they would rather invest in acquisitions than declare as taxable dividends, paying prices so high that they must reduce the quality of their new newspaper acquisitions to get their money back in a reasonable period of time.

Again, I may be accused of self-serving bias, but, in my opinion, some of the highest profit-margin, lowest quality newspapers in America today are published by two of the largest newspaper groups — the semi-private Thomson Newspapers of North America and the private Donrey Media Group in Fort Smith, Arkansas. This suggests to me that it is materialistic management philosophy, not public stockhold pressure that pushes men who manage these groups to run their newspapers for maximum short-term profit. Thomson Newspapers of North America is semi-private. Kenneth Thomson owns about 70 percent with about 30 percent sold to the public. Don Reynolds owns all of the stock of his group of 55 dailies.

There is another way. It is possible to make a reasonable profit and to run excellent newspapers at the same time. Many newspaper publishers do. We *all* can run very healthy newspapers and profitable companies by investing in good people and in modern equipment, and by demanding high quality performance.

We shouldn't think about newspapers as "products," as if they were coming off assembly lines, or trade them like commodities. We shouldn't grow so big that we cannot pay close attention to the quality and content of each of the newspapers we publish.

We group managers should not let our commendable policy of local autonomy degenerate into a laissez-faire policy of "don't know and don't care" as long as our newspapers meet a rigid group-wide operating profit formula.

We all can read and critique our daily newspapers — daily — with that discontent that Monty Curtis of the American Press Institute used to preach to shake us out of complacency with our newspapers as they are today, and to inspire us to higher standards of journalistic excellence.

There always will be a struggle in our companies, in our individual newspapers, and in our souls between the newspaperman and woman and the businessman and woman, between public trust and private profit. But I think some of us need to strike a better balance between the search for profit and the search for editorial quality and public service. They are not incompatible; but too much profit can kill the quality necessary for survival and growth.

Finally, I think we need more incisive, intelligent, knowledgeable criticism of all daily newspapers that will embarrass the worst among us into spending more money for good people, higher quality, and lower profit margins.

*continued to page 24*

# Words and Images as Weapons

Herb Block

*More good investigative reporting is one way to defend a free press.*

Herb Block (HERBLOCK), Washington Post editorial page cartoonist, received the 34th Elijah Parish Lovejoy Award from Colby College. The annual award is given to a journalist for outstanding work that contributes to freedom of the press. He gave this address at the convocation on November 7, 1986.

Lovejoy, an Illinois editor, was a 1826 Colby graduate who was fatally shot when defending his press from a mob that opposed his editorials against slavery.

I'm delighted and honored to receive the Elijah Lovejoy award. To be tapped for it is kind of an awesome and happy surprise.

It's also a special honor for me because of my great respect for the members of the committee who make it and because it commemorates Elijah Parish Lovejoy, who gave his life fighting for freedom of the press, and — at a time of slavery — for human freedom.

Opponents of Elijah Lovejoy destroyed his presses four times, and each time he started over with new printing equipment but the same

principles until a mob once more destroyed his press and killed him.

We are all his beneficiaries, and we can best honor him by carrying on his battles.

Today there are dangers from government itself, including threats of criminal prosecution and unfavorable court decisions. The weapons of the press are still words and images. There is still power in the pen — or the computer terminal — if we use them effectively.

I'd like to say a few words about words. In my daily work, I don't get to use many of them and so I mull them over a lot.

"National security" has a fine ring to it, but often serves as a cover for government bumbles and misdeeds, and we can well be suspicious of it.

We also can be careful of the term "defense," as in "defense spending." It doesn't seem like the right word for \$7,000 coffee pots and \$640 toilet seats. Or worse, for untested and non-working weapons that keep arms contractors busy but actually endanger our own troops.

There are better and more accurate words: Pentagon plans; military jobs programs; or, at the very least, Defense Department spending.

One of the most troublesome words is "conservative." It might have applied, say, to President Eisenhower, but hardly to those people who considered Eisenhower and George Marshall to be communist dupes.

But such people, or their political descendants, are now described as "conservatives." If members of a group want schools to teach that the earth is flat, they are likely to be



described as "conservatives," as opposed to world-is-round people, who must be "liberals." Except for Lyndon Larouche supporters, there is hardly any group today so far over the right field wall that they won't be described as "conservatives." They are also described as "anti-communist," as if they were more opposed to communism than the rest of us.

Political classifications are not easy these days. But whether the alternative term is Radical Right or New Right, or Conservakooks, or something else, there have to be more accurate words for some of the far-out people now called "conservatives."

A word that's come into use lately is "privatization" — the selling off of government properties. Even when government officials turn over public

Herb Block is the syndicated political cartoonist at The Washington Post. He is a three-time Pulitzer Prize winner and a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is the only living cartoonist whose work hangs in the National Gallery of Art.



resources to private companies at knock-down prices, this is not called a scandal. It is "privatization." What we need to be even more concerned about is the privatization of government—the notion that once an administration is in office, the government belongs to the officials running it and that what they do is not the public's business.

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The weapons of the press are words. . . There is still power in the pen — or the computer terminal — if we use them effectively.

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For the past half dozen years the Freedom of Information Act has been under attack. More and more material is now stamped secret or classified. This administration has even reversed the policies of previous presidents who worked to declassify tons of old out-of-date documents. It has even reclassified material that had already been made public, like dropping it down a memory hole. And information known to foreign governments has been kept secret here at home.

These policies have not contributed to "national security." They have increased the number of people handling classified material and made it harder to keep legitimate secrets. As someone said, when everything is secret, nothing is secret.

In the name of national security, the present administration has tried to impose lifetime censorship on former government employees on a broad scale.

The director of the CIA, William J. Casey, has threatened newspapers and broadcast networks with

criminal prosecution if they report government activities he decides to call sensitive. When a man was about to be tried for spying, Casey even went so far as to warn papers against publishing information that might come out at the public trial.

He also said in a speech that he questioned "whether a secret intelligence agency and the Freedom of Information Act can co-exist for very long" and that "the unwillingness of foreign intelligence agencies to share information will dwindle unless we get rid of the Freedom of Information Act." When I drew a cartoon showing him calling for repeal of that act, he issued a disclaimer, saying that he never advocated its total repeal. Perhaps his speeches needed to be translated with a magic decoder ring.

Only a few weeks ago we learned of a National Security adviser's memo about Libya that described what he called a "disinformation" campaign — one that managed to disinform the American public, if not our potential enemies. George Orwell might have smiled at that one, too.

Three years ago, when the invasion of Grenada was unfolding, a government official told the press



that the idea of such an action was "preposterous" while at the same time the Castro government knew the facts and was reporting them.

And lately the administration has conceded the accuracy of Russian accounts of closed-door summit conversation in Iceland.

It bothers me, and I think it should bother all of us, when we cannot believe our own government — when we have to face the fact that some unfriendly government reported events more truthfully than ours. It bothers me when the government is more interested in damning the press and plugging leaks than it is in leveling with its own people. It is not a private government. It belongs to all of us.

But here is an added twist. While there has been privatizing of the public's government, the government has made more and more intrusions into the privacy of individuals.

These have included proposals for domestic spying by the CIA — for widespread government use of so-called lie detectors — and for large scale government tests by urinalysis, in what might be called drugnet operations. There also has been a

chipping away at rules that protect us from search operations and that insure rights of suspects.

And the United States Supreme Court lately upheld a state law that says some sexual activities, performed in private by consenting adults, are criminal.

In our country, where there is supposed to be a presumption of innocence, Attorney General Edwin Meese said, "You don't have many suspects who are innocent of a crime. That is contradictory. If a person is innocent of a crime, then he is not a suspect." Despite the fact that there was a transcript of that interview, Mr. Meese first claimed that he was misquoted, and later stated he had not meant what he said. Ironically, before he was confirmed for his present position, Meese himself had been the subject of a special investigation.

He also has maintained — despite the clear writings of Jefferson and Madison — that the Founding Fathers would find the Supreme Court's view on separation of church and state "somewhat bizarre." And he has called the American Civil Liberties Union a "criminals lobby."

In a speech last month, Mr. Meese suggested that Supreme Court rulings are not the law of the land and found it "astonishing" that the Court's unanimous 1954 decision for school desegregation should apply to other states besides the one in which the suit was brought. Mr. Meese is pretty astonishing himself, and seems to keep topping himself. Last week he gave a speech on drugs in which he suggested that employers conduct surveillance of employees in the work place, in locker rooms, parking lots, and "nearby taverns if necessary." This is not a sequence from a Doonesbury comic strip — this is the Attorney General of the United States.

The commission that reported to him on pornography is the same one that sent, on official stationery, an intimidating letter to Seven-Elevens and other chain stores, targeting

magazines that the stores later removed from their shelves.

A few weeks ago, the Federal Bureau of Investigation raided some video stores in Virginia and Maryland because they were carrying so-called adult — or X-rated videos. This was done as part of what was called "a general investigation," without anyone being arrested or charged.



You don't have to be a subscriber to *Playboy* or *Penthouse* to ask if you want a government agency or commission to decide what perfectly legal publications can be sold in stores. You don't have to be a pornographic video fan to ask what the Department of Justice's FBI is doing raiding video stores not even accused of anything illegal.

The past month has been a busy one for many federal authorities. Patricia Lara, a woman living in Latin America, who is a graduate of New York's Columbia School of Journalism, had a visa to return to the United States to attend an honors convocation at the university. But when she arrived here, she was thrown into jail, and then sent back

to Latin America — all this without any specific explanation why.

It bothers me when government officials adopt the idea that the state is supreme over the rights of individuals and that officials need not account for their actions.

Perhaps a bulldozing attitude is infectious. I see and hear broadcasts that present people with opposing views. And I notice on some of these programs that there are a few people who not only want their own time on the tube but who keep interrupting and cutting into other people's time — sometimes crying "No No No!" or "Bah! Horsefeathers!" Some people seem to have a kind of fanatic zeal, which makes them feel that anything goes.

I bring this up because I think it illustrates something basic. It is not just a matter of "liberals" versus "conservatives," but between those who believe in the expression of differences and those who want freedom for themselves but not for the other guy. There are those who are not satisfied with their own freedom to worship or not worship as they please — they want to make sure that the other guy and the other guy's kids worship.

One political evangelist recently suggested that Christians feel more strongly than others about things like "love of country."

I think it's obvious from any study of history that freedom has defended religion better than religion has defended freedom. The late Elmer Davis, a great commentator, said that we in America have had a national faith — a faith in freedom. But it is that faith that is today being eroded by people in government as well as out of government, who would make religious belief a substitute for a belief in freedom.

The First Amendment, which protects religion, also provides for free speech, free assembly, and a free press. There was never an expectation that free speech and free press would guarantee individual wisdom or accuracy — or proper decorum —



only that they would serve to insure a free system.

Actually, the press today is far more responsible than it was in the early days of our country, when outrageous accusations and slurs were common currency. Yet today the press as a whole is probably criticized more than it was many years ago.

We all find things in the papers and on television that grate on us, particularly intrusions on private grief — like the times when the television cameras focus on some distraught person and keep rolling while the tears roll. There have been enough tears on news programs to short circuit my TV set.

When a newsmagazine interviewed several people for their opinions on the press, one of the most interesting comments came from Frank Mankiewicz. He said that "whenever you see a news story you were part of, it is always wrong." I've talked to editors who agreed that this was too often the case. Tip O'Neill has said that "all politics is local." Maybe all journalism is local, too. The local speeches or garden club meetings are not as important as world summit conferences, but they are just the

places where readers can judge for themselves if the paper is getting things straight.

The other day, I saw one of those little signs they sell in gift shops. It said, "God loves you, and I'm trying." Fortunately we don't need to try to love what we see on television or in the papers in order to care about a free press.

I think one of the reasons for a resentment against the press lies simply in the fact that there are fewer multi-newspaper cities. When there were two or several papers in a city — and when political party loyalties were stronger than they are today — a loyal Republican could subscribe to a loyal Republican paper while Democrats subscribed to a Democratic paper. And the readers of one paper could declare that the other one was only suitable for the outhouse. Today we have many cities with single newspaper ownership, and there is no way editors are going to please all their readers, even giving them a variety of views.

But there is a more timeless reason why the press can always expect to make readers and government officials unhappy. Politicians who go in for press-bashing point out that we are not elected. That's right — and it's important that we're not. The founders did the electing when they decided that there should be a free press — a press which, in our system of checks and balances, would serve as a check on government itself. The fact that the press is not elected and is not subject to the same pressures as politicians, is what enables it to perform its critical role — and to say things that politicians don't say.

And since criticism of government means criticism of people who have been elected or of people appointed by elected officials — the press that criticizes official actions is likely to be running against current majority opinion. Complaints go with the territory. If everybody agreed with what we in the press were doing, and if the government felt we deserved a

pat on the head for bringing in the daily paper and fetching its slippers, we would have real cause to worry — and so would the country.

When I talk about the press as a critic and a check on all government, I don't forget the judiciary.

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The judiciary can stand a more searching review — some judges have made libel suits a substitute for national lottery — file a suit and maybe hit the jackpot for a few million dollars.

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Many judges and justices today could stand more searching review than they have had. In Tennessee, only three weeks ago, a federal judge ruled in favor of religious fundamentalists who complained of public school books that included readings from *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *The Wizard of Oz*. The judge held that the school should compensate the parents of those children.

In other cases, judges have made libel suits a kind of substitute for a national lottery. File any kind of a suit and maybe hit the jackpot for a few million dollars. More exciting than the television show, *Wheel of Fortune*, and almost anyone can play, or at least any corporate executives.

*Consumer Reports*, which is in the business of giving its best opinion on consumer products, was sued by a manufacturer of an audio product for the magazine's evaluation of it. An airplane manufacturer sued *The New York Times* and a book reviewer because the book reviewed was about the crash of a plane manufactured by that com-

pany. The lawsuits came to nothing, but they accomplished the purpose of helping to kill the book.

A lot of these suits should be thrown out of court.

The press can't help but feel chilled by some of these cases. But it can get up some steam of its own. Ned Chilton, publisher of the *Charleston Gazette* in West Virginia, has made it clear that he would sue lawyers who took part in bringing frivolous suits against his paper. And this has had a good effect in chilling such suits.

Newspapers also can do more to let readers know what many of these court suits mean. And they can let readers know about the judges in some of these cases. Who is the judge? What is his record? And who appointed him? Even life-time appointees are not immortals. They are not gods on Mount Olympus.

In 1985, columnist William Safire described then-judge Scalia as "the worst enemy of free speech in America today" — a view based on that judge's opinions in First Amendment cases. It would have been useful if more public attention had been drawn to this judge's record before the United States Senate unanimously confirmed him for the

Supreme Court. In one case Judge Scalia indicated that a newspaper's reputation for hard-hitting investigative reporting could be considered evidence of malice.

I think we need more good investigative reporting, not less. The way to defend freedom of the press is to use it.

In the press — and particularly in broadcasting — there is some fear that if you criticize government, you might be accused of not giving both sides of the story. But everybody already gets one side of the story from government officials in all the papers, on radio, and on television every day and night. And opposing politicians, looking at popularity ratings and playing it safe, don't necessarily keep the governing party in line.

We should not be frightened by our own polls or fearful of being accused of being partisan. The press often needs to get out in front of the politicians. And its voice should add volume to what the politician hears from the still small voice of conscience. The time when speaking up about abuses in government is most needed is when officials may be most popular and when few are pointing out their errors.

Government actions in recent years have had the "chilling effect" on the press we keep hearing about. But if anyone thinks hunkering down will help, he or she has only to see how the attacks upon our freedom have been stepped up. We need not just a defense, but a vigorous offense.

Elijah Lovejoy was a fighter who did not go gently into that good night. And with all respect to the many fine people who have gone to their martyrdoms more willingly than he did, my sentiments are closer to those expressed by General George Patton when he told his war-time troops, "It's not your job to die for your country; it's your job to make the other sonovabitch die for his country."

When government officials would curb basic freedoms, it's our job to

put them out of their jobs.

One thing more about Elijah Lovejoy and his fight to publish: His last printing press, in Alton, Illinois, was made possible through supporters who contributed financially, morally and physically to providing that press and literally defending it as a militia. The record of events showed that one of the attackers was killed by this Lovejoy militia, before the building they defended was set afire and Lovejoy was murdered.

I would like to pay tribute to that militia — those people who were not themselves working press but who defended its freedom.

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The press can use a militia — people who are not working press, but who know that its rights are their rights.

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For those who are not members of the press: Many may not agree with any of us in it — we frequently don't agree with each other. That's okay, and so is criticism of the press. But we all have a common interest in the free flow of information and views.

As in Lovejoy's time, the press can use a militia — in this case the understanding of people who are not themselves active members of the press, but who know that its rights are their rights.

I recall something that was said during the long period of McCarthyism. The speaker was Doris Fleenon, who was a great newspaper columnist. She said: "I wish I had some magic formula to suggest. There is none. There are no wonder men or wonder women. There are only you and I and others who believe in freedom." □



# The Freedom of the Press

Governor Mario M. Cuomo

*Its importance to this nation and what we must do to keep it strong.*

I've spoken on this subject frequently in the last few years. It's never been easy. The subject is complex, in part arcane and — I think unfortunately — more controversial than it should be.

It also involves some sensitive and fragile relationships — between the press and the public at large, between the press and public officials, and among members of the print and electronic press community itself.

My discussions — of the press, with the press — have occasionally produced unexpected reactions. That happened a couple of weeks ago, around election time.

A friend of mine in the press called me a few days ago to talk about the effect of my own attempts at constructive criticism. He said, "Mario, I know what you had in mind but I don't think it came out the way you wanted it to. Instead, you reminded me of the errant knight in the old story."

I know the old story. It's one of my favorites. It goes something like this: It's about the knight who left the castle to go riding out to do battle to gain one further element of distinction in the king's eyes, and another plume for his helmet. He was gone for two years.

One day the watch looked out and saw the knight returning across the plain, reeling in the saddle, his armor battered, bloody, beaten — a caricature of what he'd once been. They let down the drawbridge. The horse clattered across the moat, into the courtyard. The knight fell out of the saddle, at the feet of his king; and the king looked down and said, "Sir Knight, what has happened to you!"

And the knight said, "Sire, I have been out attacking, razing and pillaging your enemies on the north side of the mountain."

And the king said, "but I *have* no enemies on the north side of the mountain." To which the knight responded plaintively, "You do *now*, oh Sire!"

Matilda hasn't made it any easier for me. As I left Albany to come down here tonight, she gave me some last minute advice. She said:

"I know it's a difficult subject and a tough group. But don't be intimidated. And don't try to be charming, witty or intellectual. Just be yourself." I'll try.

The more I learn about government and especially about this democracy, the more deeply convinced I become that one of our greatest strengths as a people is our right to full and free expression.

No people have benefited more from the gift of free speech and a free press: Never before in history has the gift been so generously given, nor so fully used. From the very launching of our nation, these freedoms were regarded as essential protections against official repression.

When the geniuses who designed

this wonderful ship of state came to draw the blueprints, they remembered Britain and other lands which had discouraged criticism of government and public officials, declaring it defamatory and seditious. The Founding Fathers considered that to be one of the worst parts of British tyranny.

They were convinced that much of the struggle for American freedom would be the struggle over a free press. So they were careful to provide that the right of free expression, through a free press, would be preserved in their new nation, especially insofar as the press dealt with government and public officials.

They declared that right of free expression in the First Amendment to the Constitution. And wrote it in the simplest, least ambiguous language they could fashion. Listen to its clarity, its sureness:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press. . . ."

Having provided for the right of free speech for the whole citizenry, they went further and provided *separately* for "freedom of . . . the press." As broadly as possible. Not tentatively. Not embroidered with nuances. Not shrouded and bound up in conditions. But plainly, purely.

Remember the context. The Founding Fathers knew precisely what they were dealing with. They had a press. And the press of their time was not only guilty of bad taste and inaccuracy, it was partisan, reckless, sometimes vicious. Indeed, the

*New York State's Governor Mario M. Cuomo delivered this talk before the New York Press Club last November.*



Founding Fathers were themselves often at the point end of the press sword.

In view of that experience, they might have written amendments that never mentioned freedom of the press. Or they might have tried to protect against an imperfect press like the one they dealt with, with conditions, qualifications, requirements, penalties.

believe it's appropriate to consider the matter of freedom of the press now, at this moment.

It appears to me — and to others as well — that we are approaching a time when shifts in our law may seriously dilute the protection of the press and thereby weaken the fabric of this society. Let me elaborate on what I mean by a shift in the law.

Remember that our Constitution

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The press has been a force for good in guarding our freedom, watching our government — challenging, goading, revealing, forcing it into the open.

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But they didn't. They knew the dangers. They knew that broad freedoms would be inevitably accompanied by some abuse and even harm to innocent people.

Knowing all the odds, they chose to gamble on liberty. And the gamble has made us all rich.

Overall, the press has been a force for good — educating our people, guarding our freedom, watching our government — challenging it, goading it, revealing it, forcing it into the open. Teapot Dome, the Pentagon Papers, Watergate, even the recent revelations of corruption in New York City — these are all examples of disclosures that might never have occurred were it not for our free press.

The press's insistence on forcing the White House to begin to tell the truth about the Iranian transaction is the most recent dramatic reminder of how the press works incessantly to assure our liberty by guaranteeing our awareness. Less dramatically, the work or revelation by the press goes on day after day at all levels of government, all over the nation.

Surely, the preservation of this extraordinary strength is worth our eternal vigilance. That's why I

is not self-executing: It must be interpreted and applied by the Supreme Court. In effect, no matter how plain the language of the great document may appear to the rest of us, the Constitution will say what the Supreme Court says it says. The dimensions of the right to a free press are therefore in the care and at the mercy of the Supreme Court.

In recent decades, the Supreme Court has dealt often with the First Amendment and most of the time has expanded its reach, culminating in the landmark protection for the press in the case of *New York Times v. Sullivan* in 1964.

*Sullivan* said that notwithstanding the press was inaccurate, even negligent, and the inaccuracy substantially damaged a public figure, there would be no liability on the part of the press. Only if the press were guilty of actual malice — that is, a deliberate falsification, or conduct that evinced a reckless disregard — could there be a recovery.

The protection obviously was designed to free the press from the chilling — maybe paralyzing — effect of huge damage awards as a consequence of inaccuracy in trying to report the truth. Some believed

this was too much protection: They called it a license to defame, an invitation to dangerous, harmful carelessness.

But some — I among them — thought it was good and necessary policy, good and necessary law: that the gamble our founders took was still a good one. I continue to believe that.

We should remember something else about how our system works: Supreme Court law is not static or permanent. It changes.

Last year Justice White, who joined the majority in *Sullivan*, announced that he had become convinced that the Court struck "an improvident balance" in 1964. He urged that a better approach would be to return to much less protective common-law standards of liability.

And in a case this year, Justice Rehnquist indicated that he too would like to revisit *Sullivan* with an eye to the possibility of overruling it.

A number of lower court decisions are, if anything, even less encouraging. All of us know about the *Westmoreland* and *Sharon* cases in which two distinguished federal trial judges denied the requests for summary judgment made by the media defendants. In my view we should be even more interested in the *Tavoulaareas v. Washington Post* case, not just for what it suggests about malice and liability, but for what it implies with respect to hard investigative journalism.

The opinion of the majority of the three judge panel that upheld the jury's award of more than two million dollars in damages, is indeed ominous. It showed a willingness — more, an enthusiasm — for detailed scrutiny of the reportorial and editorial process. And it implied, as I read it, that a reputation for hard investigative journalism should be scored against the defendant as some evidence of a penchant for maliciousness. That's like saying if I catch you playing the game hard, I'm going to assume you're playing it dirty. Chill-

ing indeed.

And still another harbinger: Justice Antonin Scalia, whose vote in the *Tavoulareas* case would have made *The Washington Post* liable, is now a member of the highest court and has been added to those already unhappy with *Sullivan*. He is a conceded excellent judge, a man of charm and persuasiveness. But he does not share the reluctance of the majority in *Sullivan* to threaten the press with vulnerability to libel judgments.

Ask Rowland Evans and Bob Novak. In *Ollman v. Evans*, a Circuit Court of Appeals decision in 1984, Judge Scalia argued strongly for a relaxation of the protection of the press to legislatures.

Conservatives generally seem to sense this is a good time to strike. Some have recently proposed making simple "negligence" the standard for responsibility for injurious inaccuracy. That's good news for public figures who may become plaintiffs and more bad news for reporters and the media generally.

What would it do to a small newspaper, magazine or station to be subjected to a multi-million dollar verdict, because a jury discovered its reporter didn't make what the jury considered to be a reasonable search, perhaps in the library, perhaps through the clips, perhaps seeking out witnesses, perhaps checking their stories, checking out their references, going to experts?

There is considerable other evidence to suggest that the courts are moving gradually — but consistently — away from *Sullivan* and toward less protection for the press.

Floyd Abrams, noted attorney and expert on the First Amendment, says the *Sullivan* principles are now under "sustained attack." Numerous legal analyses are available describing the signs of what another well-known attorney and champion of the First Amendment, Victor Kovner, has called, "the move to modify *Sullivan*" — which he warned would be a "true tragedy."

One more point about the Supreme Court: Putting aside its somewhat esoteric legal jurisdiction, the truth is that the Court is a living institution. Its nine members are subject to the same influences and instructed by the same public events that affect and instruct you and me.

Their decisions to some extent reflect changing circumstances in the world around them, or changing ideas about what is reasonable or wise.

That means that when trying to predict a change in First Amendment rulings, the quality of the press as perceived by the public is a relevant factor.

In the *Federalist Papers*, Alexander Hamilton asks: "What is the liberty of the press? . . . Its security, whatever fine declarations may be inserted in any constitution respecting it, must altogether depend on public opinion and on the general spirit of the people and the government." That's still true.

A press regarded by the public as reckless invites the attention of the Supreme Court and tempts it to perform corrective judicial surgery. That's what Mr. Dooley meant when he said, "Th' Supreme Court follows th' iliction returns."

That raises the questions: What is the public perception of the press today? Is it regarded as less than perfect? And if so, how specifically? It might be worth noting here that in earlier times many of our leading public officials were among the press's harshest critics.

Today the press is apt to refer to a public official who criticizes the media as "Nixonian." Well, if presidential labels are appropriate, the media might just as fairly call its critics: "Washingtonian," "Jeffersonian," "Lincolonian," "Taftian," "Wilsonian," "Rooseveltian," "Kennedyesque," or "Johnsonian."

For example, George Washington called the press "infamous scribblers."

Jefferson wrote: "Even the least in-

formed of the people have learnt that nothing in a newspaper is to be believed."

Theodore Roosevelt added action to his vitriol: He had Joseph Pulitzer and his *New York World* indicted for criminal libel after the newspaper charged corruption in connection with the digging of the Panama Canal.

William Howard Taft found one paper so bad as to be "intolerable." He told his assistant not to show him *The New York Times*. "I don't think reading the *Times* will do me any good and would only be provocative in me of . . . anger and contemptuous feeling."

Woodrow Wilson lost his conciliatory disposition in dealing with the press. He said, "The real trouble is that the newspapers get the real facts but do not find them to their taste and do not use them as given them, and in some of the newspaper offices, news is deliberately invented."

How about FDR? He invented a Dunce Cap Club to which he would banish reporters whose questions annoyed him.

And of course President Kennedy tore up all the White House subscriptions to *The Herald Tribune* because he didn't think their coverage of him was fair.

Frankly, I think all those guys were a bit thin-skinned. Obviously, governors are a good deal more forbearing than presidents have been.

But the truth is that criticism of the press by their natural targets — by public officials, governors, presidents — however illustrious, is not necessarily good evidence of the press's imperfection. Indeed, it can be argued that it is the best evidence of the press's effectiveness.

The press's job is to find the whole truth, especially that part of it which is forgotten, ignored, deliberately concealed or distorted by public officials. The better the press does its job, the more likely future generations will be reading colorful

condemnations of reporters and commentators by today's politicians. And the more likely that the historical record will be truthful and accurate.

I think I understand this as a public official myself. Although I believe I have been treated very well by the press overall, from time to time I have had occasion to make my own criticisms of some members of the press and their coverage in particular cases.

Frankly, the response has revealed that politicians aren't the only ones who are sensitive. I'm sure that despite that response, I will continue to express occasional criticisms of the media, as I'm sure you will of me. I hope we will both profit from such exchanges.

But of much more concern to the press than criticism from me and other public officials, should be the criticism that comes from candid, thoughtful members of the press itself. Recently, it has been harsh indeed. What's worse, the public at large appears to agree.

*Harper's Magazine* observed that when the *Westmoreland* case hit the headlines, a "flood" of commentary from the press ensued. Editorial writers noted that the press was "widely maligned, criticized, abused, and worst of all, 'distrusted.'" They pointed to numerous polls and "the public's conspicuous failure to be outraged when reporters were barred from Grenada."

*Harper's* continued, "Though Americans ritually intone their devotion to the 'freedom of the press,' they delight in repeating another prized national dictum: 'Don't believe what you read in the papers.'"

The press itself attributes much of this public disfavor to its own curable defects. Thus, "pack journalism" is a frequently heard complaint: the press's dependence on one another, forging a uniform point of view so as to avoid embarrassing differences written, as though every statement previously made by any

reporter is indisputable . . . and the clannish locking of arms against critics from outside.

Hodding Carter [NF '66] says, ". . . . We are very, very good at pitching and very, very bad at catching . . . The press appears to be paralytic when facing criticism itself."

Of course there are times when a reporter's only reasonable access to important information requires that he or she assure the source of anonymity. The right to use that prerogative seems essential to effective reporting.

But another complaint frequently heard has to do with the press's excessive and unfair exploitative use of unnamed, so-called confidential sources without checking their credentials, their motivation or their reliability . . . sometimes even concealing them. Like quoting a political opponent against a public official anonymously, without identifying that significant characteristic of the source.

The habit of using unnamed sources on the naive — or cynical — assumption that because something was said at all, it was true, seriously weakens the credibility of many stories and many reporters. The practice was forcefully condemned at the 1985 meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in the keynote address by Richard D. Smyser, president of the Society.

The editor of one of our national newsmagazines — Rick Smith of *Newsweek* — summarized the current criticism of the press, in seeking to inspire a graduating class of his alma mater to help the media help itself.

He said: "We (journalists) had proven ourselves to be the tenacious watchdogs of American society. But who was watching us?"

"The searchlight . . . has uncovered our abuses . . . many Americans now express serious doubts about the techniques used to gather and report the news. Unidentified sources . . . ambush interviews . . . trial by allegation . . . instant analysis . . . imper-

sonation . . . are all questionable, yet increasingly commonplace, ways to 'get the story.'"

"As a result, the press has acquired a reputation for being sneaky, devious and even untrustworthy. How has the press responded?"

"Too often we have run for cover. We have hidden from our critics. And worst of all, we have hidden behind the First Amendment."

Tom Wicker [NF '58] adds a larger and more substantive complaint. He feels the media generally is too prone to promote what it believes is easiest for people to accept and in the process fails to cover significant issues adequately.

Obviously the criticism that is set out here could be offset with generous accolades from sources equally credible.

That is not the point. No one is more eager than I to proclaim how successfully the press has done its job over the last couple of hundred years, or how much better government might do its job.

But we must recognize the fact that right now this nation is debating — in the place where we make the rules, the Court — whether or not to limit the freedom of the press *despite* its good record of two hundred years.

The possibility of limitation is a real one. I believe it requires that we admit the media's confessions of imperfection and what appears to be a disconcertingly serious loss of public favor that could encourage restrictions of First Amendment rights. What, specifically, should we do?

The first thing we must do is sound the alert: To make it clear that we are facing a real threat of restriction of the constitutional freedom of the press. That's not easy. The drift of the Supreme Court doesn't get reported in the morning headlines. It's an elusive subject to which we must direct attention.

Then, we must hope — and we can't be sure it will work — that the reaction will affect — for the

better — both the press and the courts.

State government has a role. In New York we have already created a strong tradition of governmental support for freedom of both speech and press. We have worked to give the press and the public the fullest possible opportunity to know and report on the workings of our state government.

ever known, and a media still perceptibly far from the excellence it is capable of. But don't take it from me.

Tom Wicker made the point by saying that the most effective way to avoid incurring the wrath of the judicial gods is to work harder to guarantee thoughtful, informed, complete and accurate reporting of the news. *The New York Times* put

and cleaner standards of ethical behavior for politicians and public officials.

Why not for journalists? Because of the special place held by freedom of the press, it would have to be done without legislating or even private imposition. It could be done by just articulating and recommending the standards. By itself, that could help.

And let me offer you what I believe is an opportunity for all the media to make a contribution to the forming of public policy in this nation: Cover the public issues more thoroughly. Cover campaigns even more extensively. Cover state and local government more deeply. Not just press events created by candidates or public officials.

There is near unanimity that the recently concluded campaigns were among the most unproductively negative in our history. Many believe this is attributable largely to the fact that so much of today's campaigning for major office must be done through extravagantly expensive 28-second television and radio commercials . . . which practically mandate simplistics and labels.

This development is encouraged, I think, by the fact that our people are not well enough educated in the details of the substantive issues that are central to our government, and that are presumably the most intelligent subjects for discussion in any campaign.

Is it really economically impossible for network television to voluntarily devote a half-hour every night — while most people are still awake — to the discussion, maybe even at some length, of important public issues — a kind of prime time *Nightline*?

Couldn't all the networks voluntarily agree to the same half-hour slot to make the only competition one concerning *which* public issues the viewers are most interested in?

Is there no alternative to the habit of newspapers refusing to discuss

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## The best answer to the threat to the First Amendment is found "not in the courtrooms, but in the newsrooms of America."

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Freedom of information laws, open meetings laws, whistle-blower laws, unique disclosure requirements, shield laws, and maximum accessibility for the benefit of the press on a day-to-day basis, have been hallmarks of our administrations since 1975, and will continue to be as long as I am Governor.

We can do more in New York. We can enlarge open meetings laws; adopt effective penalties for violation of the Freedom of Information Law; put cameras in the courtroom; and adopt new disclosure laws for public officials. We can push for an expanded use of our cable television outlet "New York Span," making it more like the extremely effective C-Span national cable that has been a dramatically useful addition to the nation's media.

But in the end, I think the best answer to the threat to the First Amendment is going to be found, as Fred Friendly, former president of CBS News, put it: "Not in the courtrooms, but in the newsrooms of America."

And so, what can the press do?

I believe it's basically a matter of improving the quality of what is both the best media the nation has

it this way in a January 1985 editorial:

"To deserve the extraordinary protections of American law . . . all of journalism needs a stronger tradition of mutual and self-correction. The more influential the media, the greater the duty to offer a place for rebuttal, complaint, correction, and re-examination. Beating the arrogance rap is even more important than escaping the rap for libel."

The notion of self-criticism is now being pursued by some well-known newspapers like *The Boston Globe*, *Hartford Courant*, *Newark Star Ledger*, *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and most notably, *The Wall Street Journal*. All are undertaking various efforts at self-correction. It's an idea worth encouraging.

As is the possibility that print, television and radio organizations might want to make explicit and public the standards they expect of the press. There is, as Fred Friendly reminds us, a difference between the right to do and the right thing to do. Perhaps that difference should be spelled out. My former profession, the practice of the law, does so. The medical profession does. We're fighting to institutionalize stronger

# News That Must be Printed

Thomas Winship

*Because of the out-dated definition of news, some of the biggest stories are only half-covered.*

When Oz and Spence Klaw asked me several weeks ago to speak at the *Columbia Journalism Review's* 25th party, I promised myself I would not preach. I would get up, throw bouquets at *CJR*, laud the glories of the First Amendment, lash out at our thin-skinned critics — and sit down. What a joke!

I do tip my hat to tonight's honoree. *CJR* deserves all the laurels it can muster, because its backside is so pock-marked by darts hurled by smug editors over the years. Let's face it, even at its ripe old age, *CJR* still is the only consistently serious monitor of the press performance in America. Every working stiff in our business loves a "laurel" in *CJR*. And, I can tell you a *CJR* "dart" doesn't tickle.

I feel proud as can be to be a piece of this salute.

I confess to having had a devil of a time the past couple of weeks trying to think of something that had not been said a hundred times before.

We in the press have been through so many years — and speeches — of cruel scrutiny. I didn't want to

overload the circuits.

We in the media have had some glorious triumphs, too. I think of the lessons learned about the dangers of one-dimensional reporting during the Joe McCarthy days (no one won a Pulitzer for that episode). I think of the golden age of exposing public corruption from about 1945 to 1973, culminating in the Watergate shutdown of a President caught playing fast and loose with our Constitution. I think of the public counter-attack. The press had become too big for its britches. The public shouted from the roof tops. Lawyers and our critics unleashed libel suits in the eight figures, and the press found itself mired in the deepest credibility canyon in history.

And, about the same time, television, always a fairly compatible bedmate, suddenly pulled all the blankets to its side of the bed. Its accomplice in this dastardly act was the elected politician.

So, today there lies my beloved life-long profession, the not-so-popular print press, shivering, scared, and in fetal position, wondering what its overpoweringly seductive bedmate will ask it to do next.

We also saw the merger mania take off, bringing three-quarters of the nation's newspapers into a handful of immense communication empires.

What we have today is about fifty absurdly bulky, multi-sectioned newspapers — fat, bland and good-looking. The rest are just bland.

That's where the newspaper fraternity stands today, I'm afraid, a bit

too ready to follow the dictates of a coalition pace setter — television, elected politicians, and marketing specialists of the advertising world.

Still struggling for a topic for tonight, I came upon Loren Jenkin's comment in the marvelous *CJR* anniversary issue. Jenkins, a *Washington Post* Pulitzer Prize winner, suggested that the press finally did a pretty good job of reporting the Viet-

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There lies a life-long profession — the print press, shivering, scared, and in fetal position.

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nam War. He added, "In the end, though, I'm not sure Vietnam has had that much of a lasting effect on the profession. I think we have gone back some. I know for a fact that newspapers, including my own, sniff the air and say, 'Well, we don't want to be too far out in front of what the general mood is.' And the general mood today is one of greater acceptance of government, greater nationalism, — jingoism, even. The Reagan phenomenon has been reflected in the risks people are willing to take and the stories they're willing to pursue. They are much more willing to accept Washington's version of events," Jenkins concluded.

Thomas Winship gave these remarks this past November at the 25th Anniversary dinner of the *Columbia Journalism Review* at *Columbia University*. He is a member of the Board of Directors of *The Boston Globe*.



Next, by chance, I picked up the booklet listing all the winners of Pulitzer Prizes through the years. That did it.

I want to talk tonight about one way I believe the print press can regain a significant niche in the media world, and in so doing, maybe even give us all a few more decades of life on this planet. Who knows, we might get lucky. Two *caveats*: I shall concentrate on one issue as an example and confine myself to the print press, because it's the only thing I know.

The press only half covers some of the biggest stories of all time chiefly because it operates under an outdated definition of what is news. It often confuses its role as conveyor of facts — all the facts — with editorializing on the news pages. Most editors have become so uptight that they are afraid to explain and educate readers, even on life and death matters. Why, they've made "do-gooder," a dirty word. Documentaries are out. Docudramas are in. This bothers the hell out of me. For I was brought up believing newspapers should be an impetus, not an obstacle, to helpful change.

I think, also, the press has unknowingly relinquished its historic agenda-setting role to the political leadership. Thanks to the sophisticated tools of advertising, hi-tech, and the hysterical rush of time, politicians too often set the terms of the debate. Result — the print press increasingly has lost some of its relevancy to society. Politicians, not editors, decide what we should be worrying about, or more accurately what we should not be worrying about.

Some background music, please. In 1917, Joseph Pulitzer decided to link a system of journalism prizes to this great university. He created the Pulitzer Prize Awards to encourage "public service, public morals, American literature and the advancement of education." I looked at the winners of this most prestigious of prizes, because they do mirror the

thrust of serious print journalism of this century.

I looked only at the 65 winners of the Pulitzer meritorious public service awards — from 1917 through this year. I found, in this time span, that nine newspapers won for great work on what we could call general political issues; thirty-three won for exposing public corruption; thirteen won the big one for efforts on civil rights. Two were for roles played in individual life and death situations. Seven involved industrial health, and one was on an environmental subject. There were four years when no award was made.

The press did lead on cleaning up Tammany Hall politics across the land. It was in the forefront of the great civil rights advances on judicial malpractice, and on newspaper ethics. The press did, indeed, serve well the spirit of Lincoln Steffens and Pulitzer.

What concerns me is that these areas of concentration have not changed that much in recent years. Where is the similar press attention to the worsening state of the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land we walk on, or other great social, economic, and psychological concerns of the day? I feel certain Messrs. Pulitzer & Company would have expected the press to have moved more vigorously onto these issues, too.

Just think of it, since 1917, only one newspaper has done a full-blown effort on a general environmental issue worthy of a Pulitzer public service award. It was *The Milwaukee Journal*, for a successful campaign in 1967 to stiffen the laws against water pollution in Wisconsin. Indeed, a strip-mining expose' and a brown lung disease series also made it to the winner's circle. Otherwise, the gap between the state of the environment and media consciousness has been infinite.

If you look at the state of the planet, it seems to me there is a race going on between two Armageddons — fast death (nuclear war) and slow death

(the destruction by humans of the eco-systems that keep the earth going).

We are missing the boat on covering well the slow death story, because we have neither the will, the grasp of the subject, nor the skills to deliver lucidly this story to the general public.

I must say this is one area where television frequently has been ahead of the print media. Take the new organization, The Better World Society, which, through meaty television documentaries, is addressing the rape of the environment, the threat of nuclear annihilation, and the violence inherent in overpopulation. All of this comes to CNN viewers, courtesy of \$75,000,000 from Ted Turner's network whose deficit is close to Ronald Reagan's.

Some large newspapers do give fairly adequate coverage to the release of new scientific research (like the report two months ago of a hole in the earth's ozone layer); to environmental legislation before Congress; or to government reports on issues such as logging and land use in the national forests. And the media are always a soft touch for animal conservation stories.

My complaint is not "how much" coverage we are devoting to environmental issues, it is "how" we can do it. Environmental problems have become so much more complex and sophisticated. There's the great challenge for all of us. Just about any environmental issue contains a scientific, philosophical, economic, social, political, and legal component. Yet the media tend to cover only one or two of these elements and to peg it to a single event.

That kind of reporting has its place, but it can no longer explain today's complex environmental issues, because the major problems are not caused locally. Take acid rain, pollution of the Great Lakes, the rising CO<sub>2</sub> levels, the depletion of the ozone layers, the destruction of species, or deforestation. These

are regional or global problems. Their solutions, likewise, are regional and global.

To cover these issues well requires the skills of a police reporter, a science writer, a political analyst, and a business journalist. It requires interpretive reporting and vivid writing that will make readers want to understand how these issues affect them everyday.

Unfortunately, this is just what most media do poorly.

The media usually fall down on environmental reporting also, because most editors are bored with it. They think it's all been written before. They also are intimidated by it.

— Ground-breaking studies linking environmental destruction to economic deterioration the world over. This is one of the least recognized aspects of environmental coverage.

— "Environmental engineering" a new discipline combining science and technology, and trying to cope with the failure of resources and the poisoning of air, land, and water.

What should the press be doing? For starters, it should assign the same news values and resources to the global environmental beat as it does to the nuclear arms race and to national politics.

Today, the environmental reporter is given the same ho-hum city room

dump. These revelations came *not* through the press, but through a court challenge by the Conservation Law Foundation.

The experts say the politically volatile Seabrook plant in New Hampshire is probably the last giant nuclear-driven, electricity-producing facility that will ever be built. The reason is not politics. It's economics, cost, and risk. The experts tell us that today's operating nuclear plants are wearing out, and all are susceptible to accidents before too long. In their place, we will see smaller, non-nuclear powered plants, co-generation and reliance on far greater energy conservation. Who is telling us about this revolution in the utilities business?

We pass a Federal Clean Water Act, amid much public breast beating, and presume we've solved the problem. The reality is the problem and it is barely addressed, because the government doesn't provide the funding to achieve compliance. And gets away with it.

Take, ozone, no, it is not a mouth wash or an erogenous zone. It is possibly the granddaddy of all atmospheric threats.

But, try to sell an ozone or quality-of-air story to most editors. The best effort I've seen was a two-part series on the ozone layer about four months ago in *The New Yorker* magazine — not exactly a hot seller at the supermarket check-out counter.

Is there a news peg for the ozone story? I think so. The amended Clean Air Act of 1977 established air quality standards for ozone, and required that all air quality regions in the United States meet these standards by December 31, 1987. Yet the Environmental Protection Agency blithely acknowledged recently that none of the areas will meet the Federally-imposed deadline. That's enough of a news peg for me. For my money, a serious and sustained global report on the quality of air is a

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## To cover these issues well requires the skills of a police reporter, a science writer, a political analyst, and a business journalist.

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These shortcomings showed up at the International Congress of Ecology which took place at Syracuse University last August. This periodic conference is the most important gathering of scientists in the environmental field. About 1600 researchers from around the world attended. But none of the national news magazines — except *Business Week*, the networks, *The New York Times*, *Wall St. Journal*, or major metro papers bothered to cover the conference.

Only the Syracuse *Herald-Journal* and the AP showed up, and only covered the release of a scientific paper or the daily press conference on the "hot" topics like acid rain.

Meantime, the real "news" of that conference went uncovered, such subjects as:

— The disastrous affect of Western agricultural methods on Third World farmers.

attention as the science reporter was before Sputnik.

For years, we've had gumshoe teams investigating corruption. Now, it's time the big healthy papers created an integrated team of specialists to monitor regularly the mauling of our surroundings. The list of story assignments is out there waiting.

Examples:

The experts tell us contamination of ground water is the most immediate environmental threat in hundreds of cities and towns in this country. Landfills, town dumps, pesticides, and leaking underground fuel tanks are the greatest culprits.

On Cape Cod, near Otis Air Force base [in Massachusetts], a suspicious number of cancer cases were reported. Two years later, the military admitted it had been dumping giant quantities of cancer-producing chemicals into the town

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## The American Newspaper

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I think we need much tougher, sharper criticism from the academy — from journalism school deans and professors and students doing more research into what is happening in American newspapers today, not just in the major metropolitan papers, but also in the large majority of American newspapers published in the smaller towns of this great country.

We all should be held to higher standards by our own journalism reviews, media critics, investment analysts, and think tanks. We need something like the independent, non-government National Education Assessment standards.

In a recent interview with the Associated Press board of directors at the Foreign Ministry in London, Sir Geoffrey Howe, British Foreign Secretary, told us, "You command influence and power beyond the dreams of man."

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**"We will be judged by our readers. . . by how we use our influence and power for the public good."**

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We all know that is a bit of an exaggeration, but that statement reminds us dramatically that we have a higher calling, and that most of us were drawn into this profession because of its special contribution to the public good. It also reminds us that we will be judged by the public, by our readers and advertising customers not by our profit margins, but by the quality of our newspapers, and the indispensable services we provide. We will be judged by how we use our influence and power for the public good. □

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## Freedom of the Press

*continued from page 20*

issues in campaigns for statewide office or even national office, or to give full treatment to the campaign until just a few weeks before election day, on the theory that people aren't interested until then? Can't the media focus on important issues even if the candidates or officials don't? Isn't it possible you could make people *more* interested?

Let's make clear, too, what I am not suggesting. I do not suggest that the government impose additional

In pursuit of that, I am making a case for the broadest possible freedom of the press.

Of course, that great gift comes with great responsibility.

The press — print *and* electronic — has the power to inform, but that implies the power to distort.

You have the power to instruct but that implies the power to mislead.

You have the power to uplift but that implies the power to demean.

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**You can work wonders — on a page, on a screen. You can make us all wiser, fuller, surer, sweeter than we are.**

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requirements on electronic media in the name of the public interest.

As a matter of fact, I have made the point a number of times before, that I believe the interpretation of the constitutional right of free press should be changed in one particular: It should move toward the conclusion that the electronic press deserves the same kind of freedom that is enjoyed by the print press.

There are, of course, differences, but the functions are basically the same: Like print, the electronic press informs, educates, advocates, and entertains. And it becomes increasingly apparent that its function is as vital as the print media to the welfare of the nation. I daresay if there had been a six o'clock news in the eighteenth century, the word in the First Amendment might have been "media" instead of "press."

Let me conclude:

The press is about finding the truth and telling it to the people.

You can lead our society toward a more mature and discriminating understanding of the process by which we choose our leaders, make our rules and construct our values.

Or you can encourage people to despise our systems and avoid participating in them.

You can teach our children a taste for violence, encourage a fascination with perversity and inflicted pain.

Or you can show them a beauty they have not known.

You can work wonders — on a page, on a screen.

You can make us all wiser, fuller, surer, sweeter than we are.

Or you can do less. And worse.

And one of the miracles of this democracy is that you are free to make all the choices.

The heart of my message tonight is that we must work . . . to keep it that way, to keep the miracle alive.

Thank you for asking me to speak. □

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# THE BOOKSHELF

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## ... Crying To Me From The Ground

### REMNANTS: The Last Jews of Poland.

Written by Malgorzata Niezabitowska; Photographed by Tomasz Tomaszewski. Friendly Press, 1986. \$35.

by Richard Cohen

In 1976, I became the first member of my family to set foot in Poland in more than fifty years. I went first to Warsaw and then, within a day, to Ostrolenka, a drab city from where, in the fall of 1920, my mother's family set out by horse and cart for the United States. Aided by a map drawn by a relative, I went looking for the family house but it was gone. I searched for the synagogue, a grand affair, a relative remembered, but it, too, was gone — first converted into a motor pool by the Germans, later stripped by the Poles for building material. Then I went looking for the cemetery. The town historian said it no longer existed, so did the mayor and — about as official as you could get — the local communist party functionary in charge of war memorials and historic sites. No use looking for it, they all said.

But I did anyway. Using an old map of the town, I followed it until, in the fading light of November, the earth rose and fell in hillocks and there, beneath my feet were open graves and bones poking from the ground. I looked at my guide and he at me, and then in horror and panic the two of us scurried about picking up bones until we met in the center of the cemetery. His arms were loaded with bones — legs and arms and chips of things — and mine, too.

My guide stared at me and I at him and then, in resignation at the futility of our task, we dropped the bones and made our way out of the cemetery until we came to an old wooden house. Smoke came from the chimney and so my guide knocked and an old, toothless man opened the door and invited us in. Once he had been the caretaker for the cemetery.

As his wife cooked on a wood-fed stove, the old man told us about the cemetery. It had been a grand affair, surrounded by a wall of high pines — a beautiful spot, he said. After the German invasion, the Jews of Ostrolenka were taken to the cemetery, forced to topple the headstones, and then marched to the nearby forest where they were shot. The old man talked slowly and in great detail and as he did so, his wife ceased stirring the soup or slipping wood into the fire and sat down to cry. She cried for the old beautiful cemetery, for the murdered Jews of Ostrolenka, for the skulls that her husband said continue to heave from earth and which the kids kick soccer-style. Huge tears rolled down her wrinkled face — tears for Jews! Here was the archetype Polish peasant of my grandmother's tales, the vaunted anti-Semite of both truth and legend, the one I would have preferred to have been indifferent to the plight of the Jews who, for sake of simplicity, should have been like the lying officials and their non-existent cemetery. Yet she cried.

Since that day, all Poland has been the Ostrolenka Jewish cemetery for me. For the truism that all Poles were anti-Semites who either aided

the Nazis in their Jew-killing or stood by indifferently, there are stories of Poles who aided Jews, sometimes at the cost of their lives. For the reality that Jews were often despised, there is the truth that to this day the peasants of the south lovingly carve figurines of Chassidim — although none are left.

For the truth that my guide, the British-educated son of Polish emigrés, tended to blame Jews for their own fate — their refusal to assimilate, their prominence in radical and communist movements — there came a later truth that after that incident in the cemetery he was a changed man. Even for the truth that my family was impoverished, came the discovery in the census records that my great-grandfather, Mendel, had a grand apartment and a Polish live-in servant. He was a man of means.

Like me in a sense, Malgorzata Niezabitowska [NF '87] and Tomasz Tomaszewski, set out to find what was left of Polish Jewry. Niezabitowska, the writer, and Tomaszewski, a photographer (and together husband and wife), have together produced an odd, yet moving book — both a coffee table book for its pictures and a kind of Studs Turkel oral history. Both Poles, both gentiles, and both contributors to a Solidarity publication until it was shut down, they photographed and interviewed the remnants of a 1,000-year-old civilization — the 4,000 or so Jews remaining in Poland. They moved none too soon. These remnants average more than 70 years of age and except for a few young people, they will all be dead within the decade. Then the Polish Jewish community, once the most populous in the world, will be no more.

But in fact I think it is fair to say that both Tomaszewski and Niezabit-

owska had something else on their agenda besides photographing and interviewing the remaining Jews. They were also, I think, trying to find out more about their country — about the sorts of people the Poles are. After all, what kind of people somehow allowed a tenth of their population to be exterminated? How was it that a distinct minority, more central than peripheral to Polish culture, were obliterated? Why was it that even after the war some Jews were killed when they returned, often from extermination camps, to reclaim their homes? And how was it that as late as 1968 the Polish government organized an official anti-Semitic campaign that resulted in yet another exodus of Jews, leaving only the scattered and aged remnants of this book?

For Niezabitowska, who does the interviewing, these questions are her theme. She asks always about Poles who saved Jews — and indeed there were some. She is forever forcing events into a context of her own choosing — the extraordinary suffering of the Poles, the draconian rules of the Nazis, the visibility of the Jews both in features and dress, their prominence in leftist and pro-Soviet political movements before the war and then, after it, their perceived complicity, as party activists, in the Soviet occupation of the country and its Stalinist terror.

Even when dealing with the inter-war period of 1919 to 1939, her history is at odds with both the facts and, for sure, the Jewish recollection of them. Official anti-Semitism is down-played and its unofficial, although sometimes deadly variant, is de-emphasized. This pre-Nazi Poland was, Niezabitowska writes, a "paradise" for Jews in which there were "no pogroms." But Poland was no paradise — not for Poles and certainly not for Jews and there were pogroms — although not as many as, say, in Russia.

For some readers — as it was for some reviewers — this aspect of the book may be too much to stomach.

And yet the author's point of view is both valid and valuable. They are cosmopolitan and liberal Poles and their handicap, if you can call it that, is precisely defined by the subject of their book. There is almost no one to provide the other side of the story. The ones who remain — 4,000 out of the 300,000 or so left after the war — surely are not typical. Many of them were saved by Poles and their account of their rescues are often moving indeed. Some of them were only quasi-Jewish to start with, having married gentiles and passed into that community. In some cases, they know little about the community they now claim as their own. In any event, they would have a hard time acknowledging that they have remained among enemies — and even a harder time admitting that to gentile Poles.

Still, this is a valuable book. The interviews, 26 in all, seemed to have been recorded and then transcribed verbatim. In some cases, that method makes for flat, lifeless reading. But many of the interviews are pure poetry. Staszek Krajewski of Warsaw who, in his middle age, has become observant, says of his old shame of being Jewish, "I experienced my Jewishness as a hunchback feels his hump."

Szymon Szurmiej, director of the state-sponsored Yiddish theatre, acknowledges that because of his prominence and his ties to officialdom, he is a controversial figure — someone, Niezabitowska says, who "evokes mixed feelings, among Jews and non-Jews. You know this."

"I know it, but it concerns me as much, it hurts me as much, as if I were lame and a dog bit me in my artificial leg. You see, I am a prosthesis, because in fact I am not here. I do not exist."

"What does that mean?" Niezabitowska asks.

"That means that if I have lived through the annihilation of my people, if all the things with which I was raised have gone up the chimneys, I am already somehow on

the other side. I have one passion left: to protect the flame that has survived. It never even enters my mind that this culture could go away, disappear, that it could be reduced to ashes and old photographs. I am ready to do everything for it to survive."

This is no history of the Holocaust although, for sure, it is partly that. Stories of survivors have been better chronicled elsewhere and so has the continuing fascination and prejudice many Poles still have towards Jews — the documentary, *Shoah*, for instance. What the book does capture, though, is the plight of a scattered few people who once had community — friends, relatives, synagogues, welfare societies, theatres — and now have nothing. To get the necessary ten men for a High Holy days service, the Jews of the Lublin area have to admit a convert. There is no rabbi left in all of Poland and no ritual slaughterer, either. The first bar mitzvah in 30 years was held several years ago in Warsaw and it may well be the last. The Jews of Poland, once so numerous, are now very few. Soon there will be none at all.

But the real value of the book is simply that it exists — that two young Poles set out to find why, at the center of their cultural life and, even, recent history, there exists a void. They rightly sense that in order to understand Poland, it is necessary to find out what happened to its Jews. And they recognize, also, that for many non-Poles, particularly the important American-Jewish community, Poland and anti-Semitism are virtually synonymous. They would like things to be otherwise and maybe for that reason there is an almost touching emphasis on the few young Jews who remain and the single bar mitzvah that, like the birth of newborn to the last of an endangered species, could somehow reverse the irreversible.

But the Polish Jewish community no longer exists and the few Jews who are left do not comprise a com-

munity or culture at all. They are, rather, human artifacts that can be dug up here and there and for some Poles, suffice for the recurring flu of hate that periodically sweeps the nation. For others, they prompt nagging, soul-searching questions: What sort of people are we? Who is to blame? The Germans alone or the Germans and the Poles?

Maybe it was the fault of the Jews, too, or maybe it was no one's fault — something that, for lots of reasons, just happened? Almost 50 years after the beginning of the end for Polish Jewry, historians still have no firm answers and neither does this book. It is to be commended, though, simply for asking the questions.

In the end, I took a piece of tombstone from that cemetery in Ostrolenka and I keep it in my

study. I look at it from time to time and think of how far back my family went in Poland and how nothing and no one is left. I think of the officials who lied to me about the cemetery and also of the old man, his wife — his story, her tears — and how my grandparents took the horse and cart of Warsaw, the train to Rotterdam and the boat to America where, comfortable and secure, I live.

That piece of funeral stone is a remnant, too, and like the living ones of Polish Jewry it speaks nothing but questions: How? Why? Until someone answers those questions, somewhere in my atavistic psyche, a bag stays packed. □

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## Our Misunderstood Minority

### All the Right People.

Barbara P. Norfleet. Foreword by Stephen Birmingham. New York Graphic Society Books/Little Brown and Company, 1986. \$29.95.

### by Robert Coles

Too often writers have told us that the rich and wellborn are inaccessible to public scrutiny — as, indeed, the author of this book does, in her introductory comments, and the author of the foreword does in his. "I concluded that in the United States the better-off document the less-well-off," Barbara Norfleet tells us, and then she asserts that "there is little reciprocity in either photographic or social studies." She adds that "the wellborn really do not want their pictures taken except for their own personal use, and their wealth can buy them isolation afforded by large estates and private clubs."

Meanwhile, the estimable Stephen

Birmingham, at pains in this brief performance to persuade the reader that he is himself the right person to talk knowingly about "the right people," assures us that he hasn't ever heard any of the people who belong to the world Barbara Norfleet has explored for this book refer to themselves as "the right people."

Since several times the people whose words accompany these shrewdly arranged and evocative photographs most certainly do use that phrase, one is left to wonder — what to make of the self-appointed arbiter's remark? But at a certain point he abandons his posture of cool and lofty self-assurance (a fantasy of his that such a demeanor will persuade us readers that *his* picture belongs in the book?) to become an interesting social and political advocate. "The gently bred and well-to-do," he tells us, "may be our last, least understood, and perhaps most persecuted minority."

The use of the word "persecuted" may strike some readers as ironic, or

as inappropriate, or as ridiculous, or as obscene, depending upon their critical disposition. One is struck by the confessional implications of the phrase "least understood" — as if Mr. Birmingham's past writing has not done its job very well. But surely he and Barbara Norfleet ought be asked to reconsider. To characterize the lives of rich and cultured people as "a landscape that remains a *Terra Incognita*," and even to emphasize the "privacy" of that territory, as he does so insistently, and she more briefly, is to overlook the constant attention such people in substantial numbers have been receiving from any number of so-called outside observers, an abundance of whom, no doubt, are relatively poor, when compared with those whom they've photographed and described with words.

I have in mind issues of *Life*, with important weddings and funerals of quite rich and quite "gently bred" people. I have in mind, Lord knows, all those thousands of pages of newspaper reportage and photographs: the "Society Page" of paper after paper in this country. I have in mind James Agee's wonderful essay for *Fortune* magazine ("Saratoga"), not to mention the finest tradition of letters — from Tolstoy and George Eliot to Henry James and Edith Wharton, and too, Louis Auchincloss and John Cheever, I have in mind dozens of journalistic pieces and social essays, in a wide variety of publications, from magazines and quarterlies to our various "national" newspapers, which are not shy about poking into the financial or familial lives of the rich, including say, a Mrs. Brooke Astor, to whom *The New York Times* devoted yet another essay (November 16, 1986), this one with several photographs and a good deal of information about her reading habits, her art collection, her personal values, speaking of "privacy." (I wonder whether Mrs. Astor felt "persecuted" by such coverage — or for that matter by anything else that has happened to

her during her long life in America.)

Nor is Mrs. Astor a singular victim of New York City obtrusiveness or vulgarity. The Boston papers have run many articles on the Saltonstalls, the Cabots, the Lowells, and writers such as Cleveland Amory have followed suit.

During the 1960's, when I lived in New Orleans, a city with its own claims to possession of "right people," half of the then not-so-good *Times Picayune*, (the paper has changed for the better of late) was filled with reports on the daily activities of various "gently bred and well-to-do" people, to the point that I heard this from a civil rights activist in 1962: "If you're one of those Garden District aristocrats, that [blankety-blank] paper [*The Times Picayune*] will tell the whole world that you're having a lunch or a tea, and you've gone to Europe or are riding a horse someplace, or are off to Colorado skiing; but just let one of us [black people] try to vote or go into a restaurant for a cup of coffee, and get ourselves thrown out, and they'll ignore us — until we gather together and start marching, and only then will they cover us; and call us 'Communists.'"

That poor fellow felt "persecuted," to use Mr. Birmingham's chosen word — and once wondered out loud why his "privacy" (during which he might try to vote or sit where he pleased in a movie-house or on a bus) mattered so little, whereas, as he put it, "everyone seems interested in what the fancy rich do, and the papers cater to them all the time."

I rather suspect that the one kind of privacy the cultured or "well-bred" rich have managed to keep for themselves is a relative immunity from the sustained scrutiny of social scientists, who without question have not been commissioned by foundations and the government to come up with their various studies and theories of "how the rich live" — and that failure of "cash flow" may account for the absence of such a

"literature," rather than any reticence on the part of the upper classes, or their legendary inclination to hide, or their power to protect themselves.

How lucky they are, in this regard — their ultimate good fortune, arguably: to be spared all those dreary, banal, pretentious and overwrought generalizations and formulations which any number of sociologists and psychologists and psychiatrists have pinned on all the rest of us, whether we be the poor, the middle class, or type A "obsessed" businessmen, or "preppies" with much touted drug and drinking problems. It is true that in Hamilton, Massachusetts or parts of Oyster Bay, Long Island a family would think twice about letting inside the house some fellow with a questionnaire and a tape-recorder and a list of big-deal "issues" to explore — perhaps a consequence of the perspicacity (if not common sense) that occasionally go with being "gently bred."

What Barbara Norfleet has to offer, fortunately, is no social science "breakthrough;" she has attended certain people, rather than (in today's vernacular) "studied" them. She has a novelist's eyes and ears, both: her photographs pick up those small, emotional unself-conscious moments which reveal our pride, our vulnerabilities, our experience of pleasure or weariness. These camera glimpses are strengthened considerably by seven interviews — stories of lives as particular men and women chose to tell them. We are cautioned, as some would, anyway, suspect upon reading those modern-day tales, that names and places have been changed.

What emerges from all the words is a larger story — one not unlike, in essence, those of our most ambitious novelists: hopes and expectations mentioned, along with disappointments, betrayals, envies, worries, fears. These are people by no means immune to all the psychological difficulties or moral flaws the rest of us find too persistently upon us. People

pretend, lie, deceive, brag, scold, steal, get sick, die — even as they strive to live reasonably contented and busy and pleasurable lives. The interviews — not self-consciously offered as "oral history" or as social science or as theory — do a good job of conveying the broad range of feeling so many of us recognize as a condition of our humanity.

The pictures, however, no matter their canny and at times uncanny penetration, are less adequately representative: none of them approach the melancholy side of things! After all, one utterly stunning interview ("Anna C"), worthy of Dickens, Balzac, Tolstoy, tells of a woman who has spent virtually her entire life trying to become part of a wealthy world. One suspects we are learning something to which her own husband (and certainly, his family, her friends) aren't privy. This dramatic narrative (a cynic would call it a whore's confession) must surely have its own visual life — those tentative looks or gestures, those nervously ingratiating postures, maybe even those moments of panic which indicate that all is not well, that indeed, much is rotten, in what some (on the inside, on the outside) would regard as Heaven.

I suspect the author's wry, sardonic viewpoint, and her moral interest as a sophisticated and appreciative observer — but one who is not hoodwinked — have prompted her to forsake a visual documentation of the sadder sides of a given world. The weddings and hunts, the limousines and boats and grand expanses of lawn and sea, abundant liquor, the smiling children, the good food, the ballrooms, they are all there — but no funerals, no sick and infirm people, no men or women or children aghast, fear-struck, scared mightily, in tears, thoroughly perplexed or confused. Some of these families, we learn, have experienced madness, alcoholism, divorce, financial ruin. Yet, smiles and smugness rule the

day (and night). I can't imagine that the perceptive observer who was able to obtain those wonderfully candid and revealing comments from a number of men and women of different ages wasn't able to notice a moment of doubt, even of utter alarm or despair in a face here, a group of faces there. As with photographs of the poor, or so-called "ordinary Americans," a number of these pictures confirm preconceived ideas, if not prejudices. They are "good" photographs; they say a lot about a certain life, a certain class; but they don't get at *character* the way some of the personal remarks do. (I'd like to have been told how long the author knew these people before they spilled so much of the guts of their lives for her edification.)

One goes through this book — looks at noses upturned and houses under careful tether and servants ever anxious to please — and thinks back to the old Fitzgerald-Hemingway exchange about the rich. Hemingway's insistence that it is money, pure if not so simple, that makes such people "different" may well be to the point. Yes, Fitzgerald in his novels and stories told us what these pictures and personal statements tell us — that life can be lavishly complex, lavishly ironic, lavishly paradoxical among those who are wellborn.

But life is complex, ironic and paradoxical for the rest of us mortals, too — or as Anna Freud once put it in a quietly meditative moment near the end of her long life: "There are just so many emotions any of us can have, no matter who we are, and where we live, and I have noticed that each of my patients, over all these years, struggles with those emotions — enjoys their consequences or suffers their consequences — no matter who he is or she is."

What Barbara Norfleet succeeds admirably in doing, throughout this book, is evident once its cover — those well-groomed boys on a horse-driven carriage — has given way to

its pages: a real sense of life's texture, its thin and thick moments, is offered. The "right people" turn out to be luckily well-to-do ones, who are, nevertheless, struggling with loony relatives and embarrassing scandals and vanities galore — though, of course, amid the illnesses or worse, they possess quite a comfortable day-to-day existence. The "right people" are living (as they say in the South) "right well" — hence

our envy, if not awe of them; and our curiosity, which this book succeeds in appealing to a certain extent. □

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## All the Right Words

### Best Newspaper Writing 1986.

Edited by Don Fry. The Poynter Institute for Media Studies, 1986. Paperback, \$7.95.

by Richard Dudman

Anyone who writes for a living will benefit from these examples of prize-winning newspaper writing, with comments by the editor and interviews with the writers. They are the 1986 winners in an annual contest conducted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

My favorite is about the Canyon of the Dead, a ravine just out of Tijuana, through which thousands of Mexicans try to bypass a legal border gate and make it into the United States as illegal aliens. Jonathan Freedman, an editorial writer for the San Diego *Tribune*, tells about the hazardous journey of the aliens, called *pollos* — chickens. They are ignored and abandoned by the United States border patrol and the Mexican police as they are stalked by American and Mexican bandits, called *asalto-pollos*: "A dozen *pollos* head together down the canyon. *Asalto-pollos* follow them, their shadows moving like daggers. Over the hill, people wait blithely in cars to cross the border legally, oblivious to the nightmare unfolding in the Canyon

of the Dead."

After the bandits have attacked, robbed, raped and sometimes killed the immigrants, "the successful *pollos* make their way north and the victims crawl out of no-man's-land or remain face down in the dust."

Freedman is an angry man, but he lets the story tell itself. In another good piece called "Bathhouse Cubicles of Death," he contrasts a San Diego isolation center for AIDS victims, where gaunt patients wait to die in sterile cubicles, with the filthy cubicles of a nearby bathhouse. "Music pulsates a heavy beat," the red light is too dark to make out faces clearly and "encourages anonymity," and many of the victims contract the disease. Warning signs were everywhere in the isolation center but tiny and obscure in the bathhouse.

He sees the ravine as a "human landscape" and tries "to make people aware that the illegal immigration problem involves people; not numbers, not immigrants, not aliens, but people." What he wants to do with the AIDS editorial is to persuade the gays that for their own health the bathhouses ought to be closed.

Roger Simon, a columnist for *The Baltimore Sun*, uses a personal incident to make a nice point about the affluent blacks in South Africa, who

enjoy material comforts and are treated very well by the South African government. Simon invited a black who had "made it" there to lunch at his hotel, one of the few where a black and a white could eat together in the restaurant.

"The restaurant was so fancy that the salt on the table was not in shakers, but heaped on tiny crystal trays.

"My guest took a pinch and then handed the tray to me.

"But before I could take it, a waiter rushed up, took the tray from his hand, and disdainfully dumped the contents on the floor.

"Then the waiter handed me a tray from another table.

"My guest froze. For a second, I did not know what had happened.

"After a long moment, my guest spoke quietly without lifting his eyes from the table. 'Now you see,' he said, 'what it means to be a "successful" black man in South Africa.'"

Quite an incident. For my taste, that was plenty. I thought Simon rubbed it in too much when he went on: "And I have always remembered that little, seemingly insignificant incident. I have always remembered how easily the image of success can be shattered, how quickly the comfortable veneer stripped away. I have always remembered that no matter how far a black man rose in that country, he was still considered unfit to touch the same salt as a white man."

But his point was a telling one. He noted that the U.S. government was not even considering joining France in freezing new investments in South Africa, on the ground that it could only make things worse. He said that argument always made him wonder the same thing: "Worse than what?"

Perhaps the most memorable piece in the book is the story of "Fat Albert," a sideshow freak, by David Finkel in the *St. Petersburg Times*. Finkel tells first about the audience — the freaks who insult and ridicule and tease and poke the professional

freak. Then he interviews 891-pound Albert and his normal-sized wife Carrie, who wooed him with pork chops, rice, and gravy, calls him "my gentle giant" or just "Fats," and now is seven months pregnant by him.

Finkel gets them to tell how they feel when people call Albert a pig or a slob and say he's disgusting and ask about their sex life. Carrie sometimes starts after them, but Albert calls her back. He says, "I'm not a pig. I don't have to defend myself." He has a glandular disorder, wouldn't be fat if he could help it, and feels lucky to be alive and to be paid \$500 to drop his pants and take the insults.

Two of Finkel's secrets of getting good quotes are avoiding the tape recorder and the telephone. A tape recorder stiffens people up and collects all the hay as well as what's worth quoting. He says he tells people, "I'm really not out to do a job on you. I just want to listen carefully to what you have to say. That's why I'm here and not on the phone." He means it, and they believe him.

He also puts a lot of care into how he works in the "BBI," the boring but important details, so as to preserve the flow of the story.

The first and longest section of the book, evidently considered to be the star selection, is a series by John Camp, a columnist for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* who won a Pulitzer Prize for feature writing as well as the American Society of Newspaper Editors Competition for non-deadline writing. Still, it bothered me.

Camp says he had become increasingly interested in the farm business, what was happening to the farmer, and farmers' feeling of powerlessness. He picked a young farm family in southwestern Minnesota, visited the farm for several days at a time through a whole growing season, and wrote detailed, sensitive articles about the family's love of the land, aching work of weeding and harvesting, and the joys and pains of living close to nature and depending on the weather and the market.

The trouble was with the family

he selected. They are former hippies from San Francisco, David and Sally-Anne ("Sago") Benson and their two children, Heather and Anton. Their two cats are named Yin and Yang. They farm only 160 acres, so David repairs Volvos and Sago teaches at a Montessori school when she isn't driving the tractor or wielding a hoe to chop weeds. Heather plays Bach on the \$25 upright piano. The parents read a lot of Nietzsche, Kafka, Tolstoy, Ayn Rand, and Hunter S. Thompson.

Such a family is no doubt more interesting than others to a young city-bred reporter and possibly to city newspaper readers. The Bensons have farmed there for fourteen years. They come from Minnesota-Swedish farm backgrounds. Still, they are far from typical, and their lives and thoughts may tell little about the general farm problem.

In considering selections of excellent writing, there is a temptation to insist that the story is the main thing and warn against too much emphasis on how it's told. Arthur Brisbane, the Hearst columnist once considered an authority on good writing, advised journalists that, when they had written a phrase, sentence, or paragraph that they particularly liked, they should cross it out. Self-indulgence in any writing distracts the reader.

This is not to disparage the rhythm, imagery, and choice of the right word. It is just to put in a good word for substance as well as form. □

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# War, Patriotism, and Survival

## Bitter Victory.

Robert Shaplen. Harper & Row, 1986. \$16.95.

by H.D.S. Greenway

On that last morning of the old Saigon; April 29, 1975, when the word began to spread around town that the final American evacuation from Vietnam would commence, I remember seeing the tall, bear-like figure of Bob Shaplen [NF '48], typewriter in hand, walking towards an assembly point that would take most of us away to awaiting ships at sea.

There were still a couple of hours yet to top last night's lead, but the difficulty was in trying to capture the historical sweep of this "climactic disaster," as Shaplen would later describe it.

It struck me that although I was in my ninth year of reporting from Vietnam, we were all babies compared to what Shaplen had experienced. In Saigon with the French in 1946, interviewing General Cogny in Hanoi in 1951 and all through the long American involvement Shaplen had known almost all the players personally, covered all the major events. He spent the better part of a lifetime writing about Indochina. What an emotional moment this must be for him!

Almost ten years later, in the fall of 1984, Shaplen returned to Vietnam for a five-week visit with a five-day side trip to Cambodia. *Bitter Victory*, much of which first appeared in *The New Yorker*, is the result of that journey.

Although he traveled all over the country, Shaplen obviously found his return to Saigon emotionally trying. "Gone was the mad bustle of the old days, the sense of a city constantly on the make, scrounging, cheating, stealing, pushing and jos-

ting, pimping and whoring, full of discordant sounds and multiple smells, always bursting at the seams by day and seething through its pores at night."

As for the new Saigon, Ho Chi Minh Ville, as it is now called: "There was something terribly tentative about that city, something untold and untellable, not because of any dark secret but because the plot was obscure, the future still unclear. Moreover, for someone like myself, who had first visited Saigon in the mid-forties when it was still radiant and softly verdant, and who had seen it change so drastically during the two long wars against the French and the Americans, to return now for even a short visit was in itself a jarring and in some ways a grotesque experience."

Later in the war, some of the more ideologically committed writers criticized Shaplen. They said his reporting was too involved with political minutia and didn't sufficiently come to grips with the horror of war and the folly of America's efforts.

But in its entirety Bob Shaplen's reports are crammed with more accurate information than many reporters gather in a lifetime and if he is on the opposite side of the spectrum from Mike Herr, well, let's hear it for the breadth of the spectrum.

I have always found Shaplen a relentlessly hard worker and a fair and accurate reporter. His kindness and generosity to younger reporters was renowned.

Readers will find no let-up in Shaplen's vacuum cleaner approach. There are detailed descriptions of how the Vietnamese Communist Party runs the country and how the decisions of the various Central Committee plenums have been carried out and how Vietnam's woeful economy works.

Perhaps the most noticeable post-war phenomenon to returning reporters — I was back in Vietnam in 1982 and again in 1986 — is the failure of the Vietnamese to unite north and south in anything more than name. And Shaplen has interesting insights on the Vietnamese character.

He writes of a "stubborn sense of individualism... which often made it difficult to negotiate and compromise... The southerners, with their inclination for being disputatious and disunited, seemed to demonstrate this to a destructive degree."

"There was no doubt that, in contrast, the sense of unity and discipline that the Communists engendered and enforced in the north were prime reasons for their success." Once decisions were made at the top in North Vietnam, they were carried out "with dedication and zeal. The southerners, on the other hand, fought among themselves and with the Americans throughout the war, sometimes about inconsequential things."

Shaplen found that this conflict "between individualism and regimentation remains peculiarly unresolved, and this may provide a key to many of the troubles the Vietnamese are experiencing.

"After visiting both parts of the country, I was left with the feeling that the circumstances and ways of life — and perhaps more significant, patterns of thought — of the two regions remain as fundamentally different as ever. And it is hard to see how, given their separate historical development, things could be otherwise," Shaplen writes.

Revisionist historians who would like to prove we could have won in Vietnam if only if... (you fill in the blanks) will not find grist for their mills in Shaplen's assessment. Of the Vietnamese he writes: "Their determination and their belief in themselves are extraordinary, as was proved dramatically by the tougher and infinitely more clever and patient northerners in their long fight to defeat the French and then the

Americans and also their southern compatriots, who lacked their physical stamina, emotional will-power, and passionate conviction."

As for the American Congress' refusal to give South Vietnam the aid the United States had promised after the 1973 Paris agreement, Shaplen says: "In my own view... additional American aid after the capture of Banmethuot (January 1975) would have made little or no difference. The will to fight and the ability to withstand the North Vietnamese final onslaught simply did not exist."

Shaplen asked a North Vietnamese General, Dinh Duc Thien, if more intensive bombing could have turned the trick for the Americans. The general answered: "An industrial country cannot defeat an agricultural nation by bombing. (For) while industrial nations cannot return to agricultural conditions when bombed, agricultural nations can, even when badly hurt. You bombed most of the industry we had, but it made no real difference." The general did not add, Shaplen points out, that Vietnam's industrial war needs were being provided by the Soviet Union and China. But given that North Vietnam bordered on China, Vietnam could never have been cut off or isolated from its benefactors as could Malaya.

General Thien also told Shaplen: "The difference also lay in the fact that Vietnam was not a patriotic war for you, or a war of survival, as it was for us."

One comes away from Shaplen's book with the impression that the United States could not have won the war in Vietnam except by paying an unacceptable price in terms of a long physical occupation involving millions of men.

But if the North Vietnamese will to power proved successful in war it has failed in peace. The country is an economic disaster zone. Given all Vietnam's difficulties, the hostility of the Chinese and much of the Western world, the occupation and war in Cambodia, Shaplen says:

"Much of it, however, has been the fault of the Vietnamese, who have demonstrated their share of *hubris* and a crippling inability to create unity among themselves and to reach out to others."

Shaplen saw many of the top Vietnamese leaders, including Le Duc Tho and Pham Van Dong. The dramatic leadership changes at the top that came about late last year when a new generation was brought into the top leadership had not occurred when *Bitter Victory* went to press. Yet these events were foreshadowed when Pham Van Dong told Shaplen that he "constantly" thought about the succession problem and the generation gap.

Shaplen quotes a Vietnamese writer on the cultural generation gap: "The older generation has a wider cultural canvas," the writer said. "Many of them know French and English and they have read more. They have a broader education — they know about the past as well as the present. The younger generation is more narrow in its outlook... 'Relatively few of the soldiers and workers today can be called intellectuals... 'Their weak point is that they have no perspective, no background, no basis of comparison. Their spectrum of life is more limited and narrow...'"

Some diplomats in Hanoi expressed the same sentiments to me about the new generation of potential political leaders. "At least the old guard had French educations and knew something of the world," one of them said. "The new generation know nothing but war and xenophobia."

There is a chapter on the Ho Chi Minh trail, that network of roads through Laos and Cambodia that ultimately brought half a million men from North Vietnam into the South. Shaplen tells of their measures to keep the trail open and our's to shut it down and if there ever was a subject for book-length treatment this is it, fellow Niemans.

The last third of *Bitter Victory* is

about Cambodia, which has become Vietnam's Vietnam. Here Shaplen gives a credible although brief history of the terrible and tragic events that have overtaken that benighted land. Perhaps because his visit was shorter, his access more limited, and perhaps because he had spent less time in Cambodia than Vietnam during the war, his account is not as rich as in Vietnamese portions of the book.

Here he brings more optimism to the possibility of a political compromise than I could muster, but his reasoning is practical. If the Vietnamese would be willing to compromise with some of their opponents and if the Chinese would drop their support of the Khmer Rouge, perhaps as part of an improving relationship with the Soviet Union, then some acceptable solution can be arrived at. Shaplen is an unabashed Sihanouk fan and still thinks the erstwhile Prince could play a major role in Cambodia's future.

For students of journalism, there is a fascinating never-before-revealed account of a secret mission that Shaplen performed for Averell Harriman who was, in 1966, LBJ's roving ambassador. Harriman wanted to arrange a prisoner exchange with the Vietcong, who had diplomatic representatives in Sihanouk's Phnom Penh while the United States did not.

Harriman asked Shaplen if he would contact Wilfred Burchett, the Australian journalist who was then living in Phnom Penh. Burchett had covered the Korean war and now the Vietnam war from the communist side and, because of this and charges that he had aided and comforted the enemy, he was not allowed in the United States or his native land.

The deal was that if Burchett would put Shaplen in touch with the Viet Cong in order to open preliminary negotiations on a prisoner of war exchange, the United States would in turn, give Burchett a visa to the United States and put pressure on the Australians to let him go home.

"Because I would be dealing with a

humanitarian matter, I agreed despite some misgivings about a conflict of interest with my job as a correspondent," Shaplen wrote.

Burchett fulfilled his part of the bargain, but the Viet Cong representative wrote Shaplen that an exchange could not be made except as part of a larger, negotiated settlement.

Almost all veteran foreign correspondents have had similar approaches made to them and the rights and wrongs of this case could be the subject of a Nieman seminar. The yarn will certainly give ammunition to Shaplen's critics who claim that he was too close to American officials during the war. I asked him what he thought about the escapade

in the hindsight of twenty years. He said, "Of course the climate of today is a good deal different now than it was in those days and I wonder what I would do today. It was far easier to say yes then than it would be now."

But upon reflection, he said he probably would do it again if it involved American prisoners and if the request came from some one of the "stature of Harriman." He muttered something about the present Irangate caper and I had the distinct impression that Shaplen would not have returned Colonel North's phone calls. □

*H.D.S. Greenway, Nieman Fellow '72, is associate editor, national/foreign news, The Boston Globe.*

domination of neatly segmented steel markets, past practices became even more entrenched.

"If we're making all this money, boys, we must be doing something right," seemed to be the feeling of management in the late 1970's when small operating losses should have been heeded as more than momentary red ink.

The industry had basked in prosperity, never to suffer any serious losses until the 1980's. In fact, in the 1970's, just before the fall, the experts in the industry foresaw glory days in the decade ahead. Indeed, they were wringing their hands. How were American mills going to find the capital to expand fast enough to meet the expected growth in demand for steel in the 1980's? The question should have been, "How are the steel companies going to survive?"

Never, in American industrial history, were so many experts so wrong. Even the ostentatious automobile industry, with its million dollar executive bonuses, seems to have caught itself before plunging into a chasm opened up by high labor costs, foreign competition and declining productivity.

This dismal pattern in the steel industry has been drawn into sharp focus in *Crisis in Bethlehem* by John Strohmeier. The book takes the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, examines its rise to No. 2 steelmaker in the nation and its fall to near bankruptcy. From a small-town editor on the banks of the Lehigh River in southeastern Pennsylvania, a spotlight is focused on the entire, reeling industry.

The book is pure personal journalism, as would be expected. Strohmeier was editor of the *Bethlehem* (Pa.) *Globe-Times* for twenty-eight years, Nieman Fellow at Harvard University in the Class of '53 and a winner of a Pulitzer Prize. He wrote the book under a grant from the Alicia Patterson Foundation, which he won before his retirement in 1985.

"When I became editor of *The*

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## Blue Collar Versus White Collar

### **Crisis in Bethlehem. Big Steel's Struggle to Survive.**

John Strohmeier. Adler & Adler, Publishers Inc., 1986. \$17.95.

by Ray Holton

**T**he decline of the U.S. steel industry can be told in numbers, but it is more interesting, if not more revealing, when participants give firsthand accounts of the ruthlessness on the way up and suicide on the way down in the corridors of power during crisis.

The story of steel's demise is intensely human. The numbers did offer small warning signs that were ignored because of the comfort of conducting business under past practices.

Institutional greed, a symptom of capitalism, is at the center of the story. Or, more acceptably phrased in a steel community, the urge to improve one's living standard is a basic desire of blue and white collar, alike. Not even the meanest of four-footed creatures accumulates more

than it needs for survival. But if the steel industry reflects the human condition, then man is driven by the accumulation of wealth in the shortest time at any expense.

This drive, of course, isn't limited to the steel industry. But steel certainly built an especially handsome niche in the free market economy.

Once the steelworkers got to making 70 percent more than the average manufacturing wage earner, they wanted to hang on. Even today, Lynn Williams, president of the United Steelworkers of America, is fighting to protect past practices and wages; thus, the work stoppage that began in August against the No. 1 steelmaker, USX Corporation (nee, U.S. Steel Corporation). Nothing has changed even though the union's steel membership has been halved in the crisis, which, at 7 years old, is still in its adolescence.

And once the top management understood that cooperation in the oligarchic industry led to six and even seven digit remuneration, blue-chip status on Wall Street, and

*Bethlehem Globe-Times* in 1956, the steel industry was at high tide," writes Strohmeier. "The signs of prosperity were often embarrassingly conspicuous."

He goes on to report how Bethlehem Steel had seven names in the top ten of the nation's highest paid corporate executives, according to a listing in *Business Week* in 1959.

"One would expect such hefty salaries and bonuses to be rewards for entrepreneurship, or at least for visionary management," concludes Strohmeier. "Far from it. This corporate elite was so well-compensated merely because American steel companies had an unchallenged grip on the marketplace."

In journeyman fashion, Strohmeier buttresses his conclusions with the words of eyewitnesses.

"Bethlehem at that time had the reputation that its hallways were lined with gold and when you became employed there they gave you a pick to mine it," a former corporate lawyer told Strohmeier in an interview.

Bethlehem Steel, under its patriarchs Charles M. Schwab and Eugene G. Grace, dominated the small industrial town in the Lehigh Valley where the social strata were clearly defined. It was an inward corporation, "lulled into a parochial view of the world," writes Strohmeier. No outside directors sat on its board until the 1970's. Perhaps that's why Grace got a \$1.6 million bonus in 1929. The luxurious corporate Saucon Valley Country Club — 36 holes, indoor tennis, swimming at three pools, squash — received as much attention as the company's steel mills. Even in the mid-1970's, executives built another, more exclusive golf course, Weyhill, at a nearby estate.

Not that labor was forgotten.

Labor negotiations generally found management giving away money without demanding increases in productivity. Strohmeier found a management team eyewitness who recalled a 1965 confrontation

between President Lyndon Johnson and the chief negotiators for labor and management who were deadlocked in contract talks.

"You tell those nickel-bending bastards you represent that if they try to bend that nickel on Lyndon Baines Johnson, I'll jam that nickel up their asses in more ways than they can count," the former President told the management representative. He then turned to I.W. Abel, president of the United Steel Workers, and said, "You represent a greedy union. You are out for all you can steal."

He gave both sides 48 hours to come up with an agreement, Strohmeier quotes the witness.

"If you can't agree by then, I will tell the American public which of you greedy bastards is the worst," Johnson said, according to Strohmeier's witness.

But with each new contract, "the gap in wage costs between American and foreign steelmakers widened, and, in 1973, the big American steelmakers virtually ensured their inability to compete," writes Strohmeier.

He was referring to the Experimental Negotiating Agreement, a long-term, no-strike contract with built in cost of living adjustment (COLA), in addition to three percent annual wage increases. The union agreed not to strike and to settle disputes by arbitration. At the time, the so-called ENA was hailed as some new era in the bitter union-management relations in the industry.

"However, it only accelerated the steel industry's distress," writes Strohmeier. "No one had foreseen the double digit inflation of the 1970's."

The COLA alone led to nearly \$5 an hour increase in union wages by 1980. "There were no provisions for increased productivity to offset these automatic pay escalations," noted Strohmeier.

And, as late as 1979, the captains of steel were still deluded. "Make no

mistake about it, the market for steel is growing," declared Bethlehem Chairman Lewis Foy in a keynote address in 1979.

By 1982, steelworker earnings peaked at \$26.29 an hour which included benefits such as health, dental, eye care, and supplemental layoff payments.

"Steelworkers enjoyed the most liberal vacation plan in the industry, with the senior half of the workforce taking company-paid 13-week vacations every five years, in addition to their generous annual vacations," writes Strohmeier.

At this exhilarating peak, no one was fully prepared for the hard ride down beginning with the 1981-82 recession. The company was going to be cut down, slipping to No. 4 among the nation's steelmakers and losing well over half its workforce.

The axman was Chairman Donald H. Trautlein, who was dispirited when he retired early this year after five years of issuing pink slips, closing plants and paring the company down primarily to its three core mills: Sparrows Point, Maryland, near Baltimore; Burns Harbor, Indiana; and the home plant in Bethlehem. Trautlein, the outside accountant who came inside, was succeeded by Walter F. Williams, a 35-year veteran, with shop-floor savvy.

"Bethlehem Steel's total employment hit a peak of 115,000 in 1975," writes Strohmeier. "It stood at 83,800 when Trautlein took over in 1980. It was down to 48,500 in 1984."

Today, it stands at less than 45,000. Production in 1986 was about 10 million tons of raw steel, half of the company's historical peak production.

The primary cause of the decline is well documented: low cost, superior quality imported steel from modern, new mills in Japan, South Korea, Brazil, and other countries. The U.S. steel oligopoly was suddenly facing competition from overseas and they didn't like it.

But there was also new competition from within America. Mini-mills, the non-union steel producers which rely on electric fired furnaces to melt scrap, nibbled larger chunks of the market from the big integrated mills such as Bethlehem.

Mini-mills such as Nucor Inc. of Charlotte, North Carolina, captured the markets for cheaper products, such as reinforcement rods, first. Then they moved up to higher cost items such as bars. They are investing in new technology, something the integrated mills let slide during the heyday.

If there is a weakness in Strohmeier's account, it is in his conclusion. The author asks in the closing chapter title, "Can It Be Saved?"

"The nation needs a viable steel industry," he writes. "Once the steel plants go down, no amount of shouting through bullhorns or demands for legislation against steel closings will revive them. The public should be aware of this. The time to use those bullhorns is now. It is in everyone's interest to insist that the American steel industry stop killing itself."

In these final words, he makes it seem as if government, through the American people, should come to the rescue of the steel industry. But the picture of the industry that he has drawn in the preceding pages doesn't make it seem to be worth saving.

Analysts, too, have done an about-face from the late 1970's. At year end 1986, one analyst predicted that 1987 will be no kinder to the American steel industry.

"Ten to 15 million more tons of capacity will disappear along with 20,000 to 30,000 jobs in 1987," predicted John Jacobson, director of the U.S. and World Steel Service at Chase Econometrics of Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania.

Such gloomy predictions, now in vogue among analysts, are still lost on some in the industry. Strohmeier found a union leader in Lackawanna, New York, where Bethle-

hem closed a mill, causing the loss of 7,000 jobs.

"Give up past practices?" said the union leader. "Hell no. We fought for them." □

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## A Universal Problem for University Presses

### Harvard University Press; a History

Max Hall. Harvard University Press, 1986. \$20.

by Michael C. Janeway

When I was a lad at college here, and the winter winds blew, there was a hoary old bit of Harvard dining hall stage-patter about Eliza, her child by a dissolute undergraduate in her arms, fleeing across the ice of the Charles River, with proctors and dogs in pursuit, to find refuge at the Business School. It came to mind as I read this amiable, frank, often dramatic account of the first sixty years of the Harvard University Press. Prestige came to the Press early; institutional security did not, and the saga of the Press' recurring shuttle to and from the abyss at times suggests a Hasty Pudding version of Harriet Beecher Stowe's tale, with the Harvard equivalent of the White House in the role of Simon Legree.

Any publishing house is an amalgam of the appeal of its authors, tastes of its editors, vision of its chancellors of the exchequer, and luck of the marketplace draw — a quirky thing all around, and the stuff of quarrels and coups. The Harvard Press is no exception. Harvard and its press appear to have fought not about art or scholarship, however, but about money (sometimes calculated in currencies other than dollars, e.g., what price administrative ability?)

Does a university press exist to celebrate and broaden the availability of scholarship, or must it be competitive? In the matter of *The Red and the Black* (ink), how much of the former is acceptable to a university, and to what extent should a university press strive for the latter? As Max Hall [NF '50], himself the Press' first editor for the social sciences, writes in his introduction, an academic publishing house "is a rare and puzzling species, carrying with it the question 'Is it a business or isn't it?' To answer 'It is both an educational institution and a business' does not necessarily settle the matter because at different times and places, and even at the same time and place, there can be wide disagreement over where to put the emphasis." And there was.

Harvard has dispatched Directors of its Press who did not get it right Red-and-Black-wise, notably Dumas Malone in 1943 and Mark Carroll in 1972. Yet under Malone the Press published some of its best-known backlist perennials, by traditional reckoning a badge of marketplace acumen. They include *The Great Chain of Being* by Arthur O. Lovejoy, *Philosophy in a New Key* by Suzanne Langer, *Mr. Justice Holmes and the Supreme Court* by Felix Frankfurter, and *Boston's Immigrants, 1790-1865* by Oscar Handlin.

Harvard, then led by the methodical James B. Conant, a chemist, also changed the formula, turning the Press in the direction of what the scholarly Malone, no bureaucrat,

saw as commercialization. That was after Conant flirted with the idea of terminating the experiment entirely on the ground that the Press had to be a business, but that Harvard shouldn't be "in business."

As the author writes, "Conant looked upon the Press as a business enterprise that happened to belong to an academic institution. Malone looked upon it as an essential academic program that happened to sell its products in the marketplace." (Conant, as the author points out, spent several days each wartime week in Washington and had much on his mind besides the Press, not least of all involvement in the development of the atomic bomb. Malone spent 38 years after his exile from Harvard writing one of the scholarly and commercial masterpieces of our time, his brilliant and definitive six-volume biography of Thomas Jefferson. Assuming the bomb is kept at bay, one ventures to think that Malone's name will mean more than Conant's on backlists of the future.)

Colorful figures before and after Conant and Malone form a great chain of publishing creativity. They include benefactors like James Loeb of the Kuhn, Loeb fortune, Class of '88, "half-hearted financier and whole-hearted lover of literature, music and art," who dropped out of the family firm, moved to Munich, and financed the Loeb Classical Library, which the Harvard Press took over. His spiritual descendant in offbeat philanthropy was Waldron Phoenix Belknap, Jr., Harvard, '20, an art historian and architect who died in 1949, leaving the Press in his will what at first seemed merely an agreeable estate (as did his mother, who outlived him.) But the Belknaps' holdings, based in Texas, turned out to mean that the Harvard University Press had literally struck oil, millions of dollars of revenues from which poured into what became the Press' first real endowment. (The Belknap Press within The Harvard Press is in effect an imprint and a

means of accounting, of enabling the Press to finance books that it could not otherwise afford to publish.)

Mr. Hall's account is rich in other Harvard lore, such as the role of the Press "Syndics" through the years: peers of the Harvard faculty realm as various as George Lyman Kittredge at the start, Zechariah Chafee and Ralph Barton Perry in the middle years, and Walter Jackson Bate, Juan Marichal, and James Q. Wilson more recently. The Syndics functioned as something like a select society of heavenly editors, peer reviewers and avenging angels, mostly in defense of the Press and its higher calling. The Syndics also included those who rendered under Caesar, representatives from the world of publishing like Roger Scaife of Little, Brown, and Roy Larsen of Time Inc., Harvard men to whom the University Administration turned for counsel and more in the long search for an answer to the "Is it a business?" riddle. Scaife, at 68, took over the Press at Conant's request in the wake of Malone's departure in 1943, steered it out of adversity, and handed it over to one of its giants four years later.

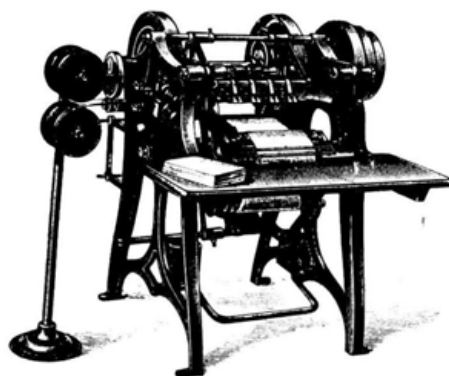
This was Thomas Wilson, whose publishing triumphs in the twenty years he directed the Press include *The Adams Papers*, edited by Lyman Butterfield, but who received more publicity for a book the Press chose not to publish — James Watson's *The Double Helix* — than for any it did. (That tale of dispute about a dispute is well told in these pages.) Experienced in commercial and university publishing, Wilson was equal to the task of reconciling the Press' problem of dual identity, and oversaw its leaps forward in size, reputation and revenue (aided not a little by the lucky strike in the Belknap bequest.) One of his mottoes was that it was "not the purpose of the Press to make money but to render a service to the University without losing money." Under Wilson the Press made a lot of money.

The short term of his successor, Mark Carroll, which began brightly under President Nathan Pusey and ended unhappily under President Derek Bok, was as star-crossed as Wilson's was auspicious. But in the wake of it came Harvard's happiest resolution of the Press conundrum yet, Bok's appointment of Arthur Rosenthal, founder of Basic Books and a publisher other publishers do not blush to call a genius, as Director in 1972.

Tantalizingly, Mr. Hall leaves off his story at this point on the grounds that Mr. Rosenthal is still very much on the job, and that passage of time is essential to "scholarly historical analysis." As that, plus an entertaining, frequently poignant account of great dreams and deeds and honest but often bitter disputes, is what Mr. Hall has achieved here, one cannot quarrel with his decision.

The moral of the story: the marriage of true minds in the form of subsidization of prestige, however high-mindedly undertaken, can lead to messy divorces between those in overall charge and those in charge of prestige. In Thomas Wilson and Arthur Rosenthal, Harvard found creative managers who have made the Harvard University Press the embodiment of publishing prestige, their achievements masking the fact that history shows that the Charles River is notorious for the thinness of its ice. □

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# Two Life Stories

## The Great American Magazine

Loudon Wainwright. Knopf, 1986. \$19.95.

*Life, The First Fifty Years, 1936-1986.* Little, Brown, 1986. \$50.

by Robert Manning

All was clamor and confusion in the Manhattan offices of Time Inc. in mid-November 1936. After several years of deliberating, soul searching, and memo writing, Henry Robinson Luce and several of his minions were plunging ahead with the first edition of an ambitious new magazine. "We've been fussing around for six months with theory and philosophy," Luce told John Shaw Billings, the man he'd chosen to edit the new publication. "From now on, to hell with theory and philosophy — you've got to get out a magazine."

It was to be called *Life*. For the cover, the editors selected a shot of the Fort Peck Dam in Montana by the already-famous photographer Margaret Bourke-White. Dated November 23, 1936, the issue led off with a surgical-masked doctor holding a newly-born child upside down, a bold photograph for its day, and under it the headline, "Life begins."

Luce and his editors presented in that first edition a hodgepodge of the sublime, the ordinary and the ridiculous but, with a chauvinism that might be expected from the man who proclaimed the coming of The American Century, took pains to arrange that the celebrities they celebrated were Americans — the Kansas artist, John Steuart Curry; the "greatest living actress," Helen Hayes; and a good-looking chap named Spangler Arlington Brugh, who had become better known as

Robert Taylor. No less than the poet Archibald MacLeish put the words to Bourke-White's photographs. A piece on Brazil presented the natives as "charming" but "lazy." Before the reader finished, he or she saw pictures of — among others — Eugene O'Neill, Gentleman Jim Farley, Winston Churchill, Benito Mussolini, two members of the Barrow (Bonnie and Clyde) gang, a one-legged mountain climber, and much-married Peggy Hopkins Joyce, who was deemed newsworthy because this was the first time she had become engaged to an astrophysicist.

The new baby was a fantastic success. A disastrous success, in fact. After the immediate sellout of the first 250,000 newsstand copies, each week's printing was increased; in three months, circulation was over a million; by year's end, it was 1.5 million. All this cost Time Inc. a fortune (\$5 million in the first year alone) because advertisers had been guaranteed rates based on a much smaller circulation, rates so low they could not begin to pay for the costs of paper, printing and delivery. All of this lost money was to flow back, and millions more, because *Life* was another gleaning of Harry Luce's golden touch, ultimately the most successful weekly the world has seen — and will ever see, now that television has succeeded the printing press as provider of sensations to the brain by way of the eye.

The late, lamented old pix mag deserves the title Loudon Wainwright gives it for this amiable insider's story of the birth, rise, rollicking good times, and much-mourned death of "The Great American Magazine."

The magazine was 12 years old and luxuriating in its success when Wainwright went to work there as an office boy. He was still there 24 years later, having become a writer, sometime editor, principal columnist, and a much-beloved fellow, when on December 8, 1972, as it

must to all, death came to *Life*. In the years since the weekly expired, Wainwright produced this labor of love. It is, he confesses, "neither an objective nor a definitive history of *Life* . . . It is also biased, for I have no emotional distance from the subject and never will."

*Life* never abandoned the jaunty, polished and at the same time raffish *boulevardier* approach that characterized its first issue. Having discovered the alchemy that could turn the world's dross and foibles into gold, why abandon it? It is interesting to read, as I do, Wainwright's story of the magazine and the varied characters who produced it from the viewpoint of one who went to work at its older sister magazine *Time* at about the same time. His version of what it was like to work at *Life* corresponds in at least one important respect to the view we *Time* writers and editors took of the brash upstarts working, we surmised, too little for too much pay a few floors above us in Rockefeller Center: The *Life* people seemed to have a helluva lot of fun putting out their magazine. We at *Time* carried the world on our shoulders, while those at *Life* played with the real world as if it were a giant beachball at a Riviera house party. We resented what has been nicely described as the Lifers' "unswerving self-esteem," envied them their lavish expense accounts, and supply of comely lady researchers. We were as impressed as the public at large with some of *Life*'s breath-taking pictorial feats — the memorable photographs of the Sistine Chapel ceiling, for example; or its stunning portraits of all the jungle cats of Africa.

That was the difference between us, of course. Pictures. We were wordmen. The people at *Life* were pix people, and for their sins they had to submit to the tyranny of photographers. There were strong and highly creative editors at the helm, the sturdiest and in many ways most successful being managing editor Edward K. Thompson

who, after he was pushed aside in 1961, went on to found another quickly successful magazine, *Smithsonian*. But the photographers were the ones who wore the purple. Some were quiet-spoken, modest craftsmen who mingled tolerantly with us *hoi polloi*; some like Robert Capa and Larry Burrows (both of whom were killed in the Vietnam war) and David Douglas Duncan were adventurers and saw as much combat as the fighting men they photographed. Others traveled the world like Imperial Khans, attended by beaters and brow-beaten reporters, commanding kings and potentates, divas and movie queens to do their bidding, even if it meant searing in the sunlight until just the right shadows came. Alfred Eisenstaedt and Elliot Elisofon seated alone in a room gave off more *prima donnaism* than has ever been crowded onto the stages of La Scala and the Met combined. It is told of Elisofon, for example, that during a picture-taking tour of Africa, the *Life* reporter traveling with him remonstrated: "You've got to stop introducing yourself as 'the world's greatest photographer.' It's embarrassing." Elisofon is reported to have replied, "You're right. So from now on, you can tell people for me."

The photographers, as well as many reporters and editors during Time Inc.'s swashbuckling, creative days (as contrasted with today's capitulation to MBAs and the bottom line), lived very high off the expense account. Their enemies were the company accountants; great artistry was employed to confuse home office efforts to sniff out would-be mulcters. After years of trying to catch one photographer famous for the opulence of his expense accounts, a business office beagle at last thought he had his man: \$40 of cab fares were reported for a time the photographer was aboard a World War II aircraft carrier in the Pacific. The pen-pusher gleefully apprised the photographer of his discovery. Came the cool

reply: "Don't understand your questioning taxi fare stop Did you ever try walking from one end of a carrier to the other during a kamikaze attack?"

But I have digressed. Blame that on the beguilement of Wainwright's book. It is so charming in its wistfulness, its enjoyment of the good times and hard sweat that went into the making of each week's issue, and so forthright about the foibles and rivalries within *Life's* staff, that it encourages the reader to summon up personal recollections of a wonderful magazine that was killed — but will never be replaced by — the medium that brings us Mork Brokaw, Mindy Brinkley, Night Vice and all that silly prattle accompanied by weather maps

immersed in bowls of oatmeal.

To punctuate this nostalgia trip, the people at Time Inc. offer at a price that adds up to \$1 per year, a fat and handsome book that shows much of the best of *Life's* pictures and covers over its 36 years of real *Life* and subsequent 14 years as a sometime semiannual or, in recent years, a frequently chintzy monthly shadow of its old self. It's fun to look at. Wainwright's book is fun to read. So turn off that damnable TV set! □

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Robert Manning, *Nieman Fellow '46*, worked on *Time* magazine and did some writing and reporting for *Life*. He is now editor-in-chief of the *Boston Publishing Company*.

## Journalism in Imperial Russia

### Soviet Studies in History. A Journal Of Translations. Newspaper Journalism in Prerevolutionary Russia.

Louise McReynolds, Guest Editor.  
M.E. Sharpe Inc. Summer 1986.  
Paperback. By Subscription.

by Pasquale E. Micciche

Few of us are able to ignore anything Soviet. Whether it be a virtuoso performance of the Kirov Ballet, a stunning Olympic hockey victory, or an ominous addition to its nuclear arsenal, things Soviet are compelling. But as we react to this twentieth century Hydra, we may understandably lose sight of less obvious historical forces which continue to exert a profound influence on all aspects of Soviet society. Despite seventy years of both Soviet rule and incessant millennial Marxist rhetoric, the Russian past still lives and it has much to tell us about the USSR of M.S. Gorbachev. For anyone who desires a deeper under-

standing of the contemporary Soviet Union, especially its political culture, this recent issue of *Soviet Studies in History* should be of interest.

Although clearly intended for scholars with a special interest in Imperial Russia, the issue also has something to tell the general reader about Russia in 1986. Edited by Louise McReynolds, a former journalist turned scholar and now an assistant professor of history at the University of Hawaii, the issue contains very readable translations of five recent Soviet publications dealing with newspaper journalism in Russia during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

With a fine eye for variety, Professor McReynolds provides the reader with an appealing range of articles — one is a translation of the journal of a working reporter (Aleksandr Chekhov, brother of the playwright, Anton Chekhov) and it is lively, colorful, and filled with details of great human interest; a

second is from a scholarly work on the social position of newspapermen in prerevolutionary Russia, with emphasis upon the precarious legal status of the profession in the Tsarist period; the third, from the same work, deals with the history of schools and institutes of journalism, both Tsarist and Soviet; the fourth is a biographical sketch of one of the great newspaper moguls of the pre-revolutionary era, I.D. Sytin, publisher of *Russkoe Slovo* (*The Russian Word*); and the fifth is a recent Soviet study of the prerevolutionary "bourgeois" (i.e., capitalist) press and its use of paid advertising. All published in the USSR between 1981 and 1984, the articles have a richness of detail and an historiographical texture characteristic of Soviet scholarship.

True to Professor McReynolds' stated purpose, the articles do fill a void in Western scholarship, for she has chosen to focus on a long ignored aspect of Imperial Russia, namely the mass circulation daily. Instead of researching either the monthly journals of the intellectual elite (the so-called "fat journals") or the underground radical press, Professor McReynolds has devoted her considerable talents to a study of the daily mass circulation newspaper. And in doing so, she provides us with a glimpse of the "other" Russia which was slowly emerging in the final four decades prior to the Russian Revolution — the Russia of capitalistic enterprise.

It hardly seems possible today, but did Russia have an alternative path of economic and political development in this century? Could she have followed a path other than the Marxist one pursued since the cataclysm of 1917? Contrary to much conventional wisdom in the West and to party dogma in the USSR, there were possibilities open to Russia other than the fateful one she took under V.I. Lenin and the Communist Party. And nothing quite illuminates these alternative possibilities better than reading

about her daily mass circulation press.

A second purpose of the editor is to provide Western readers with a representative sampling of contemporary Soviet scholarship and thereby show us how Soviet scholars are themselves focusing (albeit for their own reasons) on this long ignored aspect of the Russian past. Like much of Soviet historiography, the articles found in this issue of *Soviet Studies in History* are based on solid archival research; on the other hand, however, one confronts in this sampling of Soviet scholarship, as in all, an interpretive rigidity typical of historians who must analyze all phenomena through a particular lens — Marxism. The most prominent examples of this are found in the articles on the legal position of the bourgeois press and its use of paid advertising. In both articles, the bourgeois press is reduced to a by-product of a decadent capitalistic system and is described as "greedy," "demagogic," completely absorbed in the pursuit of its own financial interest; in short, the bourgeois press in Russia, as in the West, could not possibly have any redeeming social value.

Another glaring example is found in the article on paid advertising where commercial advertising and the income derived from it are equated with usury! While it is expected that an historian, whether Marxist or not, will impose meaning on his material, it is something else to render value judgments (e.g., all income raised by paid advertisements is usurious) as "objective" statements. The leap from fact to moral judgment, deeply ingrained in Marxism, is laudable, but not very convincing. What is clearly demonstrated is the fact that paid advertising did support the bourgeois press in Russia, not income from the cost of the daily newspaper. Yet the judgment that it constituted usury is not argued in ethical terms, but simply deduced, *a priori*, from the assumption that

such a practice is in itself immoral.

The heavy presence of Marxist dogma, however, does not vitiate Soviet scholarship in general, nor what we find in this particular issue of *Soviet Studies in History*. The articles do have merit. For example, Aleksandr Chekhov's "A Reporter's Notes" (first published in Russia in 1907) vividly records Russia's struggle with alcoholism, discussions as to its psychosomatic etiology, the Tsarist government's responsibility for the problem, debates over censorship, Pobedonostsev's (a reactionary minister of Nicholas II) depiction of the "free" press as both irresponsible and licentious (a characterization strikingly similar to current official Soviet statements on the Western press), labor unrest, and the arrival of the telephone in Russia. In short, Chekhov's "Notes" are a concrete and immediate slice of Russian life in the last years of the Tsarist era.

The two articles by B.I. Esin, professor of journalism at Moscow State University, describe the early struggle by the Russian mass circulation dailies against public indifference and official hostility, debates in the press over its public service mission, its ambiguous legal status, and the need for the professional training of Russian journalists (only dimly recognized by the Tsarist government, but given special status by the Soviet government), as well as details on the first professional journalism curricula adopted in Russia, under both Tsarist and Soviet auspices.

The biographical sketch of I.D. Sytin by E.A. Dinerstein, a young Soviet scholar, highlights Sytin's struggles with professional rivals, conflicts with editors, government censors, and public apathy as he worked to establish one of Russia's first and largest mass circulation dailies, *Russkoe Slovo*.

And, finally, the article by Professor A.N. Bokhanov, an historian at the Soviet Academy of Sciences, presents a body of statistical data on the utilization of paid advertising by

two of the largest and most influential mass circulation papers of the prerevolutionary era, i.e., *Russkoe Slovo* and *Novoe Vremia*, *The New Times*. Bokhanov offers us a wealth of valuable information on these two prominent newspapers and his work is replete with economic data such as circulation figures, daily costs, advertisements, links to banks, etc.

All of this should be of great interest to Russian historians and professional journalists with an interest in the history of the Russian press. Yet the value of *Soviet Studies in History* goes beyond the world of scholarship, at least as we generally understand it. For history in the USSR is not merely another academic field; rather, it is a crucial element in the very legitimization of the Communist Party's authority, cen-

tral to its utopian ideology, and an important part of its justification for exclusive political control of the Soviet political system.

Thus Soviet historical scholarship, and Soviet journalism as well, will be key indicators of shifts and changes in the Soviet political system. If Gorbachev is to bring the USSR beyond *glasnost* (openness) to some kind of real commitment to freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of conscience (all are intertwined and inseparable), then we should see inklings of this historic development in the Soviet press and in Soviet historical scholarship. □

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## Saying No

### A Two-Faced Press? A Twentieth Century Fund Paper.

Tom Goldstein. Priority Press Publications, 1986. Paperback \$7.50.

by Morton Mintz

The six U.S. cigarette manufacturers spend about \$2.6 billion a year on advertising, accounting for 1 percent of newspaper ads and 9 percent of magazine ads. That's about \$9 for every man, woman, and child in the country. In December 1985, the American Medical Association passed a resolution urging legislation to "ban the advertising of tobacco products." Some of the issues raised by the AMA action are examined in this brief (54-page) paper by Goldstein, an acting professor at the Graduate School of Journalism of the University of California, Berkeley.

"Should any curbs — legal or

voluntary — be placed on the advertising of lawful products?" Goldstein asks. "Does doing so interfere with the freedom of the press? Is public skepticism of the press fostered by the apparent conflict of newspapers' accepting advertisements for a product that editorials attack? Can we have a press that behaves as a good citizen and yet sustains itself commercially?" To examine these issues, Goldstein drew "upon dozens of interviews with publishers and editors and upon the 110 responses to a questionnaire on advertising acceptability policies that I mailed to 165 publishers and advertising managers of newspapers and magazines."

Goldstein's most valuable contribution is his demolition of a notion solemnly advanced by the American Newspaper Publishers Association and the Magazine Publishers Association: the proposed ban is "an unconstitutional attempt to restrict free speech . . . if it is legal to sell a product, it should be legal to advertise it. This 'commercial

speech' is Constitutionally protected."

Goldstein demonstrates to a fault — well that "there is no such thing as a constitutionally guaranteed 'right to advertise,' just as there is no constitutionally guaranteed consumers' 'right to know.'" As various editorials have elaborated it, the notion is that a publisher who takes cigarette ads does so out of dedication to principle, not profits. Moreover, if publishers refused cigarette ads, they would start to slide down a "slippery slope" at the end of which they would have to refuse ads for other products that can be hazardous. "Could we justify rejecting cigarette ads but publishing liquor ads, as does the *New Yorker*?" asked the *Columbia Journalism Review*. What of cholesterol-rich ice cream? What of books and plays expressing repugnant ideas?"

Such talk blurs a crucial distinction: cigarettes are the only major consumer product that is harmful when used as intended. Use of cigarettes in *any* quantity may be hazardous; use of alcohol, including beer and wine, in moderation is not.

Cigarettes are indeed a "legal product," but why? Professor Kenneth E. Warner of the University of Michigan School of Public Health *et al* answer the question in an article that should be read in tandem with Goldstein: "Promotion of Tobacco Products: Issues and Policy Options" (*Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*, Vol. II, No. 3, Fall 1986, Copyright 1986 by Duke University).

The historical accident that tobacco came into wide use long before its hazards were understood is only part of the explanation. More pertinent is political clout. Warner writes: "Tobacco products are legal today solely because they have been specifically exempted, by legislation or administrative decision, from the regulatory authority of numerous federal agencies mandated to protect the public from hazardous products." For example, Congress specifically

barred the Consumer Product Safety Commission from regulating cigarettes, although they "are responsible for more deaths than the combination of all of the other products that have come under the commission's purview." The Food and Drug Administration won't evaluate tobacco products for safety on the ground that they are neither food nor medicine.

Warner makes another oft-ignored point: in most states cigarettes are illegal for minors. Yet while cigarette ads are unrestricted in publications seen by children, such as newspapers, ads for other products not legally sold to minors, such as the wares of "adult" bookstores, are "restricted, often severely and occasionally completely."

Goldstein throws sand on the slippery slope: "This reasoning by absurd analogy belittles the role of journalists. When it comes to advertising, they are capable of making reasonable and intelligent judgments, just as they are able to decide what stories to run each day and where to play them."

"The almost universal response of publishers to my questionnaire was that they accept advertising for all lawful products," Goldstein reports. On the basis of his abundant evidence, however, this response suggests memory losses.

Many papers decline ads as self-appointed guardians of public morals. In Los Angeles, the *Times* declines ads "for 'streaking' services." In Cambridge, the *Harvard Crimson* refused a *Playboy* ad "for recruiting sessions." In Phoenix, the *Republic* and *Gazette* never have taken ads for X-rated movies, and an executive told Goldstein, "*Bolero*, the latest Bo Derek epic, was turned down at a loss of revenue of at least \$10,000." In Detroit, the *Free Press* movie ad guidelines bar "portrayals of human bodies that aren't discreetly clad. . ." In Cleveland, the *Plain Dealer* rejects ads for "escort services" and fortune tellers.

Other papers forego revenues to

protect us from . . . well, what? In San Diego, the *Union* and *Evening Tribune* do not accept ads from Planned Parenthood. In Nebraska, the *Columbus Telegram* refuses ads for "home sewing."

We may be grateful that Goldstein tells us of a few papers that cut off advertising of something they reported in news and editorial columns to be hazardous. In New London, Connecticut, *The Day* won't accept ads "for 'Happy Hours' at bars, hoping that this measure will help to reduce the incidence of highway deaths" (which occur at about one-seventh the frequency of smoking deaths). In Chicago, the *Sun-Times* cut off ads for abortion clinics after doing muckraking reporting about them. And in Salina, Kansas, the *Journal* "discounted all national cigarette advertising in 1984. 'It was a little hard to justify in my mind that we editorialize in opposition to smoking and then turn around and accept the revenue that was generated from cigarette advertising,' said Fred Vandergrift, the paper's publisher."

No such ethic enforces "Advertising Standards of Acceptability in *The Dallas Morning News*," a five-page pamphlet which says that advertising "likely to cause injury to the health" of the reader is unacceptable. This standard, the paper's assistant retail ad manager told Goldstein, "was not broad enough to include cigarette advertising."

Warner and his colleagues provide an additional context in which to see such contrasting behavior as that in Salina and Dallas. The six tobacco companies are conglomerates. Four of them "ranked among the top ten magazine advertisers, with R.J. Reynolds and Philip Morris ranking first and second, respectively. The same four conglomerates also ranked among the top ten newspaper advertisers, with R.J. Reynolds again topping the list." Still more power over advertising was gained by Reynolds in 1983, when it acquired Nabisco, and by Philip Morris later, when it

acquired General Foods. Loew's Corporation, parent of cigarette maker Lorillard, recently took control of a big block of the stock of CBS.

The implications are unpleasant. "Editors and owners might fear that a news or editorial discussion of smoking would be perceived as an attack on their most important sponsors," the Warner article warns. Obviously, too, refusing ads for the product said by the respectable scientific community to cause some 350,000 premature deaths a year, and to be the leading cause of avoidable death and disease, may risk punitively diminished ad revenues, not merely for cigarettes, but also for numerous other consumer products.

I regret that Goldstein builds on a flawed assumption, which M.J. Rossant, Director of the Twentieth Century Fund, makes explicit: it is "the prevailing practice of the responsible press to give full news coverage to products that may be harmful to consumers and editorially warn against the dangers of such products." More crisply, Michael Gartner, editor of *The Courier Journal* in Louisville, says that "[t]he public has been informed about the perils of smoking; it has, in large part, decided to keep smoking. *The press did its job, the public did its.*" (My italics).

Rossant and Gartner imply that aggressive, imaginative editors across the land, seeing smoking for the appalling scourge it is, and utterly indifferent to such considerations as ad revenues and career advancement, have regularly assigned platoons of reporters to the smoking story, much as they do to, say, airliner crashes, elections, and sports events. But in my experience over forty years, it is more often than not some pain-in-the-ass reporter, not a boss, who initiates (and often loses) battles for in-depth, sustained coverage of most any kind of massive corporate assault on public health and safety and the environment.

If Gartner is correct, swarms of reporters should have descended on

the Fifth World Conference on Smoking and Health in July 1983. It was a magnificent opportunity — in Winnipeg, only a short hop across the border — to harvest a huge crop of exciting news from experts from all over the globe on every smoking-related area, such as the targeting of the Third World for market expansion, of smoking trends among children and women, of anti-smoking actions in Bulgaria (strong) and Japan (weak), of physicians vandalizing cigarette billboards in Australia, of the destruction of irreplaceable forests for wood to cure tobacco. The grand total of U.S. newspaper, magazine, television, and radio reporters who attended: two.

Because the press "did its job," Gartner says, the public was "informed." If he was implying (as I believe he was) that the public was fully informed, he was blowing smoke. Goldstein himself calls such suggestions into question, citing, for example, a 2,500-word *Washington Post* article in December 1985 in which reporter Susan Okie amply "documented 'a widespread perception among writers, editors, and antismoking organizations that cigarette advertising is influencing the news Americans read about smoking.' Okie found that the health effects of smoking are especially 'played down in many women's magazines that accept cigarette advertising,'" but she, Goldstein, and Warner also tell of disturbing episodes involving *The New Republic*, *The Atlantic*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *Sports Illustrated*.

Warner *et al* blow away any thought of a fully informed public with this: "Polls suggest that large proportions of the U.S. population do not understand that smoking reduces one's life expectancy; large proportions do not identify smoking as the principal cause of lung cancer . . . and do not perceive lung cancer to be a fatal disease; large proportions do not identify smoking as a cause of heart attacks . . . Recent

*developments associated with smoking and health remain largely unknown to the general public [my italics]. . . .*

"The image that smoking really is not all that important is strongly suggested in a recent poll in which the public ranked 'don't smoke' as the tenth most important health and safety priority, behind such measures as installing home smoke detectors, despite the facts that cigarettes kill sixty times as many people as do home fires and the most important cause of home fires is cigarettes."

Whether the ad ban proposed by the AMA, if legislated by Congress, would be found by the Supreme Court to be constitutional is, of course, conjectural. Goldstein's plea, however, is not for a ban, but for rigorous self-denial: all publishers should be "socially responsible" and sacrifice cigarette-ad revenues. A few magazines have in fact done so, including *Reader's Digest*, *Good Housekeeping*, the *New Yorker*, *Seventeen*, *Washington Monthly*, and *Hadassah Magazine*. The pitifully few newspapers on the honor roll include *The Daily Record* in Morristown, New Jersey.

Goldstein may be coughing up the wrong tree if he seriously expects large numbers of magazines and newspapers, wealthy or struggling, to sign on. Consider *The New York Times* and *The Boston Globe* — each a more likely pacesetter than a paper of 30,000 circulation in Salina, Kansas.

The *Times*, Goldstein reports, lived without cigarette ad revenues

in the early 1970's. Since then, however, it "has energetically solicited tobacco advertisers in an important trade publication, the *U.S. Tobacco and Candy Journal*. The salutation of one recent advertisement was: 'Lifestyles are made, not born.'" And "one of the first things The New York Times Company did after purchasing the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* late in 1982 was to reverse that paper's long-standing policy of refusing cigarette advertising."

The *Globe* banned cigarette ads in May 1969 because "accumulated medical evidence has indicated that cigarette smoking is hazardous to health." Five years later, the *Globe* "decided there is a larger question here — one of access, a responsibility to its public to allow the varying voices of the community appropriate access to its advertising space." Wealthy, i.e., is better than healthy.

There are numerous possible alternatives to either an ad ban or appeals to social responsibility, including a proposal by Representative Pete Stark and Senator Bill Bradley to end the tax deductibility of tobacco ad and promotion outlays. Warner lists another interesting possibility: "Earmark a few pennies of the federal cigarette excise tax to pay for a media antitobacco campaign. . . . The tax has the desirable feature of yielding diminishing revenues as consumption — and hence need for anti-tobacco publicity — falls." □

Morton Mintz, Nieman Fellow '64, is a reporter on The Washington Post and is also an author.



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(see page 46)

# Female Reporters to the Fore

## Brilliant Bylines.

### A Biographical Anthology of Notable Newspaperwomen in America.

Barbara Belford. Columbia University Press, 1986. \$30.

by Jan Collins Stucker

Nearly everyone has heard of Woodward and Bernstein. Ditto Ernie Pyle. Jimmy Breslin, Seymour Hersh, and George Will have become famous enough that fellow reporters write stories about *them*.

But who are the best known newspaperwomen in America? Lois Lane and Brenda Starr, probably. Clever Lois is still four steps ahead of Clark Kent, while titian-haired Ms. Starr always gets her scoop (though not always her mystery man). Problem is, these intrepid females are fictional.

There is no dearth of real newspaperwomen of course, nor will there be in the future, since 60 percent of today's journalism students are women. But women journalists, past and present, remain more obscure than they ought to be.

Barbara Belford, a former newspaper reporter herself and now an associate professor of journalism at Columbia University, remedies this with *Brilliant Bylines*, a fine "biographical anthology of notable newspaperwomen in America."

There is Margaret Fuller, for example, the first woman foreign correspondent of the 1840's whose prose was judged unique by Thomas Carlyle. We're also introduced to Jane Cunningham Croly ("Jennie June"), the first woman to work daily for a newspaper, the first to teach undergraduate journalism and the originator of the women's page; to Peggy Hull, the "female Ernie Pyle" who spent 31 years covering military actions on six fronts; to Marguerite Higgins, the glamorous war corre-

spondent who, with a male colleague, filed the first stories on the liberation of Dachau in May 1945 (she died of a rare tropical disease in 1966 after her tenth visit to Vietnam); and to Sigrid Schultz, the multilingual Berlin bureau chief of the *Chicago Tribune* who was one of the first to warn of the Nazi menace.

Belford offers profiles of these women and nineteen others, including Ellen Goodman, Nieman Fellow '74. Narratives of some of these women can already be found on library shelves, of course. But Belford goes one step further and includes samples of their work, giving us a fascinating look at changing reporting styles and the broad range of issues covered by women journalists over the years.

Undercover reporter Nellie Bly's 1887 account of her ten days in an insane asylum in New York, for instance, is as compelling and horrifying today as it must have been to readers a century ago. Georgie Anne Geyer's 1966 series on Fidel Castro ("Our Girl's Talk with Dictator," blared the *Chicago Daily News*) is both perceptive and funny, while Ellen Goodman's column on the 1983 gang rape of a woman on a pool table in New Bedford is a classic commentary from the so-called "midwife of feelings."

All the women described in *Brilliant Bylines* have similar traits. They were (or are) bright, resourceful, independent-minded, adventurous, gutsy, persistent, competitive, ambitious. Many never married. Their careers usually dominated their lives, even if they married and had children.

Despite this dedication, many of the early newswomen had a difficult time of it. To Stanley Walker, one-time city editor of the *New York Herald Tribune*, women journalists were often "slovenly, incompetent

vixens, adept at office politics, show-offs of the worst sort." To the military, women correspondents during wartime were a burden because there were no "facilities" for them. To which Marguerite Higgins replied that she would use any available side of the road.

But men were not the only chauvinists around. Elizabeth Meriwether Gilmer ("Dorothy Dix"), who wrote a column for *The New Orleans Daily Picayune* from 1896 until 1949, called journalism "the ideal career for a woman. What is a newspaper, anyway, but the aggregate gossip of the world."

Still, women journalists such as Winifred Black Bonfils ("Annie Laurie") used their sex to advantage. Bonfils, a versatile reporter whose career spanned nearly fifty years and whose trademark was emotional, heart-tugging phrasing and quotes, characterized the ideal newspaperwoman as having "the keen zest for life of a child, the cool courage of a man and the subtlety of a woman. A woman has a distinct advantage over a man in reporting, if she has sense enough to balance qualities. Men always are good to women. At least I have found them so, and I've been in some of the toughest places."

Belford chronicles the lives of twelve women journalists whose bylines were often *noms de plume* and who are largely forgotten today — women such as Elizabeth Cochrane Seaman ("Nellie Bly"), undercover and stunt reporter *extraordinaire*; Ida Bell Wells-Barnett, black civil rights crusader and Chicago newspaper editor; Anne O'Hare McCormick, first woman to win a Pulitzer Prize (in 1937 in the category of correspondence); and Emma Bugbee, one of Eleanor Roosevelt's "girls," a group of women reporters who traveled with the President's wife.

For many of these pioneer newswoman, journalism was "something they stumbled into" to support their families. Usually they began writing women's news, moving later to feature writing as "sob sisters" if

they displayed talent and ambition. Some, such as McCormick and Peggy Hull, established reputations as freelancers at home and abroad. They were hired by newspapers only after they had proved their talent on their own.

Others, such as Leonel Campbell O'Bryan ("Polly Pry") started their own newspapers. Her crusade against corrupt union leaders in Colorado's mines may have resulted in an assassination attempt. In January 1904, a "big man in dark clothes and a derby hat" rang her doorbell and fired two shots at her as she went to answer it. He missed.

Today's women journalists owe a debt to these intrepid women who made it easier for us to enter the profession — and to shine.

Belford also profiles twelve women whose bylines are more recent. Six are writing today — Mary McGrory, Ada Louise Huxtable, Judith Crist, Georgie Anne Geyer, Ellen Goodman [NF '74], and Madeleine Blais [NF '86]. Four (McGory, Huxtable, Goodman and Blais) have won Pulitzer Prizes.

Happily, the author also includes journalists such as Mildred Gilman, a tabloid reporter during the Jazz Age, who won no awards but whose career was "so adventurous and exciting that [she] deserved to be rescued from the past." Gilman, pictured in her office in the 1920's with bobbed hair and short skirt, telephone to her ear, cheerfully admits to embroidering stories and "making characters more interesting" for her Hearst newspaper. "Back then it was all in good fun," Gilman, now age 90, told Belford recently. "It was a crazy era, people were sitting on flagpoles and walking backwards across the country."

I loved the life stories of these modern Lois Lanes. Their struggles to cover stories outside the traditional women's sphere, to juggle family and career, to be recognized as good journalists, not just women journalists, are intensely familiar to most female reporters.

Georgie Anne Geyer, for example, who has never married, was "often the only woman covering a revolution [in the 1960's], and her position forced her to examine the problems women face in choosing a career over a family," Belford writes. "She has no simplistic answers except, 'You have to do what you love.'"

I'm glad so many women journalists have done what they loved. I'm also glad Barbara Belford wrote her book, giving these women the recognition they deserve. Belford's research was thorough, her writing style fluid and interesting. I'm only sorry that more modern-day newspaperwomen weren't included. Shirley Christian [NF '74], the Pulitzer Prize-winning foreign correspondent when she was with *The Miami Herald*, would have been a good candidate. She now heads *The New York Times* bureau in Argentina. Flora Lewis, *The New York Times* longtime foreign affairs columnist, also would have been a candidate.

Perhaps Belford can write a sequel

in a decade or so to recognize these women and others who continue in increasing numbers to choose journalism as a career. But it's no oversight that the women in this book who gave us brilliant bylines were primarily reporters, not editors.

There weren't many female editors in the early days of newspapering, and there aren't many now. According to a recent survey by the American Society of Newspaper Editors, just 12.4 percent of directing newspaper editors today are women, up from 5.2 percent in 1977. At this rate, says the *ASNE Bulletin*, it will take 69 years to achieve a 50 percent balance between the sexes in directing editors' jobs. □

*Jan Collins Stucker, Nieman Fellow '80, is editor of Business & Economic Review, a quarterly business journal published in Columbia, South Carolina. She is also a Southern regional correspondent for The London Economist, and is a freelance writer and editor.*

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## A Rural Ramble

### Looking for Hogeye

Roy Reed. University of Arkansas Press, 1986. Hardcover, \$13.95. Paperback, \$7.95.

### by Wallace Turner

*December 16, 1964/Hot Springs/Little Rock.*

*Roy Reed is a young, earnest fellow who grew up in Hot Springs and graduated from the University of Missouri. Wife's name is Norma. Son 10. Daughter 12. Nieman Fellow '64. Eight years at Gazette. Looks in trepidation at challenge of the job in Atlanta and a little mystical about it.*

— Contemporaneous note reflecting on meeting described more fully below.

That mental itch planted by Harvard University made him discontented from the day he got back to Little Rock. It set him up for Claude Sitton. Sitton wanted somebody to fill the job he left in Atlanta when he went off to New York to be national editor of *The New York Times*. Nobody would ever fill Sitton's shoes as leader of the pack of civil rights reporters. It turned out that Roy Reed had big shoes of his own.

As Sitton's San Francisco correspondent, I was on a story in Hot Springs, and had been asked to stop over in Little Rock to answer the new man's questions. I found a tall, darkly handsome fellow of about 30, with a deep voice and thick mountain accent, who needed to talk, to question and get answers. We went out to his home where he and Norma lived in Pulaski Heights in Little

Rock.

They both went to work on me in that courteous manner of the place where Roy grew up. They were so worried and they had so many questions, but they tried not to seem hurried or critical. Expense accounts, transportation, filing systems, personalities, heavy travel schedules, colleague competence — they touched all these. And finally the knife touched the bone.

"Good copy readers?" he asked.

The words were simple; what they covered was not. Horror stories he had heard about the copy desk had him ready to jump out of his skin. He was wondering how smart he was to leave the *Gazette*, where he did it the way he wanted and the paper printed it, to go to *The Times* where he would have to do it their way.

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What do you tell a young man in that frame of mind? Well, you think hard for positive ways to answer what you know is coming. You rattle on about competence, experience, about how the *Times'* place on the American scene is so exalted that errors must be kept out at all costs to ego.

None of that stopped the key question:

"Do they change your copy much?" His voice had just the hint of a quaver.

That time had come to spill it out or lie and be found out later.

Well, yes, they do change your copy sometimes. Sometimes they change it a lot. Sometimes they change the flow you worked so hard to create. But not always. Worst of all, they have been known to edit in errors.

There was a pause. Roy stared at

the floor.

Finally Norma broke the silence that had gone on too long.

"Roy," she said, "you won't like that."

Roy looked up at her, nodded and began to talk of other things. He had made up his mind. Now he thought he knew the worst it could be, and he would try to live with it. So, he went on to Atlanta to set standards for those who followed him there. Matching these standards was like climbing the greased pole with the greased pig under your arm, even for the string of Southerners who followed Roy, such as B. Drummond Ayres, Wayne King, Howell Raines, and Dudley Clendinen, each a great stylist with ready access to the graceful idiom, colorful image, and powerful understatement that marks so many newspapermen from the South.

A time came when Roy was persuaded that his greater future was to write about the glamour of national affairs from the *Times* Washington bureau. Then Gene Roberts [NF '62], another in the parade of Southern stars who passed through the Atlanta bureau, became national editor of the *Times*. Some years ago, Gene described the seduction of Roy from Max Frankel, then the Washington bureau chief. Gene baited Roy with fulfillment of the dream of every reporter who ever came out of the mid-South.

"I asked Roy," Gene said, "what it would take to get him to come back to the National staff. He says if we had a New Orleans bureau and it was vacant, he might be interested.

"So," said Gene, "the next day I called him and says 'Roy, we just opened a New Orleans bureau. You interested?'"

Roy had a really good time in New Orleans. During those years he got the farm on Hogeye Creek and sharpened his game of trying to figure out just who he is. He went around the South and did what he wanted to do. He managed to find some reason not to do what he didn't want to do. There was an awful lot of what he

wanted to do right there at Hogeye.

Once when Abe Rosenthal was coming to visit Atlanta — Roy to come over from New Orleans to join in the dinners and talk — someone thought it would be a good idea to put colored pins in a map to show where stories across the South had been datelined in the past year. The project was scrapped when they found that half of Roy's stories that year had been datelined "Hogeye, Ark." and not "New Orleans."

There came a time when Roy decided his destiny was in London, England. Turned out he was wrong. He didn't like it there. So he left London, left *The New York Times*, left reporting, built a house on his farm, and evolved into a professor of journalism at the University of Arkansas.

He left the *Times* without complaining or explaining. Regrets? Perhaps. The most he said was to one editor among the several who tried to get him to stay with the paper.

"I'm tired of it," Roy said. "I just don't want to do it anymore."

You can piece together from the copyright acknowledgments where the pieces in this collection first appeared. Most of them were in *The New York Times*, and a lot were just those daily stories, nothing big, that delighted readers until Roy became Professor Reed. It is not written how many times "they" changed Roy's copy in any of these. Probably, it was seldom.

I commend to you the one called "The Country" which begins "They called us trash" and soars onward and upward as Roy untangles and sets down his version of what happened in our country to the white, rural poor farmers. Only a dead soul could read this and be unmoved.

Then there are the Taylors of "Camp Meeting," a clan sure of itself, whose members know exactly who they are without fumbling. A Taylor took the girl he had chosen to be his wife for a walk through the tombstone forest of the graveyard.

He put his proposition by asking how she felt about having Taylor as her name on her headstone someday.

Some of Roy's stories are immensely simple in content, for reasons he explains in his preface. Once a colleague threw down that morning's edition, and roared in a thick accent "I fly 500 miles and drive another 75. I spend the night in a flea-bag motel. I interview 19 people to do a story they hold over so they can print Roy's 800 words about

what he thinks when he stacks firewood."

Unfortunately, the wood stacking piece is not in this collection. □

*Wallace Turner, Nieman Fellow '59, joined The New York Times San Francisco bureau in 1962. He was chief of that bureau from 1970 until opening the Times' Seattle bureau in September, 1985. He was a member of the Nieman Advisory Committee from 1978 to 1985.*

with contempt rules, Official Secrets subjects British journalists to far greater risks for printing unofficial truths than anything in the United States. The libel laws are a scandal in both places.

If Ingham were concerned about press freedom and integrity, he would resign. It is a safe bet that he will not. He, not Luddite print unions, greedy publishers or lazy reporters, represents the real threat to a free press.

Despite all the handicaps, the London reader who looks at *The Financial Times*, *Guardian* and *Telegraph* during the week and the *Sunday Times* and *Observer* on the weekend is about as well informed as readers in Washington, New York, and Los Angeles. Since the Europeans have easier access to *Le Monde* and the superb *International Herald Tribune*, they may be better briefed on the whole.

There are real problems in Britain — outrageous unemployment; a sluggish economy; racial tension and Clockwork Orange violence; Ulster; and the institutional and

*continued to page 51*

## LETTERS

### Disputing Mr. Ingham

The literacy and charm of a top British civil servant should not deceive. Bernard Ingham, chief press agent for the troubled Thatcher government, is no more equipped to review the press than Larry Speakes or Herb Schmerz. Like all official spokesmen, Ingham deplores a press that fails to transmit dutifully the outpourings of government. So he sneers at Carl Bernstein-style investigators ("All re-potas are investigators," Eddie Folliard used to say) and is contemptuous of a John Le Carre, veteran of both British spy services, for assuming that government is guilty until proven innocent. After more than thirty years on dailies, I know of no better opening stance.

Ingham does not (Nieman Reports, Winter 1986) tell us that he regularly participates in a central rite to castrate the British press. Several times a week, he leads the infamous briefing for the Lobby, a select crew who must echo the government line without attribution. Ingham is said to be outraged because a few papers have threatened to break away from this Nanny-knows-best routine.

His mistress has pushed the dangerous Official Secrets Act to new depths, notably in Australia. There she tries to suppress a book about British spies that was originally inspired by the spy agency for British consumption only. Along

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# NIEMAN NOTES

— 1941 —

GEORGE CHAPLIN retired December 1 as editor in chief of the *The Honolulu Advertiser*. In October, he was "toasted and roasted" at a benefit for the Honolulu Symphony, which later received a \$125,000 check in his honor.

Also at the time of his retirement, the George Chaplin Scholar-in-Residence Program was established at the East-West Center with a \$100,000 gift from Duty Free Shoppers. Laurence Vogel, the organization's president, said, "The income from this grant and such others as may be added to it will be used to bring to Hawaii each year a distinguished author or journalist who, during his or her stay, will make a significant, professional contribution to the community... We are particularly pleased that we can do this on behalf of the community, because George has contributed so much to our state during his many productive years here."

Chaplin is past president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors and continues on its International Communication Committee. He is active in the community, serving as chairman of the board of governors of the East-West Center and the Honolulu Symphony. He was chairman of the Governors' Conference on the Year 2000 and of the Governor's Advisory Council on Foreign Language and International Studies.

In 1962, Chaplin was presented the Meritorious Citation of the Navy League of the United States for starting a nationwide campaign to raise funds to build the U.S.S. *Arizona* Memorial. He received the University of Hawaii Trustees Award for Distinguished Leadership in 1982.

Chaplin originally came to Hawaii in the Army in World War II as first editor and officer-in-charge of the Pacific edition of *The Stars and Stripes*, the armed forces newspaper.

In 1958 he returned to the island from the editorship of *The New Orleans Item* to accept the top editorial job on *The Honolulu Advertiser*. During the past 27 years under his leadership, *The Advertiser* has won more than 60 national awards.

Chaplin now has moved to another office in the Advertiser building to begin work on a biography of *The Honolulu Advertiser*, which in its 130 years has covered the monarchy, republic, territory and, since 1959, the state.

George and his wife Esta have a daughter, Jerri, who is a public relations counselor. Stephen, their son, is a career U.S. Foreign Service Officer. He was born during their Nieman year.



— 1942 —

Word reached us in early December of the death in 1983 of DONALD GRANT. He and his wife, Mary, had moved to Ireland seventeen years ago. On their farm at Bantry Bay they raised goats and bees. Grant wrote an occasional column for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. His book, *White Goats and Black Bees*, tells of their rural experiences.

Mary Grant continues with the farming there.

— 1945 —

A.B. GUTHRIE, 85, was interviewed in December by BERT LINDLER (NF '84), staff writer with *The Great Falls Tribune* in Montana. Guthrie, who makes his home in Chateau, said he is starting the New Year as a confirmed non-smoker. He had smoked for 65 years before quitting two days after Christmas in 1985, and had just completed his first year without a cigarette or a pipe. "I know I feel better," he said.

Guthrie has been assembling 17 of his poems written from the 1930's to the present for a collection titled *Four Miles from Ear Mountain*, to be published by Kutenai Press in Missoula. Also, he is the author of a series of five mystery stories. He has recently finished revising the latest one. The books are published by Houghton Mifflin.

Earlier, in 1950, Guthrie received the Pulitzer Prize for his book *The Way West*.

— 1953 —

WATSON SIMS retired last August as editor of the New Brunswick *Home News* in New Jersey. He is now coordinator of international projects at Rutgers University's Journalism Resources Institute.

— 1958 —

JOHN ARMSTRONG, a member of the Communications Faculty at the University of Portland, Oregon, visited Lippmann House in November. He was in time to sit in on a Nieman seminar with the Reverend Pat Robertson, a potential candidate for the next presidential campaign.

— 1959 —

JOHN SEIGENTHALER, editor and publisher of *The Nashville Tennessean* and editorial director of *USA Today*, was elected treasurer of the American Society of Newspaper Editors last fall. He will assume his new duties in April and then will rise through the organization's procedures to the presidency in 1990.

HOWARD SIMONS, curator of the Nieman Foundation, has been named a member of Governor Cuomo's newly formed state commission to investigate corruption. At the news conference announcing the Commission on Government Integrity, Mr. Cuomo said that the group would be granted subpoena power under New York state's Moreland Act, as well as additional powers delegated by the State Attorney General to conduct the "broadest possible inquiry."

At the news conference announcing the commission, Governor Cuomo promised a budget of \$5 million and "all the resources they need." He said: "The very basis of our political democracy, the silent compact that sustains the Constitution, is an understanding between our citizens and the people who represent them that the public business will be done openly and honestly and according to law. Eventually the people will insist on making that assumption a reality."

Chairman of the seven-member commission is Joseph A. Califano, a lawyer who was Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare in the Carter Administration. Other members of the panel are: Richard D. Emery, staff counsel to the New York Civil Liberties Union; Patricia M. Hynes, former chief of the Official Corruption and Special Prosecutions Unit of the United States Attorney's office in Manhattan; James L. Magavern, a partner in a Buffalo law firm and a former counsel to the State Comptroller; Bernard S. Meyer, retired as associate judge of the State Court of Appeals; and Bishop Emerson J. Moore of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York.



— 1962 —

EUGENE ROBERTS, president of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, was recently made a Fellow of the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi. Also named Fellows were Paul Conrad, editorial cartoonist of *The Los Angeles Times*, and Ted Koppel, anchor for ABC News, *Nightline*. This is the highest honor bestowed for public service by SDX.

— 1963 —

BERNARD NOSSITER's latest book is *The Global Struggle for More*, to be published in March by Harper & Row. A Twentieth Century Fund Essay, it examines economic conflict between the Third World and the rich nations.

— 1969 —

RICHARD C. LONGWORTH, formerly a senior economics writer for *The Chicago Tribune*, became financial editor of that newspaper in January. He also writes a column.

He joined the *Tribune* in 1976 after 18 years as a foreign correspondent with United Press International. In 1972-76 he was UPI European correspondent based in Brussels.

— 1974 —

ELLEN GOODMAN, nationally syndicated columnist with *The Boston Globe*, has been named associate editor of that newspaper, as has columnist David Nyhan. Both will continue writing their columns and assist executive editor John S. Driscoll and editorial page editor Martin F. Nolan, who announced the changes early in January.

— 1975 —

MIKE RUBY, formerly assistant managing editor of *Newsweek* in New York, became executive editor of *U.S. News & World Report* last September in Washington, D.C.

— 1976 —

PETER BEHR and Mark Potts, both business writers with *The Washington Post*, are the authors of *The Leading Edge: CEO's Who Turned Their Companies Around*, published by McGraw Hill Book Company. The book gives an account of what the CEOs of several leading-edge companies did to effect changes, and how they did it.

DALE BURK, an outdoor writer and publisher in Stevensville, Montana, has a book and publishing enterprise known as Stoneydale Press and Stoney-Wolf Video.

His hunting and fishing videos have sold more than 10,000 copies; his firm has sales on six continents.

The abundance of deer, elk, bear, trout and the scenic countryside provide him with ample material. For example, the videos treat deer and elk hunting, fishing Montana's salmon-flyhatch, tree-stand hunting techniques, field dressing big game, and planning a Rocky Mountain hunt. Future releases will deal with waterfowl hunting, among other topics.

Burk, who covered environmental issues as a reporter with *The Missoulian* during the 1970's, says all the videos carry a strong conservation message. "We feel we have a responsibility to convey an appreciation for the resource and a commitment to its conservation," he said.

— 1978 —

ALICE BONNER, most recently a cover stories editor for *USA Today*, in December joined Gannett's corporate news division in the newly established position of coordinator/news staff recruiting.

Before entering the employ of *USA*

Today, in 1985, she had worked fifteen years at *The Washington Post* in editing and reporting.

— 1981 —

DOUG MARLETTE, editorial cartoonist of *The Charlotte Observer* in North Carolina, has won first place in the 1986 John Fischetti Editorial Cartoon Competition sponsored by Columbia College of Chicago.

A milestone of another sort was reached when Marlette and his wife, Melinda, announced the birth of their first child on December 20. Their son is named Jackson Douglas Marlette and he weighed 7 lbs., 9 oz. All three are doing fine!

— 1983 —

GUY GUGLIOTTA, staff writer, *The Miami Herald*, has won the General Reporting competition in the J.C. Penney-University of Missouri Newspaper Awards program for excellence in journalism, with an article on illegal immigrants.

— 1985 —

BERNARD EDINGER, reporting from the Gaza Strip for Reuter, experienced a mishap. The incident was carried in *The London Times* of December 10 under Ian Murray's by-line from Jerusalem. We quote in part:

"With colleagues from the BBC and Reuter, I was driving to Bir Zeit when we noticed 100 or so youngsters on the hillside, a quarter of a mile or so from the main road, which was protected at that point by a patrol of soldiers from the Givati Brigade in their purple berets.

"We turned down a side-road to reach the hillside and found an old bath tub and some rocks had been put up to block the way to the camp. As we got out of the car, one of the youngsters spotted us and

shouted. The whole group turned and ran down the hill towards us. As they ran they began to throw stones.

"Bernard Edinger from Reuter, shouted in Arabic: 'English journalists.' But the stoning continued. Two Arab women from a nearby house rushed out to try to stop the charge, but in vain. We turned back to the car as stones began to rain down. One hit the back of my leg and slowed me to a walk.

"We reached the van but as we accelerated away, the rear side window seemed to explode and a brick-sized rock hit Mr. Edinger on the back of the head, momentarily knocking him out, ripping off a patch of hair, and opening an ugly gash behind the ear.

"With hindsight, it had been stupid to go towards the youngsters. They were only 12 to 16 years old, intent on declaring their camp a 'no-go' area and the troops had wisely kept out of range until they grew bored. We provided the target the youngsters had been waiting for."

In a hand-written note to us dated December 12, Edinger added, "In fact, hospital sent me home after treatment. Promised I'd have a nice scar and told me take couple days off. Now fine."



CHING CHANG HSIAO and his journalist wife, Mei-Rong Yang, wrote us in November that a new biweekly newspaper, *Hua-Mei Economic Herald*, would be making its Canadian debut in January. Sponsored by the *World Economic Herald*, "It's a paper of economics

specialty and written in English. We've never touched this beat before so it's actually a challenge for both of us..."

"Our Harvard group had a tea party on September 5 for the 350th [anniversary]. ...Slides of the Harvard campus and Boston made us remember the pleasant days when we were there in 1984-85."

DEBORAH JOHNSON has moved from NBC, New York to CBS in Washington, D.C. She has been named executive producer of the two-hour long news program, *NIGHTWATCH*. The program is televised from 2 a.m. to 4 a.m. and is again repeated from 4 a.m. to 6 a.m. The Nieman Fellow proclaims to all that she loves Washington.

MIKE PRIDE, editor of *The Monitor* in Concord, New Hampshire, has been named Editor of the Year by the National Press Foundation for "encouraging reporters and photographers to respect privacy while covering tragedies like the space shuttle disaster."

The National Press Foundation, a non-profit organization that encourages high standards in journalism, chose Pride from among seven nominees. He will receive a plaque and \$5,000 at a dinner on February 25 in Washington, D.C.

"I think it's really a tribute to the Monitor staff and the way they covered that story," Pride said. "I also think the foundation was sending a message to all the media about covering grief."

Concord is the hometown of Christa McAuliffe, one of the astronauts who perished in the explosion of Challenger, seconds after lift-off.

ZWELAKHE SISULU, editor of *The New Nation*, was among those detained by South African security forces during a massive roundup of alleged "subversives" who President P.W. Botha said were involved in a "barbaric plot" to incite revolution set to begin December 16.

Following are excerpts from a page one article in *The Boston Globe* of December 13; the by-line is William Claiborne, *Washington Post*, from Pretoria:

"In a series of raids beginning early yesterday morning throughout South Africa and in neighboring Swaziland, the security forces arrested an undetermined number of opposition activists, trade unionists, journalists, and community leaders. Authorities said those arrested were linked to a plot by the outlawed African National Congress to trigger a

general insurrection next week.

"Botha called the series of raids 'preventative security measures.'

"Among those arrested was one of South Africa's leading black journalists, whose family ranks just behind that of Nelson Mandela, the imprisoned ANC leader, in esteem among antiapartheid activists.

"Zwelakhe Sisulu... editor of *The New Nation*, a biweekly black newspaper sponsored by the Roman Catholic Church, was arrested at his home in the black township of Soweto at 3:30 a.m. yesterday.

"His mother, Albertina, copresident of the United Democratic Front, said in a telephone interview that she did not know where he was being held or on what charges. Sisulu's father, Walter, former secretary general of the ANC, is serving a life sentence with Mandela in Cape Town's Pollsmore Prison.

"The United Democratic Front is a coalition of more than 600 antiapartheid groups representing more than two million South Africans, both blacks and whites.

"Zwelakhe Sisulu, 36, is widely considered by those who favor eventual black rule of South Africa as one of the most promising young black leaders. He was arrested in June at his home by hooded white gunmen and held in detention during the early months of the nationwide state of emergency."

[Editor's note: Preceding the *Globe* piece was this sentence, "This article was written under new South African press restrictions that prohibit the reporting of nonofficial news of violence, unlawful gatherings, strikes, boycotts, and other forms of organized dissent or of any 'subversive statement' unless cleared by censors."]

Derek C. Bok, president of Harvard University, sent the following telegram to South African president P.W. Botha on December 17:

"I wish to associate myself strongly with those of the United States government and the newspaper industry in protesting the arrest and detention of Zwelakhe Sisulu. Mr. Sisulu was a Nieman Fellow here two years ago and brought distinction to the program and the University then and has brought the same measure of distinction to his newspaper, *The New Nation*. I would urge you — in the spirit of the holidays and of

the democratic process — to free Mr. Sisulu and to unshackle your press."

— 1986 —

GUSTAVO GORRITI, together with a British correspondent and two other Peruvian reporters, was detained by soldiers and taken to a military jail in central Peru. The four newsmen were attempting to visit the stronghold of the "Shining Path" leftist guerrilla group. They had gone into the mountainous region to follow up reports that Claudio Bellido Huaytalla, regarded as the number three person in the guerrilla movement, had been killed in a skirmish with an army patrol. The journalists were arrested in the Andean village of Vilcashuaman, held briefly in the local military jail, and later taken to Ayacucho, approximately 200 miles southeast of Lima. Later they were ordered to return to Lima.

— Excerpted from IAPA Updater, January 1987. No date of incident given.

BARRY SHLACTER, formerly with the Boston bureau of the Associated Press, joined the expanded state desk operation of the Fort Worth Star Telegram, Texas, in December.



## RANDOM NOTES

Among the newspaper editors and executives who make up the jury to submit nominations for this year's Pulitzer Prizes in journalism are six Nieman Fellows. They are: JOHN CARROLL ('72), vice president/editor, *Lexington Herald-Leader*, Kentucky; WILLIAM GERMAN ('50), executive editor, *San Francisco Chronicle*; JOHN HUGHES ('62), syndicated columnist, *The Christian Science Monitor*; DAVID KRASLOW ('62), publisher, *The Miami News*; GENEVA OVERHOLSER ('86), member, editorial board, *The New York Times*; and ALVIN SHUSTER ('67), foreign editor, *The Los Angeles Times*.

In addition, two Nieman Fellows are members of the board: ROBERT C. MAYNARD ('66), editor and publisher, *The Tribune*, Oakland, California, and EUGENE L. ROBERTS JR. ('62), executive editor, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

A mission of the Inter American Press Association's Freedom of the Press Committee visited Chile in late November and early December to investigate press restrictions under the state of siege and urge President Augusto Pinochet's government to allow the reopening of five banned publications.

Included in the eight members of the visiting group were Nieman Fellows Anthony Day ('67), editorial page editor, *The Los Angeles Times* and Roberto Eisenmann ('86), editorial director of *La Prensa*, Panama, now in exile. Wilbur G. Landrey, foreign editor of the *St. Petersburg Times* is chairman of the IAPA Committee on Freedom of the Press and Information.

Chilean members had requested the mission after the IAPA General Assembly passed a resolution last September in Vancouver condemning the closure of the publications and urging the government to lift press restrictions.

IAPA also urged the government to redouble its efforts to find and punish the torturers and murderers of Chilean journalist Jose Carrasco, who was abducted by men claiming to be members of the security services after the attempt to assassinate Pinochet last September.

The mission group met with Francisco Javier Cuadra, Minister-Secretary General of the Government, on November 27 at the Moneda presidential palace.

A week after their visit, the govern-

ment did allow the reopening of one of the publications, the weekly magazine *Apsi*, but extended the state of siege for another thirty days and banned the reappearance of another magazine, the monthly *Pluma y Píncel*.

Before it left, the mission gave a brief press conference to confirm the Freedom of the Press Committee's previous conclusion that press freedom does not exist in Chile. The Chilean government controls television, on which no contrary opinions are heard. Newspapers are severely restricted in what they can print and radio stations in the news they can broadcast. The rules are applied more strictly at some times than others, but editors are never quite sure when that will be. In these circumstances, it cannot be said that there is more or less freedom than before.

— Adapted from article by Wilbur Landrey, IAPA News, December 1986.

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## LETTERS

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*continued from page 46*

legal assaults on press freedom. Ingham and his office are part of the problem and an unlikely guide to any solution.

*Bernard D. Nossiter [NF '63]*

### Problems Within Problems

I was surprised — and flattered — to be quoted in the lead piece in the last issue of *NR*. BUT, unfortunately, there was a slip in the quotation.

One of my pet peeves as reader and Ombudsman of *The Washington Post* was "Post corrections so brief they became breakfast-time mystery stories." A correction would help *NR* readers make sense out of the comment.

*Sam Zagoria [NF '55]*

*The editors regret the error and are glad to print the accurate quote, as above.*

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## News That Must be Printed

*continued from page 23*

prime candidate some day for a Pulitzer Prize.

Consider the runaway world population crisis. The press spotlights this cataclysmic trend, in short spurts of alarm about once every five years. How much do we tell readers about the government's default on population control programs and the changing attitudes on this issue in the Third World?

The response of the workplace to women trying to be both mother and breadwinner at the same time is an ongoing powerhouse story — so is our national attitude toward children.

race — and to a far lesser extent over-population — front and center of their news budgets.

But all of us in the media have failed miserably on the third biggest story of the century.

I say the single best way that newspapers can break out from television dominance — and again become the mover and shaker in mass communications — is to start paying prime attention to the rape of our environment. It's one helluva big story and we haven't begun to cover it.

Newspapers can no longer stay hung up on the traditional definition

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To survive, newspapers must help people see what physical and social changes affecting our world would mean to the future and their children and grandchildren's future.

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My point is: Newspapers are not covering fully or often enough some of these overwhelming problems. Instead, the print press — as an industry — too often is becoming a floundering captive of President Reagan's communication genius and the pervasiveness of television. I hope this is only a temporary malady.

Today, television, newspapers, magazines, and radio which reach the greatest mass of citizens have almost identical news agendas. All have finally placed the nuclear arms

of news. They cannot beat television at its own game. They simply have to do something very, very different. To survive the electronic age; to survive, period, for God's sake, newspapers must help people see what the colossal physical and social changes now affecting our world mean to them, to their future, to their children's future, and to their grandchildren's future.

Let's leave the docudramas to others. Let's leave to newspapers, the life-and-death developing dramas of the real world. □

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