

NIEMAN REPORTS

THE NIEMAN FOUNDATION FOR JOURNALISM AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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Five Dollars

Katrina's Aftermath News With No End in Sight



Teaching Journalism in the Digital Age

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Plowing New Ground in Journalism Education

'This should not be a discussion of how to graft the latest onto the existing.'

By Bob Giles

The following words are excerpted from an essay written for the September 2007 McCormick Tribune Foundation Conference on the Future of Journalism and Mass Communication Education at Louisiana State University.

Journalism education and the news business have something new in common these days: Each has fallen behind and, in their separate struggles to catch up, each is chasing a moving target. Newspaper companies are learning that playing catch-up is no longer a game of journalistic horticulture; simply grafting the latest trend onto existing business models does not translate into long-term yields. It's fair to suggest that journalism schools might well avoid the temptation to reach for grafting tools to solve their curriculum problems. They might, instead, head for the plow for a little creative destruction.

In this time of transformation in how news is reported and distributed, the profession and the academy are confronting new media realities in which audiences are empowered to engage with the community's established news media or bypass it and gather information on their own. There are new questions now, many questions, in fact, and few answers that will tell us what the purpose of journalism is becoming and how journalism schools can prepare students for whatever that might be.

Journalism education seems to go in cycles, following trends, but clinging to basic values. The electronic age has introduced different journalism skills to which students should be introduced, but only introduced; no technician-graduates needed. As faculties ponder new course offerings, the ever-present challenge is how to creatively squeeze more into curricula already limited by the number of hours allowed for majors.

In thinking about changes in journalism education that have occurred over more than a generation, it is always reassuring to recognize that one constant remains: the values of journalism. The news of the day is a powerful reminder of how our citizens turn again and again to the press for the stories so vital to understanding the latest crisis.

Whatever changes in course offerings might give graduates a solid understanding of multimedia technology and the skills to report, write and produce online, the true test of academic excellence in journalism would be a curriculum that is sufficiently rigorous in preparing students to report on a society that is increasingly difficult to understand. Journalism schools should invest in their students a spirit

of intellectual depth and versatility and a desire for continuous learning over a working lifetime.

Each year, I review more than 100 applications from U.S. journalists who want to study at Harvard as Nieman Fellows. Many of the candidates are journalism school graduates. In their essays, they share their aspirations for the rest of their lives in journalism. The statements are often inspiring as they express an enduring passion for journalism as well as acknowledge that they missed opportunities in college to become better prepared for the complexities of the world they are now covering. There is something revealing in these confessions; journalism school deans might wonder how the apparent shortcomings of a journalism education can become the motivation for midcareer fellowships.

As journalists, we face daily demands to explain, clarify and interpret for our readers, listeners and viewers. The issues we report on, more often than not, contain elements of science and technology, medicine and economics, as well as human emotion and political or ideological conflict. These topics, typically at the core of a Nieman year, also might well be part of a university's journalism regimen.

As early as 1919, Walter Lippmann, the most influential newspaper columnist of the first half of the last century, recognized that as stories become more and more complex and more specialized, there was a greater need for reporters and editors to master the study of evidence and verification and develop special areas of expertise in which they could do their work in a highly informed and authoritative way.

In a new book, "Five Minds for the Future," Harvard University psychologist Howard Gardner issues a call for new ways of learning that will prepare students to think globally and function in a world dominated by information, science and technology, and the conflicts among cultures. Gardner's five minds would master one or more disciplines, would possess capabilities to synthesize information, would be creative, would be respectful, and would work in an ethical manner.

These are values worth considering in the journalism curriculum for the future. They should be part of the larger consideration about how to shape the education of young journalists for the near term and create a new foundation for the longer term. This should not be a discussion of how to graft the latest onto the existing. Tear up the current models that perceive journalism as a craft. Rethink the field as one of rigorous scholarship and practice. And build anew around one truth: journalism matters. Give students that, and they will find their way. ■

Katrina's Aftermath

It's been two years since Hurricane Katrina's destructive force riveted the eyes of the world on the suffering of those left in its wake. In that time, newspapers in New Orleans and Mississippi have made adjustments—from creating new beats to assuming a more aggressive voice—while national news organizations, determined to stay with the slow-moving story of recovery, wrestle with finding fresh ways to engage distant audiences.

In this collection, written by journalists who have spent significant time trying to tell this story, Nieman Reports explores particular demands and difficulties posed by coverage of an ongoing news event with no end in sight. “How do journalists continue to make this catastrophe interesting and relevant for our audiences?” asks **John Burnett**, a correspondent for National Public Radio. “There's no easy answer. As they say, the low-hanging fruit is gone.” **Gordon Russell**, special projects editor at The Times-Picayune in New Orleans, acknowledges that while it is possible to pick up his paper and not find a story related to Katrina, “two years after the event, Katrina is still our alpha and our omega . . . The ruination wrought by Katrina—with an unwitting assist from the Army Corps of Engineers—looms over nearly everything we do. And it will for years to come.”

Times-Picayune photographer **Ted Jackson** includes in his photo essay a picture he took of family members clinging to the columns of their porch as water rose around them. “Little did I know that this ethical dilemma and the ensuing debate with my conscience would become the theme of my storm coverage,” he writes. In excerpts from a panel discussion about Katrina coverage, Times-Picayune features editor **James O'Byrne** describes one of the “shortcomings of our craft” that coverage of Katrina revealed: “. . . we can write the story about one person's tragic heartbreak, but when 100,000 people have tragic heartbreak and that heartbreak extends over 21 months, we just don't have the capacity to cover that.” **Rukmini Callimachi**, an Associated Press reporter who covered the aftermath of Katrina from New Orleans, explains the reporting approach she developed as reporters grew accustomed to devastation surrounding them. “A lot of us had stopped describing well what we were actually seeing and hearing and smelling,” she writes. So I began deliberately to note the kind of details I might otherwise have ignored . . .”

As out-of-town journalists talked with him about stories they were planning to do, **Jed Horne**, who recently retired as metro editor of The Times-Picayune, noticed that “it's as if reporters and editors are overawed by the backdrop of the epic storm, so much so that we can get slipshod about the foreground stories we continue to set against it.” In his photo essay, Associated Press photographer **Alex Brandon** observes that “Unlike the early days of Katrina when powerful images were everywhere, now it is harder to make a photo that has enough impact to draw an editor's attention.” **John Pope**, a reporter with The Times-Picayune, describes ways that reporters' personal lives—and the stresses their circumstances pose—intersect with stories they need to tell. “It's tough to be part of the story you're likely to be covering for the rest of your time in New Orleans, but that's the post-Katrina reality.” Times-Picayune columnist **Jarvis DeBerry** realizes that his pre-Katrina columns appear “to have been written by a different person. There's a difference between writing from a city where everybody

wants to come at least once to party and writing from a city that some government officials say no longer deserves to be.” In finding new ways to share local news and information with online and print audiences, Times-Picayune city editor **David Meeks** believes that at a time when “it’s not uncommon to hear talk in newsrooms of how it’s a good time to get out of the newspaper business, I’d argue that there never has been a more exciting time to be in it.” In photos and words, Associated Press photographer **Bill Haber** shares his work from a two-year assignment that “taxes the limits of my ability as no other story ever has.”

Stan Tiner, editor of the Sun Herald in Biloxi/Gulfport, Mississippi, describes changes he’s had to make in the newsroom to comprehensively tell the story of Katrina’s aftermath—in print and on the Web. “We exploded our newsgathering departmental and beat structures,” he writes. “All of the silos were leveled . . .” Because reporters and editors face similar issues in their personal lives to the ones they cover, Sun Herald City Editor **Kate Magandy** writes of keeping a watchful eye for “evidence of any bias that a reporter might inadvertently be bringing to the piece.” And, she adds, “Editors also check editors in much the same way.”

Sun Herald photographer **John Fitzhugh** initiated the newspaper’s popular “Before and After” series of what was there then and what remained after the storm. (He has subsequently added recovery photos—the “now” moment—to the mix.) “It allowed readers to remember what had been lost and to mourn that loss,” he writes. **Tony Biffle**, associate editor of the Sun Herald, offers advice from “what we’ve learned in editorializing” about Katrina’s aftermath. “Just because daily contact causes you to become familiar with shattered lives and a littered landscape, do not allow that familiarity to deaden your senses to the outrageous and the exceptional.” When mental health issues needed in-depth coverage, the Sun Herald secured foundation funding to support the work of reporter **Joshua Norman**, who writes that until this beat was created “our newspaper was only able to report on the growing mental health crisis in a cursory fashion.”

Susan Feeney, an NPR senior editor at “All Things Considered,” addresses “listener fatigue” with Katrina stories and describes her news organization’s response. “We continue to cover this story because we believe it is the right thing to do—journalistically . . .” she writes. USA Today medical reporter **Liz Szabo** was among the 17 staffers, primarily editors, who traveled in early 2007 to New Orleans and Mississippi to understand the depth and dimensions of a story that until then few appreciated. She quotes USA Today editor Ken Paulson as saying, “The trip was a valuable reminder that sometimes editors—and not just reporters—need to walk in the steps of the people they cover.” **Jenni Bergal** served as project manager at the Center for Public Integrity for a book of investigative journalism about New Orleans. “City Adrift: New Orleans Before and After Katrina,” she writes, goes “beyond many of the stories being told by newspapers and broadcast media.” Given “the luxury of time and resources,” reporters she assembled for this project could “take a step back and closely examine whether decades of ineptitude or inertia by local, state and federal government and private agencies had contributed to the failures in New Orleans.” ■

Keeping Katrina's Aftermath Alive

'Anyone who visits New Orleans knows the story is far from over.'

By John Burnett

For the first year after Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans was the story every journalist yearned for. God forbid any great American city should befall such a calamity but, once it happened, the aftermath produced some of the more complex and fascinating stories of a career. It had everything: complete and epic destruction; government incompetence from city hall to the statehouse to the White House; the greatest engineering disaster in American history; an internationally acclaimed artistic heritage in peril; the greatest city planning challenge in modern times, and a complex racial overlay (or, as they say in New Orleans, "It ain't about race, it's about *shade*"). And everyone was a quote machine, from the Creole chef to the French Quarter strip-club hawker to the rasping piano professor who told me, "N'awlins has been *traumatized*."

That was then. Today, nearly two years after the dikes crumbled and Lake Pontchartrain roared into the city, it's a lot harder to tell that story. It's harder because we've done our job well. Journalists have described why the levees failed and covered every step of the Herculean effort to rebuild them. We've chased Mayor C. Ray Nagin for interviews, usually fruitlessly, and tried to understand why the city reelected him. We've chronicled the state's feckless program to repatriate residents who are desperate to come home. We've reported on the city's alarmingly high level of depression, suicide and criminal violence. We've tried to document and deconstruct the chaos during the unforgettable week after the storm, such as the hospital patients who were allegedly euthanized in Memorial Medical Center and the police who allegedly gunned down civilians on the Danziger Bridge. We've



In his *New Orleans Journal*, appearing in *The New Yorker*, journalist Dan Baum has written about Miss Joyce, now the widow of Mardi Gras Big Chief Allison "Tootie" Montana. She is pictured with her husband in February 2004 as they worked together on his Mardi Gras suit. Photo by John McCusker/*The Times-Picayune*.

told every story we could uncover in a city that seemed to offer up a poignant and comic drama behind every flood-warped front door.

Nearly two years later readers and viewers and listeners—who suffer from the national affliction of NADD (news attention deficit disorder)—have moved on, telling us that they've heard it already. They have Katrina fatigue. This circumstance ups the ante for journalists who believe that the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and along the rest of the Gulf Coast is important and that the rough draft of history is still in progress.

Anyone who visits New Orleans knows the story is far from over. Much of the city is still a disaster zone, where exuberant tropical growth has overtaken abandoned neighborhoods and returning residents live like fron-

tiersmen in a wilderness. "I'd move back, but nothing's reopened in my old neighborhood. And I don't want to drive five miles to Jefferson Parish to fill up my tank or buy an ice cream," the vice president of a bank in devastated New Orleans East told me on a flight out of the city recently.

How do journalists continue to make this catastrophe interesting and relevant for our audiences? There's no easy answer. As they say, the low-hanging fruit is gone. We look longer for a new angle, spend more time on the phone, and ask friends of friends of friends what's new. Fortunately, in a city as eccentric and kaleidoscopic as New Orleans, the fresh stories are still there.

- The New York Times found a communal organic farm for urban storm

evacuees in central Louisiana started by a wealthy Canadian who called it “an African American version of ‘Green Acres.’”

- Journalist Dan Baum, in his wonderful *New Orleans Journal* for *The New Yorker*, introduced us to Big Mike Ricks at Perry Walker High School; Miss Joyce, the widow of longtime Mardi Gras Indian “Tootie” Montana, and took us into Mickie Bee’s, the only bar in the Lower Ninth Ward.
- NPR stringer Eve Troeh reported on the heartening phenomenon of “volun-tourism,” whereby visiting conventioners and tourists from across the country add a couple of

days to help build houses in the flood zone.

The stories are there. Reporters just have to look for them harder. And though we rarely hear from people anymore who want to thank us for remembering New Orleans, we certainly hear that from locals. They’re grateful they have not been forgotten.

I was struck by something that a local journalist told NPR when we did a story on the plethora of disaster tours that New Orleanians now give to visitors. “Our version of Katrina fatigue is different. It’s the fatigue of struggling to survive, to get back to where we

were, to really establish a life again,” said James O’Byrne, features editor of the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*. He lost his family home in Lakeview to the floodwaters. “So it’s painful for us when we hear people say, ‘We’d really like to forget about this and move on to something else.’ Well the truth is we’d really like to forget and move on to something else. But we can’t. Because this is where we live and this is our home and this is our struggle.” ■

John Burnett is an Austin-based correspondent for National Public Radio, who has covered Katrina since the night it struck until the present.

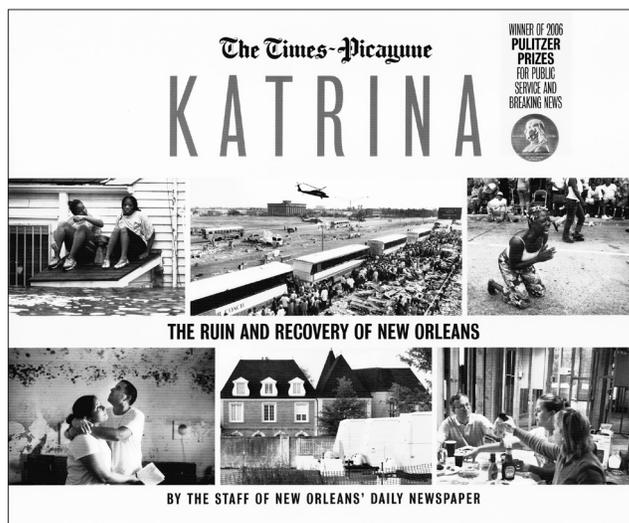
The Long Road to a Wide Bend

The *Times-Picayune*’s ‘focus has gradually shifted away from how the city will be rebuilt to how it is—now, in the present tense.’

By Gordon Russell

Many months after Hurricane Katrina laid waste to New Orleans, some of us started to muse idly over lunch about when a story not containing the “K” word would finally be published in our newspaper, *The Times-Picayune*. Two years, some figured. No, five, others said. A few thought it would be longer still.

As it happens, the day of the first Katrina-less story has come and gone, and none of us really noticed. These days, in fact, it’s possible to pick up the *Picayune* and find a story or two or three on any given day that doesn’t mention the dreaded storm. That said, two years after the event, Katrina is still our alpha and our omega. It’s like a tree that casts such a large shadow over your backyard that you eventually just accept its existence and fail to notice



it anymore. The ruination wrought by Katrina—with an unwitting assist from the Army Corps of Engineers—looms over nearly everything we do. And it will for years to come.

Working in a place where a single subject so dominates everything is strange for journalists, accustomed to

covering an ever-changing tapestry of characters and storylines. New Orleans, in particular, has always been a town of a million stories. Perhaps we at *The Times-Picayune* feel a bit like some of our peers did a few decades back in cities that were ruled by a single industry: In the old Pittsburgh, the story was always steel; in Detroit, it was the Big Three.

But as the writers in those cities surely learned, and as we have, there’s endless variety in a story so big. And that may be particularly true in our case. If Katrina is the only story in town, she is a damn good one, with tangents and sidebars galore. A few examples:

- Last year’s mayoral contest, shaping up as a ho-hum victory lap for Mayor Ray Nagin before the storm, was transformed by Katrina into a complex, fascinating nail biter.

- The storm's wholesale devastation spawned a wrenching but enlightening discussion over how best to rebuild, a debate shot through with themes ranging from the scientific to the socioeconomic and from racial to political.
- With various government agencies awarding billions of dollars through emergency no-bid contracts, the stakes surrounding the awarding of these contracts—always a source of controversy and entertainment in New Orleans—rose dramatically.
- New and intriguing beats arose and had to be charted where none existed before. For instance, one task I was involved with was coming up with ways to count the city's population, one of the more blunt measures of recovery. These days, we have a reporter, David Hammer, whose sole duty—and his reporting constantly appears in the paper—is to chart the progress, or lack thereof, of the state's homeowner-aid Road Home program. Likewise, following the construction of levees and other flood-proofing measures is now one of the paper's essential beats.

Katrina's Toll

Journalistically, some find writing about Katrina and her aftermath the most fulfilling work they've ever done; others find it tiresome. For many—most, perhaps—the reaction to our post-Katrina work falls somewhere in between.

My colleague James Varney, a veteran who rode out the storm and authored a number of revealing exposés about FEMA's contracting practices, decided one day he'd just as soon never type the word "Katrina" again. He's now covering Louisiana State University sports for the paper. Though the university is just 90 miles away from New Orleans, it might as well be in a parallel universe. For him, the job operates as if Katrina never happened.

Varney is my only coworker who managed so thorough a change of scenery without leaving the paper. But we've lost a handful of other top-notch journalists since the storm to other

cities and, in some cases, other occupations. Some had their lives turned upside down—homes damaged, schools closed, and so forth—and others just didn't want to stay in a city that was clearly going to be on its knees for a long time.

The life here is not for everyone. My neighborhood, nestled close to the river on some of the city's highest ground, is a good example. Though none of the homes in my neighborhood were

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flooded, at least a third of the people who lived in them, perhaps even half, have moved away from New Orleans since the storm. For most, I think the decision to leave was driven largely by a lack of jobs—or, at least, the kinds of jobs they'd had—after Katrina. Others were driven out by skyrocketing rents, insurance and utility bills.

But the psychological factor can't be overlooked. Even when your life is sort of in order—your home, your job, your spouse's job, your children's school are all in place—there's a weight to be shouldered simply by soldiering on. At the grocery store, at the corner bar, at the neighborhood restaurant—everywhere—the refrains continue to sound the same. "How'd you make out?" "When did you get back?" "I'm waiting on my Road Home money." Or: "I'm moving to Dallas." That's an option that has tempted some of us, too,

myself included—the idea of chucking it all for a "normal" place.

I'll never forget what Varney said after making his first trip to the outside world a few months after the storm. People, he told me somewhat indignantly, are walking around Charlotte, North Carolina, "like nothing ever happened." They're shopping, selling, eating, drinking, living and building. Life marches on out there, while in New Orleans we continue to wallow in a frustrating mess that seems like it will never be picked up.

In the newsroom, it's especially difficult to shut out what our columnist Chris Rose refers to as "The Thing." After all, we spend a lot of our time talking to people wounded by the storm and struggling to recover. At times, after Katrina, some of us have felt like part-time social workers. Not everyone has been up to that task, and some of us have visited psychiatrists or seen counselors for the first time.

Every time someone writes a story about the city's plan for demolishing damaged homes, a flurry of calls and e-mails is inevitable. Same goes for stories about the state's Road Home program. The flurry becomes a hailstorm whenever stories about the city's rebuilding priorities are published, in particular when the controversy about whether some sections of town will be rebuilt resurfaces. On many days, I've spent an hour or two just returning phone messages from people with concerns raised by our reporting. Other reporters have had to deal with far more given the topics they tend to write about. Often as not, callers seem to want counseling as much as they want information, and this wasn't in our job description before Katrina hit.

Sometimes these interactions take us out of the journalist's traditional spectator role. I listened the other day as my colleague Michelle Krupa dealt patiently with a frantic man whose home was about to be torn down, even though he had taken the required steps to ensure it wouldn't be. Though it was off the official demolition list, the word hadn't trickled down to the subcontractors in the field with the backhoes, and they were about to get started.

Some reporters might have just given the man a couple of phone numbers and told him to call back if the bulldozers didn't go away. But Krupa went further, calling a couple of contacts at FEMA and getting the agency to spare the man's home. She wondered aloud whether she had done the right thing. I told her she had.

I'd be lying if I said that all of us have cheerfully accepted the extra load. Stress, depression and plain old overwork have taken their toll. For a few months after the storm, it seemed like adrenaline—plus a sense of mission, a feeling that the information we were supplying to people mattered as it never had before—was enough to get us through. (We got a lift, too, from the two Pulitzer Prizes awarded to the staff for Katrina coverage.) But adrenaline subsides. There was a time during 2006 when I—and a fair number of my colleagues—felt beaten down. A few of our coworkers had quit and not been replaced. We had all been working very, very hard, and there was no reason to think the story was going to get easier to cover.

Morale in the newsroom went south, and people began to mutter more loudly about jumping off a ship that felt like it was slowly sinking. There was a palpable feeling that we were being bled dry as our bosses shrunk the staff down to some unspecified level that we had yet to reach. Some of us also made pleas to the editor, Jim Amoss, who assured us that he wasn't planning to preside over the dismantling of our newsroom.

He spoke the truth. Though it didn't happen as quickly as some of us would have liked, the *Picayune* eventually filled every open position in the newsroom. To a person, the replacements have been terrific: They are young, energetic and enthusiastic, and they've lightened the load considerably. There's still more than enough for everyone to do. I often say that in a news-saturated city like New Orleans, we could keep a staff twice as big as ours busy with good stories. I try to be realistic, though. And I recognize that it's remarkable that our newspaper (part of the Advance chain, privately

owned by the Newhouse family) has avoided layoffs even in the face of a disaster that shrunk our circulation by perhaps a third—even as our Web site's traffic has increased significantly—while dozens of other papers have been slashing jobs with no Katrina to blame for the downsizing.

Throughout the ups and down, the fact that some of our staffers have been going through the same problems as our readers has helped our coverage immensely and bolstered our collective sanity. My boss, city editor David

... we spend a lot of our time talking to people wounded by the storm and struggling to recover. At times, after Katrina, some of us have felt like part-time social workers.

Meeks, recently moved into his rebuilt home in devastated Lakeview, giving him a firsthand look at life as a pioneer in post-Katrina New Orleans. [See Meeks's article on page 34.] Coleman Warner, a veteran *Picayune* reporter, has been spending most of his time since the storm in a 240-square foot FEMA trailer on his property with his wife and daughter. He's hoping to move back into his renovated house this fall.

Sometimes I think about what a long time two years is. When Coleman's daughter remembers her high school years decades from now, she'll think of life in the trailer. To Coleman, perhaps the most unshakable person I've ever met, FEMA's accommodations are nothing to whine about. A few months ago, he wrote a whimsical and hilarious first-person paean to the humble white box—an "icon of hope and loss and government bungling," as he put it. His words appeared on the paper's front page.

A Shift in Perspective

There was a time, early on, when I envisioned that New Orleans would someday turn a corner and that the newspaper would shift from writing stories about picking up the pieces and return to the sort of meat-and-potatoes stories about institutions and events that newspapers generally provide—trials, arrests, school board meetings, elections, graduations and so on.

Now I see the city as rounding a wide bend rather than turning a corner. As time marches on, the newspaper, too, has come round the bend, and our emphasis has gradually shifted away from how the city will be rebuilt to how it is—now, in the present tense. In some ways, that shift is a subtle reflection of the reality that, despite all the heady talk of remaking New Orleans's broken institutions from the ground up, none of that is going to happen. Instead, the old ones are just being patched up—or, in some cases, they are deteriorating further.

In a more positive sense, the slow refocusing of the *Picayune's* lens may be a sign of progress, an unspoken indication that the newspaper and its readers alike are working their way through the grieving process. At some point, the thinking goes, it's time to stop dwelling on what happened—not that we should forget it—and move forward.

This perspective was summed up by six-year-old Edmund Philipson, who sent a two-sentence letter to the *Picayune* in March. The child had apparently heard enough excuses about why the city's beloved St. Charles Avenue streetcar line was still inoperable 18 months after the storm.

"I think the streetcar should be running," he wrote. "The hurricane was a long time ago!"

Indeed. ■

Gordon Russell is special projects editor at The Times-Picayune. At the time Hurricane Katrina struck, he covered city hall, after having begun his work at the paper in the River Parishes' bureau.

AN ESSAY IN WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

A Tragedy Illuminates the Ethical Dimensions of Picture Taking

By Ted Jackson

Reliving August 29, 2005, or the days afterward, is not easy for me or many other people who were in New Orleans during that dark time. To stay behind while more than 80 percent of the city evacuated before Hurricane Katrina, whether as a resident, a police officer or, like me, a photojournalist, was to be forever changed, even scarred, by the horror of what was experienced and by the stories you keep buried inside.

I'm not a neophyte when it comes to covering disaster and horror. I've lost count of the hurricanes I've covered. I've experienced earthquake carnage and the senselessness of war. Despite my experience, Katrina crept past the emotional protection my camera lenses have faithfully provided.

I've struggled to explain the difference to fellow journalists. It's similar, I'd think, to responding to an auto fatality across town only to discover my son slumped behind the wheel. Katrina altered my perspective, making it impossible to remain a distant observer. I had a strongly felt need to connect with and somehow help those I was photographing.

As a photojournalist I'm accustomed to being a first responder. But as people clung to life amid the swirling floodwaters, I found myself a sole responder.

Going Into the Flood

When Katrina blew through New Orleans that Monday morning, I was huddled with the storm team at The Times-Picayune office, watching through the windows as the wind wreaked havoc with the trees outside.



Family members cling to posts on their front porch as rising floodwaters force them to evacuate their home on St. Claude Avenue in the Lower Ninth Ward. They had tried to get into their attic space but said the floor wouldn't hold them. Floodwaters raging down St. Claude had prevented rescuers from reaching them. August 29, 2005. *Photo by Ted Jackson/The Times-Picayune.*

The weather was nasty, but I was getting antsy. I needed to get out and start taking pictures. I knew from experience that to photograph a hurricane properly, you have to "see the wind" in the photos, and you can't do that once the wind has stopped.

Driving my trusty old Toyota Tacoma four-wheel-drive truck, I carefully picked my way through high water, downed power lines, and trees to the French Quarter. It was more of a reconnaissance mission to check on the city's beloved landmarks. I photographed St. Louis Cathedral as a man aimlessly

walked past, praying in the blinding rain. Portions of the Superdome roof had peeled away. Since cell phones weren't working, I returned to the office to report my findings and drop off my photos.

My editors heard that the Lower Ninth Ward, the low ground surrounded by the Industrial Canal, the Mississippi River, and the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet, was flooding and asked if I could get there. I wasn't sure, but I was more than willing to try. Picking my way through the four-mile stretch, I rolled over all manner of debris, even

the bricks of a collapsed building in the Faubourg Marigny neighborhood. Surprisingly, I was able to drive within a couple of blocks of the St. Claude Bridge over the Industrial Canal, then waded through thigh-deep water and crossed over the canal into the Lower Ninth Ward.

I expected to see high water, but the scene stretching out beyond the bridge where I was standing caught me by surprise. Floodwater was up to houses' eaves as far as I could see. Immediately to my right was a family of women clinging to the columns of their porch, chest deep in swirling floodwater. They were desperately waiting for help, and an elderly man on the bridge with me was frantically looking for a way to help. We considered wading across the street that separated us, or even swimming to them, but when we gauged the water depth, we knew it was way too deep and moving too fast to cross.

Above the howling winds I asked the family how long they had been trapped there. They said, "Since 8 a.m." It was now 1 p.m. That's when I realized they were not standing on their porch but were precariously balanced on the porch's railing. I asked if they could get into their attic. They said they had tried unsuccessfully and now it was too late. I noticed the top of the front door was just inches above the water. I encouraged them to hang on. Surely help would arrive fairly quickly. I needed a boat, a rope, or a life ring. We had nothing but a camera between us.

As the man and I helplessly paced and watched, the women decided they would use a floating log to ferry a youngster across the current. Their plan was to push her across, and I would catch. With the swirling current between us, I knew she would never make it. So again I begged them to stay where they were, as hard as that would be. I knew it was a lot to ask, but I saw no better options.

Documenting This Moment

I also knew that my editors—and the world—needed to see what was hap-

pening here. I knew this would be a tough picture to shoot. I didn't want to make the situation worse or add to the family's trauma. Neither did I want it to seem that I was trying to profit from the situation. I tried to become invisible, moving to the side and diverting their attention away from me. I then quickly raised my camera. The elderly man furiously yelled for me to stop, upset that I would do such a thing. He angrily chastised and threatened me. I tried to reason with him, but this wasn't an atmosphere for logic. I tried to tell him why this was important,

I knew this would be a tough picture to shoot. I didn't want to make the situation worse or add to the family's trauma. Neither did I want it to seem that I was trying to profit from the situation.

that others needed to know what was happening here. My God, I thought, this is history. I told him we would sit down one day over coffee, and I'd justify the pictures.

"I'll never have coffee with the likes of you," he said as I clicked off a few pictures. His words cut me even deeper than he intended.

Meanwhile, the little girl was clinging to the log with a woman ready to push. I felt that being there was encouraging the attempt. Knowing that she would be swept away by the current, I wasn't about to stand there and watch her drown, especially if only for a photo. I left.

And so my Katrina saga began. Little did I know that this ethical dilemma and ensuing debate with my conscience would become the theme of my storm coverage.

I raced back to the paper and dropped off my digital cards. From there, reporter Brian Thevenot and I

headed back to the bridge, this time with an inflatable boat and a rope. As we raced down the levee road, I said to Brian, "If we have to choose between getting a story or saving a life, I'm saving lives. Are you OK with that?" He said he was, and we headed back to the family.

This time I pushed through deeper water than before, and we were able to drive over the bridge. I stopped and looked over the railing but the porch was empty. My heart sank.

By now there were several police SWAT boats working search and rescue. I yelled to them, confident that they had rescued the family. They said they had seen no one at that house.

I remembered the women's desperation and the weariness in their eyes. In my mind I could see the little girl slip beneath the water and the others losing their composure and following her. It felt as if my chest was caving in as I assumed the worst. Could I have done more? Did I do the right thing?

The rest of our day was spent riding along in a private citizen's rescue boat, plucking people from second-floor windows, off rooftops, and ferrying them to safety. We spent the better part of an hour snagging food and bottled water floating from a nearby grocery store to take to others.

Later that night I processed my photos at the newspaper office and fell asleep on the floor.

Rowboat and a Broom

The next morning I awoke to the news of the 17th Street Canal levee break, sending water into most of the city. As the paper's staff evacuated in delivery trucks, I escaped in a rowboat that I found on the newspaper's dock, using a broken broom for a paddle. As I sat in the boat pondering my next move, I watched as the newspaper trucks—with most of my colleagues in them—slowly drove away through the rising water. I thought to myself that leaving alone in a rowboat was not the smartest thing I've ever done.

I had thoughts of the Titanic, with overloaded lifeboats rowing away from drowning passengers. I feared that I



Angela Perkins pleaded with the world with her cry, "Help us, please." September 1, 2005. Photo by Ted Jackson/The Times-Picayune.

would soon find myself in the same situation. I needed some clear thinking and decided to settle my ethical questions then and there.

After a few minutes, I decided that if I saw people swimming or wading in deep water, I would help them into my boat. If they were safely out of the water on rooftops or bridges, I would leave them there for search and rescue teams. I was comfortable with that plan and started paddling. Less than five seconds later I saw a head bobbing in the water. I yelled, "Are you OK?"

The swimmer turned my way and yelled, "Ted!" It was fellow photographer Alex Brandon, with a freezer bag full of digital camera cards clamped in his teeth. [See Brandon's photo essay on page 27.] He was evacuating the building like me but trying to get to the police SWAT headquarters just a few blocks away, where he planned to embed. We both made it to a nearby bridge ramp and decided to go our separate ways, wishing each other safety and good luck.

I paddled into the neighborhoods, not knowing where I was going or what I was going to do. I progressively found myself surrounded by people. Luckily for me, they were all high and dry. I spotted a man waving for help on the edge of an interstate ramp. I raised my camera for what promised to be a great composition. As I watched

through the lens, he raised his hands in disbelief and shrugged his shoulders as if to say, "You're going to shoot my picture but you're not going to help me?" I decided that if I couldn't help, neither could I shoot. I put down my camera and started rowing.

What I needed now was dry land, wherever that might be. I needed to replenish my resources: food, water and transportation. But deeper down, my primary goal was to get word to my wife, Nancy. She had evacuated to Mississippi and was surely beside herself with worry.

I rowed under a bridge where a man pleaded for help. I ignored him. I didn't even look his way. I could hear him conspiring with others: "If we work together, we can take it from him." They came running down the ramp trying to catch me, but I outpaced them. I remember thinking how glad I was to have been a Boy Scout.

Five hours after I left the newspaper offices, the bottom of the boat scraped the pavement of Airline Drive at Causeway Boulevard in Metairie. I walked a couple of miles to the Interstate 10 interchange and collapsed. It turned out to be a lucky spot, for a short time later rescue helicopters started landing all around me. The interchange had been designated as a triage center and eventually a pickup point for transportation out of the city.

I watched a few helicopters land with tattered victims being helped by paramedics. Finally, I summoned the strength to begin taking pictures again. By now, other media were starting to arrive. As rescuers begged for help, the photographers zoomed in tighter for the increasing drama. I disgustedly slung my cameras over my shoulder and started helping. I remember thinking, "I'm done with this. I just don't want to do this anymore."

But of course I couldn't quit. The story wouldn't let me. I hitched a ride in the back of a military dump truck headed back to the city. When we reached the water's edge I caught a ride with a rescue boat. From there things started to improve. I was now able to help when it was needed and shoot when it was appropriate.

Later that evening, I teamed up with fellow photographer Brett Duke, who gave me a place to sleep for the night and even brewed coffee for me on a camp stove the next morning. I got out a brief call to my brother Ken in Mississippi, who could relay a message to Nancy that I was OK. That's all she needed to know for now.

The next day Brett and I paddled his canoe through New Orleans' Central Business District. We made our ethical decisions early. If we found people desperate for help, we would summon rescuers scouring the area. As we paddled near the Louisiana State University School of Medicine, teenage girls screamed to us for help. They could see an elderly man clinging to a chainlink fence, growing weary and about to fall. We summoned a boat nearby and shot photos as the rescuers helped him into their boat. I was feeling better about myself.

As we paddled back near the LSU balcony, the young girls cheered us. "You saved a life," they swooned. "No, you saved a life," we told them. Their voices made the difference. This is how I wanted to work. I was happy to be able to help and get photos, too.

Thinking About My Photos

Wednesday night, I joined five other photographers as the city began to fall

into chaos. As we woke Thursday, there were rumors of a riot at the Morial Convention Center. Fully expecting full-bore violence, we warily approached the scene. As we were spotted, people began crazily running toward us but, to our surprise, they were screaming, “The press is here, the press is here.” I’ve never been greeted in such a way. We each were grabbed by the arm and ushered around the dramatic scene. Angela Perkins grabbed my arm.

“You’ve got to see this; you’ve got to see that,” she said as she took me by dead bodies lying on the street’s median. I was escorted past rancid restrooms, squalid sleeping quarters, and thousands of hopeless people. As I walked amid the mass of people, Angela became more emotional about her plight and suddenly dropped to her knees, clasped her hands in prayer and screamed, “Help us, please!” Brett Duke, Melissa Phillip of The Houston Chronicle, and I were all shooting furiously.

As Brett and I analyzed the situation later, we wondered to whom was she

praying. I’m a very religious man, but I realized she was not praying to God. She was praying to the world through our lenses.

At this point, I realized that my ethical dilemma had come full circle. The power of the camera in this moment was much more intense than anything I could have done for them.

During the past two years, I’ve analyzed my photo coverage of the storm and decided that the pictures I made were shot because I couldn’t help in any other way. I mostly shot pictures in self-defense. It was the only thing I could do.

Months after the storm, for a Thanksgiving Day feature, editors proposed a Living story allowing victims to thank their rescuers, titled “Savior in the Storm.” They wanted to tell the story through the dramatic photos we had shot. We each turned in a photo we wanted included in the package. I submitted the photo of the women on the porch, not because it was my best picture, but because I wanted to learn their fate. Would they be listed

with the victims of the storm or did they manage somehow to escape the floodwater?

Writer Maria Montoya was given the task of tracking down the women and found them rattled but safe in Houston. Teenagers had rescued them in a fishing boat while I was racing back from the paper.

I couldn’t wait to talk to them. I had so many demons to quell. When I finally got them on the phone, Audrey Walton confirmed what I knew she had been thinking. She asked me, “What we couldn’t understand was why you left us?”

“I want you to know,” I said, “I came back with a boat and a rope.”

“Oh,” she said. “I didn’t know that.”

We had a pleasant conversation after that and, as I was telling her goodbye, she said, “I’d like to ask a favor. If you can, can we get a copy of the picture? We’d like to have one to keep.” ■

Ted Jackson is a photographer with The Times-Picayune.

Palm trees bend and break in Hurricane Katrina’s winds as a banner from a billboard flaps from a Canal Street lamppost. August 29, 2005. Photo by Ted Jackson/The Times-Picayune.



Continued on next page.

Evacuees rescued from their homes in the flooded Lower Ninth Ward express their anxiety. August 29, 2005.



During the height of the storm, a man uses a T-shirt to attract attention from rescuers from his attic window in the Lower Ninth Ward. Rising floodwaters forced him and his family, including small children, into their attic. August 29, 2005.



Photos and words by Ted Jackson/The Times-Picayune.



Clinging to his puppy, the resident of a burning home on Columbia Street in New Orleans walks away while smoke and water fill the air. September 6, 2005.



The Netherlands Ambassador Boudewijn van Eenennaam looks out the tour bus window as it passes the 17th Street Canal repair work as U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu succumbs to the moment. Landrieu led the tour through areas of Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes devastated by Hurricane Katrina. November 28, 2005.

Photos and words by Ted Jackson/The Times-Picayune.

The corpse of Alcede Jackson is reverently laid out on his front porch at 4732 Laurel Street in Uptown New Orleans, covered with a blanket and held down by slate. The body was left abandoned for 17 days with an epitaph on a poster board, "Rest in peace in the loving arms of Jesus." September 5, 2005.



An EMT helps children from an Army Black Hawk helicopter as they arrive at the Interstate 10 interchange staging area. August 29, 2005.



Connie Falls kisses Clarence Robinson's hands as they lift off in an evacuation helicopter at the Morial Convention Center headed for Armstrong Airport. September 5, 2005.



*Photos and words by Ted Jackson/
The Times-Picayune.*



A man with his baby cries out over the body of an old man who died in a chair on Convention Boulevard. Refugees crowded into the Morial Convention Center, with no authority supervising or supplying food, water, or any other essentials. September 1, 2005.



Firemen struggle to start a small floating pump to fight a raging inferno, attempting to keep it from spreading to the next house. "It's the best we can do," one fireman said. September 6, 2005.

*Photos and words by Ted Jackson/
The Times-Picayune.*

Putrid waters inundate many streets of New Orleans, including Broad Street, as seen from the Broad Street Overpass. September 12, 2005.



An elderly man clings to a chainlink fence as a rescue boat approaches to help him. August 31, 2005. ■



Photos and words by Ted Jackson/The Times-Picayune.

Journalism Driven By Passion

‘... we’re totally comfortable with the view that New Orleans should survive. As a newspaper, we’re clear on that position.’

In the spring, the Nieman Fellows were visited by three journalists—a reporter and editor with The Times-Picayune in New Orleans and a senior editor with National Public Radio—each of whom has been involved with the long-term coverage of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, an epic storm that devastated the city of New Orleans and many other areas along the Gulf Coast. They spoke of great personal loss and of professional obligations and about the passion they feel for a story without an ending that they know must continue to be told. What appears below is an edited version of the discussion that took place during their morning visit with the fellows.

James O’Byrne, Features Editor, The Times-Picayune: The experts on trauma will tell you that the human mind has a great deal of resilience in dealing with trauma, because once you’re removed from the traumatic event, your ability to heal yourself is actually quite profound, and it’s a very limited number of people who have difficulty long term. The problem with Katrina is that the trauma is around us every day. The part you visit is doing great but not the part you live in. The neighborhood that I drive my kids through to school every day is still ruined. It’s still empty houses—it looks like a neutron bomb hit it. So if you are a citizen of New Orleans, you’re exposed to the trauma on a daily basis.

If you’re a journalist in New Orleans, it’s hard to have to tell people’s stories. We spend all day long listening to people’s stories, and it’s important that we listen to them and that we continue to tell them for our readers. But that takes a toll on top of just living in the city.

Mark Schleifstein, Environmental Reporter at The Times-Picayune: [In a series of stories he co-reported in 2002, Schleifstein revealed that the risk to New Orleans from hurricanes was increasing because the protective wetlands were disappearing and the

levees were sinking. Even a Category Two storm, his series concluded, would put water into the city.] I dealt with the trauma around us by working and then overworking and overworking until I ended up in the hospital. I ended up with a back injury and had surgery and then the day after I’m out of the hospital, I’m still working at home.

O’Byrne: For others, there are drugs or alcohol. There are all kinds of ways to deal with it.

Schleifstein: The second I was out of the hospital I stopped taking any medication, because I didn’t want to get hooked on anything. But I was lucky, because my wife was sane and dealt with everything and was able to deal with the rest of my life. So I had that ability of doing that and not having to deal with knowing that we are now in the ninth place that we have lived in the last six months, and she’s going to go find a house for us to live in. My kids were not living with us because they’re grown, so I don’t have that to worry about. We had enough money to survive, as opposed to what a lot of other people at the newspaper were dealing with. Even so, there were many stresses going on from Day One, and it could be overwhelming if you allowed them to be.

Susan Feeney, Senior Editor for Planning at NPR’s “All Things Considered”: There are a lot of people on the staff who are really struggling, and the city has a profound lack of mental health services. It took a while but the Dart Center folks who deal with trauma in journalism came to speak to people at the newspaper. They came in right after Katrina hit and then some months later, and I think it was needed. I think you would admit that there are still people at the paper having a hard time holding it together. [See box on page 55 about Feeney’s efforts to raise funds to offer assistance to many Times-Picayune employees who need financial help as they recover from the storm.]

The problem with Katrina is that the trauma is around us every day. The part you visit is doing great but not the part you live in. The neighborhood that I drive my kids through to school every day is still ruined. It’s still empty houses—it looks like a neutron bomb hit it.

—James O’Byrne

Sometimes people complain we do too much Middle East or too much Somalia or something, so we're used to that. But we didn't expect that the story that these listeners were most sick of was Katrina, and we were so sad about that. If you're a commercial network, you're probably not doing it anymore.

—Susan Feeney

O'Byrne: I think the problem with journalists in particular is that we think we're so resilient that we don't need any help, so we resist it as much as we can. What Dart did was provide a scientific underpinning for the struggles that some people were having and, therefore, made it a little easier for them by giving them this medical information about why they might be depressed or might be dealing with the effects of trauma or stress. Once they understood the medical underpinnings of it, they felt a little more comfortable getting help.

I manage 31 employees post-Katrina, and at the very least we had each other, and all of us work in a place where we understand there is a context for anything that happens. For example, it's not a particularly noteworthy thing in my department for an employee to cry over something seemingly small that just happens every day. As a manager, it's incumbent on me, in a way that probably would have been inappropriate before the storm, to know how my people are doing in their personal lives. I don't ask incredibly probing questions, but I will ask people how they are doing. And they know I don't mean "How are you doing on your story?" but I mean how are you doing getting by day to day. And they will tell you how they're doing, and it's important for them to be able to talk to you and talk about that.

One of my editors has been trying to get her house back together for 21 months. You can build a new house from the ground up in 21 months, but not in New Orleans you can't. You can't even get your damn house renovated in 21 months. She was so long without running water in her kitchen that one day she just lost it. She said to have to cook every damn meal in the FEMA trailer parked out in front of her house for a year and a half, you just get to the point where you can't deal with it anymore. So that's just in microcosm what people deal with, and you just have to give them the room to have bad days.

Question: Susan, you spoke earlier about how NPR has tried to stay with the story but that when you report on Katrina's aftermath listeners tell you they don't want to hear about it anymore. Perhaps you could talk a bit about these two parts of your life—one in which you are very involved with what's happening in New Orleans and you understand so well the personal dimensions of this

story and the other when you are hearing from people from some other place who are saying, "We're tired of this story."

Feeney: Let me make that clear, there's no disagreement at NPR, all the way up to the president, that we will continue to cover this story. It is enormously expensive to do so, and we don't care; we will keep doing it. It's easy to cover a tragedy when something happens. When Katrina hit, we knew how to dive in. We know how to do big stories. But to continue to cover very, very slow-moving tragedies, it's really hard, because when we do a story now and you hear it and it's a lovely story you have this vague sense that you've heard this story before. We had one the other day about this community in New Orleans East that picked itself up—the Vietnamese community—and someone said, "Wasn't that a great story?" I said, "Absolutely, and I'll give you the date that we just did that story. We did the same damn story, and I'm glad that we did it again, but we have not found a way to continue to tell the story in a compelling enough way."

When I personally see a poll that tells me people aren't caring, I think that's a personal failure of mine that I haven't found a way to make people understand how enormous this problem continues to be. OK. And a couple of weeks ago, because we're retooling "All Things Considered" a little bit, we did focus groups in Boston with those we consider to be hard-core listeners. We thought they might complain a little bit, because we're having that sort of problem with our Iraq coverage in telling that story. Sometimes people complain we do too much Middle East or too much Somalia or something, so we're used to that. But we didn't expect that the story that these listeners were most sick of was Katrina, and we were so sad about that. If you're a commercial network, you're probably not doing it anymore. But we can still do it; to me it's an invitation to find interesting ways and that we are really trying to rethink how we tell the story.

For the moment, this involves some bigger profiles of people and families, and we're going to try to do a little less of the incremental. While I think the money stories out of Congress are important and that the bureaucratic battles are incredibly important, we're going to try to do more

personal, more big picture stories, and see if that's an interesting way to sustain it. [See Feeney's article on page 54.]

O'Byrne: I think Katrina has revealed two shortcomings of our craft. One is what Susan speaks of that we can write the story about one person's tragic heartbreak, but when 100,000 people have tragic heartbreak and that heartbreak extends over 21 months, we just don't have the capacity to cover that. The other thing that I think that has sort of been our enemy on the national stage is that as journalists we think we know what disaster looks like. We know what floods look like, what wind damage looks like, and what storm damage looks like. We know what tornadoes look like. So there is clearly this thing where editors who make decisions about coverage think they know what New Orleans looks like, and they don't. They don't have a clue, and all you have to do is get one or five of them or however many you can get to come here and drive around the city for five or six hours and never see a habitable house and, by the end of that, they say, "I had no idea." [See story by USA Today reporter Liz Szabo on page 56 about editors visiting the region.]

Feeney: Most reporters talk about that even when they've come down here to do stories, they have the hardest time convincing their editors that this is a story, let alone that it should go on Page One.

O'Byrne: The people who were in New Orleans in the first weeks after the storm, whether they're TV people or print people, they are forever haunted by this story because they know how big it is.

Feeney: John Burnett at NPR is a great example. He's been back many times. [See Burnett's story on page 6.]

O'Byrne: Anderson Cooper at CNN won't let it go; he was there in the first couple of weeks after the storm, and he cannot get this story out of his head. We talked to a print reporter at the Los Angeles Times who said the same thing. He wants to come back and write stories, but he can't get his editors to let him. What we need is for the editors to come, and if the editors come and they see it and go back and decide not to write about it, that's just the breaks

of the game, that's the way it works. But what's hard is for people to make decisions thinking they know what happened in New Orleans, when the only way you can know what happened in New Orleans is to go to New Orleans.

Feeney: This is a hard story to do—doing a story that's basically saying nothing's changed. Nothing-has-changed story is a really hard story. There's not good TV footage that looks any different than when things hadn't changed before. It's the nothing-has-changed story that is just mind-boggling.

O'Byrne: We talk about the Katrina channel being this continuous channel in which you never see the same house twice, but it's just driving up and down streets. But that's the reality.

Schleifstein: From the public's standpoint, I think the biggest problem is that they still look at this disaster as a TV screen and this little picture of a house or a guy being interviewed in front of a house or looking down a street, but just that little street. They don't recognize that today you can drive 90 miles from New Orleans to Venice along the river, and on both sides of the street for that 90 miles every single house is destroyed. Brian Williams is trying to do this on TV, but there's just no way of explaining that. Indeed as James said, "Who is going to watch a TV show like that? Oh, here's House No. 257. Here's House No. 1,242."

O'Byrne: House No. 97,324.

Schleifstein: They all look alike. "Oh, my God, look there's some more children's toys that are out in the middle of the street."

Question: I'm struck by the notion that this is, of course, what foreign correspondents have been dealing with for a long time.

Feeney: Darfur is a great example.

Question: How much can you write about the tsunami since it happened? Some people find it interesting because of the personal dimensions that are being discussed in new ways.

Feeney: I think that's right. We've done quite a bit of speaking at journalism schools

We know what floods look like, what wind damage looks like, and what storm damage looks like. We know what tornadoes look like. So there is clearly this thing where editors who are making decisions about coverage think they know what New Orleans looks like, and they don't. They don't have a clue

—James O'Byrne

'Well, you have to tell me this. What do you mean you can't tell me?' We're all like that, and it's this aggression and ownership of the story. It's our story. It's our lives, and we're going to do something about it.

—Mark Schleifstein

and to media groups and so these people are interested enough to listen and to talk about it.

O'Byrne: A great thing about being a journalist in New Orleans right now is passion drives our journalism in a way that it never has before. Far from feeling defensive about it, I'm unapologetic about it. I think the newspaper has been an extraordinary leader in trying to define the agenda and trying to raise the issues that are important to the future of the city. In the absence of civic leadership, I think the newspaper has done a great job identifying the issues and calling on people who aren't doing their jobs and exposing fraud where we see it and holding the city's officials and the state and federal officials accountable where we can.

We have no compunctions about it—we're totally comfortable with the view that New Orleans should survive. As a newspaper, we're clear on that position. The conversation about whether or not we should have a place to live, whether or not our city should survive—just imagine having that conversation in your hometown. Your hometown is hit by a disaster and the nation wants to talk about, "Well, should we really have a town there after all?" I mean it's an extraordinary conversation to have, but as a newspaper in New Orleans, which was a city before the United States was a country, it's strange to have a conversation about whether or not you're going to have a city at the mouth of your major river. You are, OK? Let's dispense with that at the outset. We take the position that it's okay to have that position and that the flip side position—"We'll just let those people rot, essentially, let that city rot. Sorry we didn't build a strong enough flood protection system but life's tough. Move on."—is not an acceptable position to have.

So emanating from that is really passionate journalism about what's happening in the city. I'm the features guy, so I sort of have a somewhat arm's length view of what goes on in the news pages, but I think they've done everything that great journalism should do to hold people to account—"to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable"—that's what we should be doing, and that's what we are doing in the city.

Schleifstein: We've also been successful even in our hires in getting some really

good young people. One of whom is a local kid whose family was flooded out, and he is reporting on the state's Road Home program [set up to help those affected by Katrina get back into housing], and he's there all day and night and just killing them on a daily basis. I'm sitting right next to him, and he's like yelling at them, "Well, you have to tell me this. What do you mean you can't tell me?" We're all like that, and it's this aggression and ownership of the story. It's our story. It's our lives, and we're going to do something about it.

Feeney: There really has been extraordinary leadership at the paper. Editors are very close to their staffs and connected to them and pay attention to them and take care of them. I'm going to say one really nice thing about the Newhouse family that owns the paper, and everyone there has said this, "Thank heavens The Times-Picayune is not a publicly traded newspaper." Would you want to be part of the Tribune Company and have your paper making zero money? Have it lose money for months and months and months? And they kept everybody on staff who could make it back by a certain date when basically half the city was gone, half your circulation was gone. It's a pretty extraordinary thing, really.

O'Byrne: Yes, it is. I think the date people had to be back at their jobs was October the 13th, six weeks after the storm. Regardless of whether you were in St. Louis for six weeks or you were in New Orleans working for six weeks, you were getting paid.

Feeney: And receiving a clothing allowance and health insurance no matter where you were.

O'Byrne: Today we have a much smaller staff, but it's a staff now that more closely reflects our circulation, anyway. Our staff shrunk with our circulation; it was 265 before the storm and right now we are around 200, which isn't bad. Our strategy to focus a lot of our efforts over the last 20 years in the suburbs paid off in big ways. No one was fired.

Feeney: No one was fired. That's a pretty big issue when every other newspaper in America is laying people off. ■

Observing Everything to Tell the Story of Change

‘I found the timeline of the city’s renaissance in mundane details and in revealing what daily rituals were still altered.’

By Rukmini Callimachi

I had been living in the destroyed city of New Orleans for nine months when a colleague gave me the following piece of advice: “Make them smell it.” He wasn’t giving me advice on how to write about the city, although he should have been. His comment came in response to a casual question on where I should take first-time visitors to New Orleans. “Don’t just drive by the flooded houses,” he said. “Stop the car. Make them get out. Make sure they smell it.”

By then, I had become accustomed to the smell of the mold-infested walls. Nine months of fresh air had washed over them, diminishing the initial hit. Like the smell, so too the images of destruction had stopped hitting me as they had in my first months there, and I found myself reaching for tired phrases to describe the environment around me. Do a Google search on New Orleans, and you will find writer after writer reflexively describing the city as “hurricane ravaged,” “hurricane scarred,” or “storm battered” and “storm scarred.” They describe the number of feet of water that swept into each house and make note of “piles of debris” on the street outside.

All of us had become accustomed to the homes yanked off their foundations and the perpetual deteriorating state of these properties. With this familiarity, a lot of us had stopped describing well what we were actually seeing and hearing and smelling. So I began deliberately to note the kind of details I might otherwise have ignored—the color of the warped wallpaper, of stiff clothes and bloated mattresses. I jotted in my notebook the size of measuring cups scattered on a flooded kitchen floor. I sketched the shape of the blades of a ceiling fan, hanging downwards like

the petals of a drooping flower, the result of gushing water. I copied the smudged words on a sheet of music, the words underlined in a swollen textbook, and the chapter and verse still highlighted in a mold-caked Bible. I took note of the brand of toothpaste and of dishwashing liquid. I returned on second and third trips to the same house to fill in my notes, realizing I had written Crest, but not the flavor or Dove, but not the color.

Almost none of this information made it into my stories, but it became an exercise in looking closely. In that act of looking, I tripped over details that illuminated the destroyed lives of people I wrote about. To write a story on the impact of the storm on children I traversed the city looking for flooded toys. I found a teddy bear, his fur matted with mud. A headless stuffed rabbit poked out of the rubble of a ruined house. In another heap, I found a baby doll, her arms raised above her head as if waiting to be picked up. I filled half a notebook with detailed descriptions of toys and from it distilled a paragraph that became a key section of my story and a metaphor for what the hurricane had done to children’s lives.

What I’d recorded in my notebooks also informed how I interviewed children. I asked them to tell me what toy they missed most from their destroyed room. Then I asked them to tell me what, if anything, they had

been able to salvage. For eight-year-old Gabrielle Riley, that was a large, floppy-eared rabbit that her mother had given her. Gabrielle’s mother died of pneumonia during the storm, and the rabbit, propped up on her bunk bed in the family’s new home, opened the way for her to tell me about how she is afraid of losing the rest of her family. Since the hurricane, whenever her dad takes a nap, she stands outside his room on edge. When she hears nothing she peeks in, trying to see if the covers are moving up and down with his breath. Eventually she yells out, “Daddy, are you OK?”

In journalism, we often speak of gathering “color” for a story, as if it’s separate from the substance of the article, a frivolous addition like a pretty border around a painting. I chafe at that. Details are like spotlights, pointing out an aspect of a person’s life or a moment in time in a city’s recovery.

When I first arrived in New Orleans, it had already been one and a half months since the storm. I was one of dozens of reporters parachuted in for a



A teddy bear lies in a pile of debris. June 2006. Photo by Alex Brandon/The Associated Press.

10-day stint—breathless at the chance to cover a big story. On my way there, my suitcase had been given a “Heavy” tag at the airport, weighed down by hip waders, rubber boots, goggles and an



Lauren Carriere, 11, sits above the ruins of her family home in New Orleans, flooded and then burned after Katrina. March 2006. *Photo by Alex Brandon/The Associated Press.*

industrial-strength respirator, accouterments I thought I needed to ford a flooded city. I found the water gone but the devastation vast, immeasurable and shocking.

In my rental car, I left the French Quarter one night and drove into the skeleton of the destroyed city. It was only a short distance to travel, perhaps a few blocks, but I arrived in a darkness so deep that my headlights became the only source of light. The hulls of dead houses passed me one after another. I rolled down my window and felt the dead air, pregnant with mold.

Months later, I would drive past the same houses, but they no longer



A child's book sits in the debris of a school in New Orleans damaged by Katrina. August 2006. *Photo by Alex Brandon/The Associated Press.*

smelled from the street. It would take walking inside to remind myself of the stench. Some of the houses had been gutted. Families that could afford to pulled out the rotten wallboard, installing new roofs, drywall and flooring. Neighborhoods began to look like a patchwork quilt, a repaired house with a green lawn flanking an abandoned one, where weeds had overtaken the mailbox.

It was this halfway-there state that I found difficult to capture. I struggled to describe a city that was suffering on the one hand but a model of resilience on the other. To capture the passage of time, I used the details of people's daily lives.

Eighty percent of New Orleans flooded when the city's aging levees collapsed under the weight of the swelling water. Yet only the neighborhoods closest to the broken barriers flooded up to the roofline. Many more homes swallowed just a few feet of water, enough to destroy the first story, but not the second. On one of my first drives through the city at night, I noticed that high above the street the darkness was interrupted by the flicker of a candlelight, or the intermittent beam of a flashlight.

Those points of light were among the first signs of life in a city some had given up for dead. Tired of hotels or of imposing on relatives, homeowners who had two-story homes had begun returning, boldly moving into their dry upstairs, even if the bottom half of their home was still sloshing with water. A doctor who had swum out of his flooded house balancing his parrot's cage on a floating tire was the first person back on his block. I found him by driving up and down the block until I saw the flash of light—the beam off his headlamp. He invited me

upstairs and guided me up the staircase with the light propped on his forehead. On a Coleman stove, he boiled water and made me a cup of coffee.

We talked about the ways in which our daily rituals are tied to the first, not the second-story. A house's electric meter is typically located on the ground floor, so even if the upstairs is dry, the home's electrical input has been flooded. Without electricity, the young doctor relied on flashlights and kerosene lanterns. Down the street, a young woman lit candles in each room, placing them in deep, globular bowls to catch the wax.

In my notebook, I made a list of all the things I do from morning to night—and then went through the list with each family to see what aspects of their day had changed. Kitchens, like electrical meters, are usually located downstairs. Living upstairs, the families devised new ways to cook. They washed their vegetables in the bathtub and cooked dinner on a barbecue stove placed on the second-story balcony. One mother of three told me that she got tired of making a mess in the bathroom, so she took to washing her dishes in the yard using the garden hose. She combed the local grocery store for ready-to-eat ingredients, like prewashed lettuce and packets of broccoli florets. Soon she switched to paper plates and plastic forks.

As the city began to heal, I visited these same neighborhoods, marking progress in terms of a family's ability to have a hot rather than a cold shower, a microwaved rather than a barbecued dinner, and electricity rather than battery-powered light. The shift never came all at once, but in bite-sized chunks. I found the timeline of the city's renaissance in mundane details and in revealing what daily rituals were still altered.

Nearly a year had passed since the storm when I knocked on the door of an elegant Victorian that from the outside appeared repaired. The elderly man who opened the door refused to show himself, cracking the door open a few inches and speaking loudly across the divide. He told me that the city could be divided into two kinds of people:

“Those that came back and those that came back, threw up their hands and gave up.”

He was one of the people who hadn't given up, dragging the sopping furniture to the curb, yanking out the mottled floorboards, and pouring his savings into construction materials. His house was—almost—as good as new.

But why wouldn't he show himself? He told me that in spite of repeated visits to city hall to get an electricity permit, he had so far failed to receive one and restore power to his house. It was summer and, to get some respite from the oven-like heat, he had taken to moving around his house naked, carrying a battery-operated fan from

room to room.

Details—color—are the lifeblood of stories, especially those drawn out over long arcs of time. ■

Rukmini Callimachi worked in New Orleans as a reporter with The Associated Press in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Bypassing the Easy Stories in the Big Easy

An editor and author urges out-of-town journalists to park their preconceptions at the city's edge and be prepared to do some digging to find the news.

By Jed Horne

Around Lent, and then again in late April and early May, the nation's press is suddenly rife with enterprise stories out of New Orleans. The mystery behind this flurry of attention isn't hard to solve. Mardi Gras and the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival (a.k.a. Jazz Fest) might not be worth a lot of ink, but they're a lot of fun. The trick for the out-of-town reporter is to dig up a New Orleans story on the fly that justifies expensing the trip. Lately that's been pretty easy: just do a “post-Katrina update.”

So it was that I found myself in a somewhat testy conversation with a colleague from a big out-of-town daily. “I've got my story,” he told me, as we recuperated from a Sunday afternoon at Jazz Fest, and he planned a day or two of reporting before catching a plane. “Racism,” he said.

“What about it?” I asked.

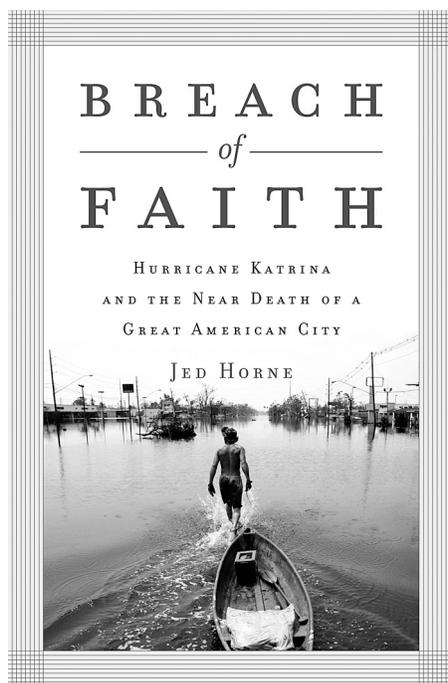
“I'm hearing it's still a problem here.”

“And the news?”

“I'm taking the post-Katrina perspective,” he replied, “I'm doing an update.”

Post-Katrina Journalism

Hurricane Katrina inspired some terrific reporting, along with some crude lapses into myth and stereotyping that



had to be atoned for in the months after the water receded. Published and broadcast mea culpas redeemed our industry. But the magic words “post-Katrina” seem to have become license for problem journalism of another kind. It's as if reporters and editors are overawed by the backdrop of the epic storm, so much so that we can get slipshod about the foreground stories we continue to set against it. The quality and professional rigor of

the “update” too often is in inverse proportion to the magnitude of the event being updated.

Yes, racism persists in New Orleans, as it has at least since Reconstruction. My friend, of course, would have had no trouble digging up the requisite five quotes and three for-instances to support this kind of nut graph: “Katrina may have blown the lid off racism and poverty in America, but the flood waters did not wash these social ills away.”

But that could be said about any city in America and, frankly, when the dateline says New Orleans, we want to hog the spotlight these days. We crave media attention as our only hope for waking America out of Katrina fatigue. Does that put racism stories off limits? Not at all—nor crime, poverty, addiction nor stories about any other social ills. We would only ask for the same depth of reporting that hometown audiences would demand.

One focus of a story about race, for example, might be to explore how once racially monolithic voting blocks in the New Orleans metro area have begun to fracture along class lines. That white conservatives spurned the white liberal candidate and joined with black voters to re-elect Mayor Ray Nagin—a move some now regret—is a development to ponder. So, too, the spectacle of middle-class suburbanites—black

and white—who rose as one at an annual civic luncheon earlier this year to applaud Ronnie Harris, the white mayor of suburban Gretna. Harris is the man most closely associated with the infamous decision by his constabulary to train guns on a largely black throng, abandoned by government at every level and seeking to escape the flooded city by way of a Mississippi River bridge. Ronnie Harris: defender of property rights; Ronnie Harris: no nonsense champion of law and order. Ronnie Harris: hero of the emerging black middle class?

Or better yet, given the strong Hispanic presence in the city my newspaper reporter friend hails from, how about taking a look at the intricate minuet now under way between African Americans in New Orleans and another people of color—the Latinos, who have swept into the area since the storm, flooding the job market? It's certainly the most significant ethnic infusion since Vietnamese boat people were resettled here in the 1970's.

If the update is to focus on crime, another popular theme, here, too, legwork will be required in place of pre-packaged assumptions. New Orleans remains the violent city it has been for decades. New Orleans remains a city heavily dependent on tourism. Assuming that crime is a threat to tourism might be a self-fulfilling concern, but the linkage is misleading. To report on crime in New Orleans requires more than asking a bunch of tourists on Bourbon Street whether they're worried about it. It requires understanding the drug trade that flourishes on the margins of the city and the particular dislocations within that trade caused by Katrina and now being worked out at gunpoint. That's the story, and I'd advise caution in pursuit of it, as well as a bit more time than editors back home might think reasonable for a trip to New Orleans that happens to coincide with Jazz Fest or Carnival.

Katrina Anniversary Stories

The problem of an epic story becoming sanction for brain-dead updates also has been apparent during another

recent addition to our seasonal calendar: Katrina anniversary stories. The throng of media that descended upon us in August 2006 is expected again in August 2007. Last season's visual cliché was this: TV talking head standing in front of wrecked house or flipped over car in the Lower Ninth Ward. The appeal of the visual backdrop was easy enough to grasp; it was iconic, a shorthand way to say "Katrina." So it didn't much matter what words the reporter's lips were forming, since the message was already sent: Katrina destruction persists. (Memo to producers: A lot of flipped over buildings have been bulldozed since the first anniversary; new backdrops will be needed.)

Much more interesting anniversary stories were those that parsed the faltering recovery process—examining what was going right and what was going wrong. As the first anniversary press corps scoured New Orleans for updates, the Superdome—an icon of disaster and human suffering during its use as a Katrina storm shelter—was about to reopen with the triumphant return of the Saints for their first regular season home game in two years. Ah, but that was precisely the problem: A repaired Superdome made for a backdrop visually indistinguishable from footage that might have been shot there in 2004 or, for that matter, in 1994, no matter how interesting it might have been to question the wisdom of prioritizing Superdome resurrection.

Ultimately, it did not take a lot of bullying to get my Jazz Fest friend to abandon the preconceptions that shaped his initial story idea and move him past interviews by phone with (white) antiracism advocates and (black) politicians, each of whom retains a vested interest in the persistence of the problem they dream of eradicating. I urged him to venture into the heart of the community and encouraged him to contact the neighborhood associations that—without much support at all from City Hall, Baton Rouge, or Washington—are doing the day-to-day work of planning and implementing New Orleans's revival.

That the city's revival is a biracial effort should come as no surprise.

Even after the Katrina diaspora, New Orleans remains strongly Afro-centric in its culture and leadership. That racial differences can be teased out of virtually every debate also is not a surprise. This is New Orleans. But "racism" is being eclipsed by other concerns, and this is heartening. There is a city to rebuild, housing to gut, a flood defense to fortify. The Bush administration's lackluster performance since Katrina has been called racist, and I paid my own respects to that line of reasoning in "Breach of Faith," a book about Katrina. Perhaps race-baiting and other manifestations of the old-time religion have been muted in post-Katrina New Orleans precisely because Washington has given us a bogeyman exterior to local politics.

A city's fate hangs in the balance, but the repercussions are wider than that. Katrina was the first real test—a colossal failure—of the Bush administration's signature domestic achievement, the Department of Homeland Security. For those reasons, the recovery of this city deserves more than facile, preconceived and lazily executed reporting. After an ugly tussle, Louisiana has begun to win the right to tap into federal royalties from offshore oil and gas to pay for restoration of coastal marshes and other crucial measures in the fight against storm surge. But New Orleans remains hugely dependent on congressional largesse for its recovery. Congress might be hard to educate, but its best teachers are constituents throughout the country. Conveying a fresh and accurate understanding of what's going on in New Orleans is our only hope for meaningful public policy and government support. ■

Jed Horne, who retired recently as a metro editor of The Times-Picayune, is the author of "Breach of Faith: Hurricane Katrina and the Near Death of a Great American City," published by Random House in 2006.

AN ESSAY IN WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Images Evoke Memories and Emotions

By Alex Brandon

Every day we think about Hurricane Katrina. We think about the waterlines as we drive through our neighborhood. We look at the house down the street that still isn't finished. We remember what we were doing during Katrina when we drive by a house where we'd photographed people swimming out of it or we'd taken a picture of a dead body in the front yard.

All that just on the way to the office, every day.

I've been here from the beginning, when I rode on one of the first two boats launched in the Lower Ninth Ward on Katrina Monday—New Orleans slang for Monday, August 29, 2005. The memory of that day burns as fresh in my mind as the smell of a gutted house. And if you haven't gutted a house for a friend, consider it a chance missed to really get down and dirty and get Katrina under your fingernails.

For me, Katrina is personal. I saw people I know stranded at the Morial Convention Center. I pulled people out of the water and into boats. And

I saw a person shot on the interstate by cops who were trying to get their city back.

One of the challenges I confront in making visual the story of post-Katrina New Orleans is in figuring out how I can force those who don't live here to realize that this city and the Gulf Coast are at the beginning of a very long recovery process. Unlike the early days of Katrina when powerful images were everywhere, now it is harder to make a photo that has enough impact to draw an editor's attention. I have to dig deeper into the human condition to show how people's lives are still in turmoil—that putting their lives back together involves more than new sheetrock in their homes.

I have done parachute journalism into disaster zones, but somehow the pictures I take matter more when the place I am working is home. What I've experienced here gives me a deeper understanding of how Iraqi journalists feel each day they head out to tell a story that to them is much more than a daily assignment. I ask myself

whether it is important for me to leave my feelings at the door along with my smelly Katrina boots. It might be a good thing to do, but I can't. Instead, I use my emotions—such as the joy I feel when I see small signs of recovery and the anger that boils up inside of me by the slowness of it all—to motivate me to do justice to the story of those who are engaged in the struggle of a lifetime.

The region's struggles are as varied as the heights of the rebuilt homes. Some of those are being rebuilt on stilts, while others are the way they were—a slab on the grade of the land. Now about those levees—are they ready? As I write this, we are just about to enter the heart of hurricane season, and prayer abounds down here in the hope that they won't be tested. If they're not ready, I just don't want to know. ■

Alex Brandon is an Associated Press photographer who has worked in and around New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina.



Almost two years after Katrina a few residents are removing belongings for disposal. This refrigerator was put out on the curb in the Gentilly area of New Orleans. June 26, 2007. Photo by Alex Brandon/The Associated Press.

Continued on next page.



Many New Orleanians are arming themselves as crime becomes an even greater fear. Vivian Westerman poses for a photograph with her new .38 revolver in New Orleans. March 13, 2007.



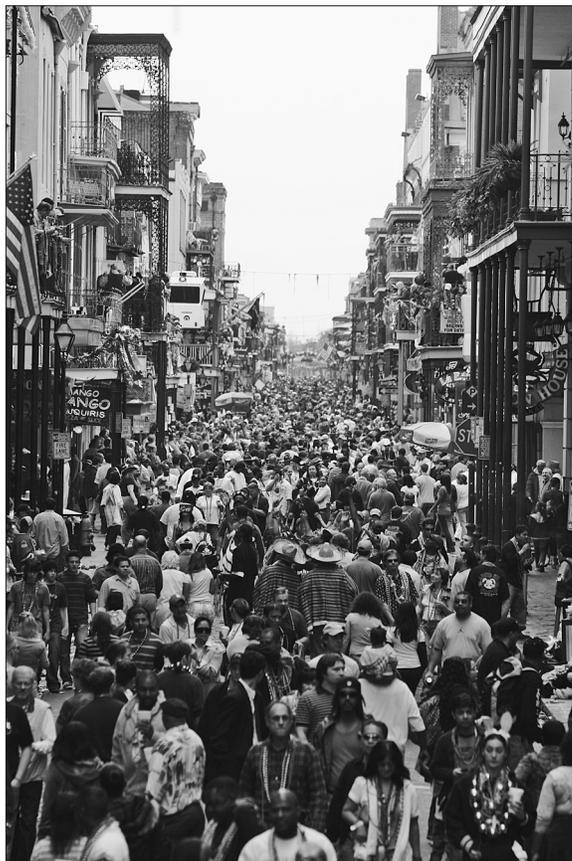
With Highway 90 and the beach in the background, Benjamin Lin's empty slab is still bare where his flea market once stood in Pass Christian, Mississippi. May 22, 2007.

Photos and words by Alex Brandon/The Associated Press.

World-renowned musician Fats Domino looks at the progress of the rebuilding of his home in the Lower Ninth Ward. March 9, 2007.



Bourbon Street and the French Quarter are mostly up and running at full strength. During Mardi Gras, crowds filled the streets in this part of the city. February 20, 2007. ■



Photos and words by Alex Brandon/The Associated Press.

Personal Circumstances Intersect With Professional Obligations

'We have become tougher, more aggressive, more skeptical reporters due, at least in part, to the fact that we have a rooting interest in the outcome.'

By John Pope

The night before we left Baton Rouge—our temporary base of operations after Hurricane Katrina pummeled New Orleans—to return home, I felt I had reached my limit. By October 9, 2005, after six weeks of writing for The Times-Picayune about the havoc Hurricane Katrina had wrought—breached levees, ruined homes, and desperate evacuations that had fractured families—I didn't know how much longer I could go on.

I said this to my wife over dinner, and she shook her head. "You're not allowed to say that," she said. "The easy part is over. The adrenaline rush of the storm is gone. Now you're facing rebuilding. That's the hard part."

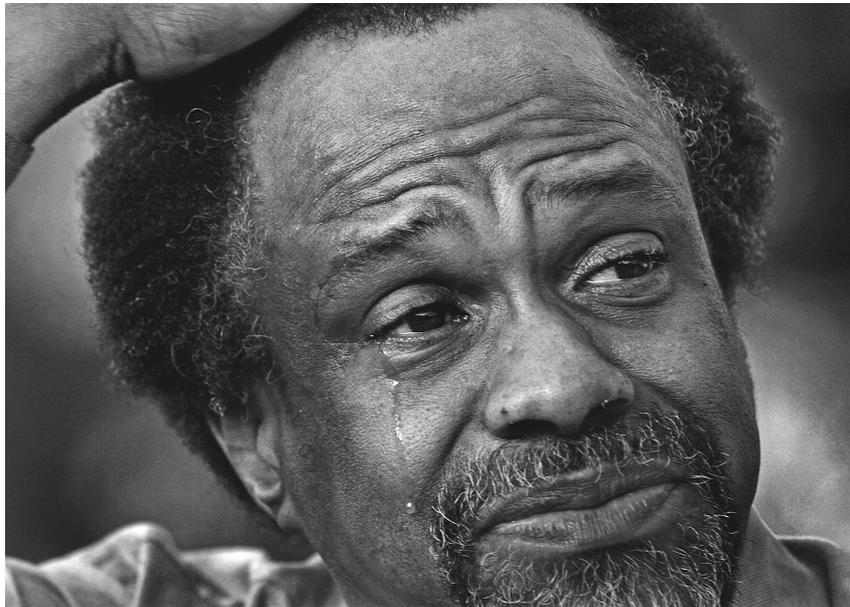
She was right. Coming back to New Orleans peeled away the protection of distance, forcing us to confront situations that had seemed almost abstract while we were working 80 miles away. As we live and work in greater New Orleans, we are surrounded by a shattered infrastructure throughout our city, in our neighborhoods and, in some cases, within our own families. Since the storm struck

on August 29, 2005, The Times-Picayune's pages—and, indeed, the lives of those of us on the staff—have been dominated by topics such as levees that won't protect us, relief programs that don't work, homes that people can't inhabit, and a President who just doesn't get it.

Clearly we, as residents of this city and journalists telling its stories, are immersed in what we cover. It couldn't be otherwise. Given all we've lived through, our coverage has developed a decided edge: We have become tougher, more aggressive, more skeptical reporters due, at least in part, to the fact that we have a rooting interest in the outcome.

Case in point: Shortly after the storm, several of our reporters put together a story that debunked every sensational claim our police chief had made about murders and rapes among the people who were left behind in New Orleans, cooped up in foul conditions at the Superdome and, later, the Morial Convention Center. They simply weren't true. The day after that story was published, the chief resigned.

Our editorial policy has followed this aggressive path and served notice early on: Days after the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) failed to intervene while tens of thousands of people suffered and more than a thousand died in New



Robert Green, Sr. of the Lower Ninth Ward recounts the horrors of surviving Hurricane Katrina. His traumatized family moved higher and higher onto the roof until they were all huddled together. Robert and his brother Jonathan shielded the children and their frail mother from the howling winds and stinging rain. Once the winds died down, Jonathan said, "Mamma didn't make it." She died sometime during the long morning. As he said this, he told Robert that her dying words were, "I'm going to take care of Nai Nai." Nai Nai Green, who was three years old, had died that night when she fell off the roof into the swirling waters. August 15, 2006. *Photo and words by Ted Jackson.*

The result: intense challenges and frustrations—professional and personal, occasionally at the same time.

Orleans, a front-page editorial said everyone in FEMA should be fired.

It's tough to be part of the story you're likely to be covering for the rest of your time in New Orleans, but that's the post-Katrina reality. Despite the edginess, our news coverage has remained rigorously fair because we can't let it be otherwise. But it's a constant struggle, explained Mark Schleifstein, a Times-Picayune environmental reporter who predicted in a 2002 series of articles the type of damage that a storm like Katrina could cause. "I have to be careful about bias and think things through carefully to ensure that if my personal feelings might get into a story, I leave them out," he said. His home in the Lakeview area had two feet of water—on its second floor.

The struggle to maintain a sense of balance in our news reporting makes our job tougher, said Coleman Warner, a colleague of mine at the Times-Picayune who is rebuilding his family's home near Lake Pontchartrain after it drowned in eight-and-a-half feet of water. "It's challenging in a different kind of way professionally because you want to maintain your journalistic principles and your dignity and your sense of fairness in how you portray things," he told me. "All the standard ingredients of good journalism are there, but there's an entirely different dimension for us because we have a different insight into the manifestations of this because we can see it. We can touch it. We're surrounded by it. We're living with it."

While reporting on these conditions is stressful, Warner said that living in the same sort of situation can give reporters a personal perspective on what they hear others talk about. "When I interview people who are trying to renovate, and they're frustrated with Road Home (the housing relief program) or FEMA, I can immediately empathize with that person," Warner said, "because this morning, I woke up in a FEMA trailer." Given this vantage point, "you can fill in the blanks about the way people can feel things," he said.

Meshing Life and Work

As we struggle to get back to normal, we stumble across circumstances that might lead to stories. For instance, after my wife and I returned to New Orleans, we couldn't find our general practitioner, and we knew that our files at our eye doctor's office had been washed away. That led me to think that other people must be in the same situation and that I might be able to put together a legitimate story that could be beneficial, too. After a lot of calling and Web surfing, I learned—to my amazement—that doctors aren't required to tell their patients where they are. But I found several new Web sites where doctors could let patients know of their whereabouts and, perhaps, their return dates. I did a story listing these sites and their addresses and wrote about the feasibility of electronic medical records.

Alert reporters can spot these stories on every beat. Editors welcome them, not only because they help depict the way we live in post-Katrina New Orleans but also because they offer a respite from somber tales of human misery and bureaucratic sloth.

Since the storm, The Times-Picayune has become the principal news source in this part of the world. In the days after Katrina hit, our Web site¹ was getting up to 30-million hits a day, and people were using our electronic bulletin boards to find out how their homes had fared, where their relatives had wound up and, indeed, whether they were alive.

The push for Katrina-related stories continues, even for people whose beats have nothing to do with flawed levees or relief programs snarled in bureaucracy. It's relentless, it's tough, and it's stressful. The stress was evident early on, when we were in Baton Rouge in the days after the storm, bunking in married-student housing at Louisiana State University (LSU), when I shared an apartment with 10 other men. We slept on mattresses and shared a bathroom. Although we were dead

tired from the work, we couldn't stop waking up in the middle of the night to worry about the conditions we'd left behind.

I watched a colleague crack one night; she was sent away to stay with relatives. One of my roommates had aging relatives and in-laws who had lost their homes on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. His wife, who had taken their children to stay with friends several hours away, was wondering whether to enroll them in school there because there was no way to know when anyone would be able to return. At four o'clock one morning, he awoke with stabbing chest pains and had to be rushed to a hospital. It wasn't a heart attack, but it served as a warning of the toll stress could take.

As we worked side by side in Baton Rouge—first at LSU, then in a windowless suite at a former shopping mall—we juggled work on stories with calls to family members and to contractors and insurance agents. We were trying to restore order to our own lives as we were chronicling the chaos that had befallen our city. Colleagues often hung up in tears. In a flash, someone was always there to offer a hug and words of support. Those gestures helped a lot.

When people were able to venture back into New Orleans, they took pictures of their ruined homes to bolster insurance claims. The photos were always horrible to behold, especially for those of us who had visited their houses before Katrina. For example, the director of our news-art department owned a burgundy-colored leather sofa that had been her pride and joy, but in the photo she showed us, it was white with mold. At times like those, the camaraderie was vital.

We cried, we hugged, and we kept working. We had no choice. Besides being what we were paid to do, our work—gathering facts and organizing them into stories—was one thing we could do to keep us focused—and reasonably sane.

Stress continues to be a problem and

¹ www.nola.com

not just because, day after day, we're forced to write about conditions that could destroy us, such as weak levees and the receding coastal buffer zone. Everyone in the newsroom has been forced to confront questions that have faced everyone who has returned to New Orleans, especially people whose homes were ruined. Rebuild or demolish? Stay or move?

There are no right answers, nor wrong ones. But each choice involves—and creates—stress. Two policemen killed themselves, as did the brother of a colleague whose pediatric practice had, literally, washed away after his little patients evacuated with their parents. Mental health counselors are busy, and prescriptions for anti-anxiety and anti-depression medications have risen significantly throughout the area. They have become so commonplace in post-Katrina New Orleans that the relative merits of such drugs as Wellbutrin, Cymbalta and Xanax are discussed as routinely—and openly—as the fortunes of the New Orleans Saints, our pro-football team.

But sometimes, for some people, everything can become too much. John McCusker, one of our photographers

who had stayed behind in New Orleans to chronicle the destruction of his hometown, was deeply troubled. His house had been ruined, and insurers refused to give him the reimbursement he needed. One night in August 2006, McCusker snapped. He led police on a wild, careening chase through Uptown New Orleans and finally begged them to shoot him after he pinned an officer beneath his car. After being brought down with a Taser, McCusker was led off in handcuffs to jail and, later, to one of the city's few remaining psychiatric beds.

McCusker, who is back at work, discussed his stress in an interview with a Brown University student: "Some nights ... just in despair you lay in your bed, and like you're a three-year-old and you just lay there and say, 'Oh, my God. I want to go home.' And you can't go home." McCusker's desperation hit hard because it forced us to realize that we were all still coping with a lot of the same pressure.

Yet we keep at our jobs, surrounded in our newsroom by desks once occupied by colleagues who have moved away. Some desks have new occupants, talented young journalists who are

drawn by the story of a lifetime. As New Orleans struggles to rebuild, we have to keep documenting what happens. As we do so, we walk a tightrope, trying to remain professional without seeming cold. Ours is a sacred obligation, and it's nowhere near over. I took some wry satisfaction from an editor of a Hiroshima paper—one of a long procession of journalistic visitors to our newsroom—who said his city, which an atomic bomb had leveled in August 1945, was thriving.

That's good to know, but will our recovery take 60 years?

Supportive spouses, friends and colleagues are invaluable. Through our work, strong ties have been formed that more than one colleague likened to the bonds that soldiers form in combat. That's an apt comparison, but there's a difference. People who fight wars—or cover them—usually have safe, comfortable homes to return to. Our war came to us, and it's nowhere near over. ■

John Pope is a reporter for The Times-Picayune.

A Forceful Voice About a City's Survival

With the 'transformative power of anger, I was converted into a full-time columnist who took on the serious work of defending a city.'

By Jarvis DeBerry

A journalist given a new beat or assigned a new topic is expected to be an instant expert, an authority on a subject that's somewhat unfamiliar. A good journalist, therefore, must be a quick study. "It doesn't matter how long you've known it," I've heard some of my colleagues say. "What matters is that you know it."

When the subject is New Orleans, however, the honest journalist will

admit that instant expertise is impossible to attain. It is a place that often seems impossible to figure out if only because of its many contradictions. For example, New Orleans is a city heavily influenced by France and West Africa and Spain and Haiti and, to some extent, even America, and yet maintains an attitude that it doesn't want to be influenced by outsiders.

New Orleans takes some getting

used to.

It is a place where the people sing, even when all they're doing is talking. It is a place where "Baby" is not only what the waitress calls you when she's topping off your coffee, but is also how one grown man might refer to another without the suspicion that either one is gay. It is home to accents that are never conveyed accurately in the movies and to grammatical constructions

and mispronunciations that confound the newcomer until he considers that English was not the city's first language. Nor was it the second.

Knowing those things can help a columnist writing for the daily newspaper, but embracing those quirks helps even more. That is, it is not enough to know New Orleans's peculiar history; that can be found in books. It is more important to acknowledge that the differences represent a perfectly acceptable way of being and to remember that because the city doesn't want to be like any place else, comparing it to every place else is a surefire way to both insult its residents and overlook its unique charm.

Accepting the city for what it is does not mean accepting things the way they are. If everything were perfect, there would be no columnists. No, it means accepting New Orleans's idiosyncrasies, its multiple personalities, as the positives they are while blasting away at those things that threaten the city's way of life, if not its very existence.

Who'd have thought that we'd ever be talking about threats to the city's existence? Or that there would ever be a debate as to whether this city—this city of all cities—should continue to exist? The *Times-Picayune* can't have but one forceful opinion on that topic, and I've been fortunate enough to be one of the ones who gets to express it.

Defending New Orleans

I wrote a weekly column for the newspaper before catastrophic levee failures put 80 percent of New Orleans under water, but those columns now appear to me to have been written by a different person. There's a difference between writing from a city where everybody wants to come at least once to party and writing from a city that some government officials say no longer deserves to be. Before the storm, I was an editorial writer who had fun writing a weekly column. Thanks to an executive decision by editor Jim Amoss and editorial page editor Terri Troncale, but more significantly to the transformative power of anger, I was converted into

a full-time columnist who took on the serious work of defending a city.

I was not born in New Orleans and, given the city's aforementioned resistance to outsiders' opinions, that is probably reason enough for some New Orleanians to ignore what I have to say. Just the other day I heard a local pundit exclaim, "You don't choose to be a New Orleanian. You're born a New Orleanian." He was serious. By his definition, I will never, can never, be of this city.

But I am not a mercenary. This fight

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for the city's survival is as personal for me as it is for the native born. I know what it's like to lose a house, a car, and one's entire community in one fell swoop. I know what it's like to see one's personal belongings in a sodden heap on a buckled-up hardwood floor. I know what it's like to say I have something—a book, a CD, an article of clothing, a photograph—and in the middle of that sentence stop myself and say, "Well, I used to have"

I think of myself as an advocate for those who used to have. Granted, not all those who used to have will always think of me as an advocate for them. Though everybody here is in agreement that New Orleans should continue to be, there is no consensus as to how it should be. I am in favor of a denser city, where most people live on the city's natural ridges and fewer people live in the areas that were populated after the swamps were pumped dry. However, many people who live in those neighborhoods respond that the Army Corps of Engineers promised them protection, too, and that they have as

much right to go home as anybody else. Besides, insurance settlements must be spent on the damaged property. Where else can they go?

In the larger sense, it doesn't matter if my readers and I disagree about some of the issues related to rebuilding. What matters is that my opinions are built on a foundation of love and respect for the city and its culture and that I not pretend to be objective when those readers are desperate for someone who will passionately defend them.

Though I am personally in as much trouble and dealing with as much worry as the people I interview, I cannot imagine a more enviable assignment. Hurricane Katrina, with the exception of the terrorist attacks of 2001, is the most significant American news story of this young century. Some may have originally categorized it as a weather story, but it's much more wide reaching than that. Can an American city really die before our eyes? What are the consequences of long-term poverty, as epitomized by what happened here? Is homeownership really the safest way to build wealth? What happens when the people in a relatively isolated city become a diaspora? How does the federal government respond when it is to blame for much of the ineptitude we've experienced? Who have we become—both as a forgetful and dismissive nation and as a city trying to reform itself?

The opportunity to write about these things has come at a great cost. To be the observer and commentator, I've had to live in a struggling city where I am also the thing observed. But I wouldn't have it any other way. New Orleans is my home. I long ago stopped trying to figure it out, even stopped trying to figure out why I live here. The simple answer is that it's the experience for me. And it's the experience that hundreds of thousands of those making up the diaspora long to know again. ■

Jarvis DeBerry is a columnist at The Times-Picayune.

Lessons in Rebuilding: A House and a Newspaper

After embracing 'the value of persistent patience,' an editor shares what he learned in the transformation of the newsroom and the place he calls home.

By David Meeks

I took my usual route to work one recent morning, thinking along the way that The Times-Picayune was closing in on 700 days of staying in business since Katrina's floodwaters forever changed one of America's great cities. It's a milestone that few others took note of, and it seems a minor accomplishment for a newspaper that's been around for 170 years. But it's the way I think these days, living in a place where one searches for signs of hope a day at a time. After all, to have been here two years ago, when the levees broke and our readership was dispersed down interstates to anywhere dry, the thought occurred that we might not be here at all.

Yet in this disaster, we learned something about our readers: They didn't leave us, they went to a safe place and found us—online—in staggering numbers, counting on us, like they always have, to tell them what was happening to their homes and neighborhoods. And we were there then, a ragtag bunch of volunteer journalists, on bicycles, in kayaks and canoes, wading in the water all over New Orleans, doing our best to gather the information and get it out.

My 10-minute drive to work is a daily demonstration of both what has happened to this city and what's possible. It's also epitomizes how I see the newspaper business as it sorts itself out in similar ways—forced, in some places out of desperation, to figure out what's happening and what's possible.

I live in Old Lakeview, just one of the neighborhoods that suffered massive flooding in a city where the devastation zone was seven times the size of Manhattan. I saw my home via kayak the day after the storm (swam through it, actually, in an illogical, ill-planned

but ultimately successful mission to save the family dog). As I floated up to my house, I drifted on black water and cried. I thought it was over. Our home, our neighborhood, it didn't seem a recovery would ever be possible. My daughter had evacuated. I remember thinking that I did not want her to see what had happened here.

We are living in that home today, on a block where recovery now seems not only possible, but also inevitable. My 75-year-old neighbor is back, having been diagnosed with cancer and undergone two surgeries while he was gone, but never losing his determination to come back home. There's a young couple building a new home a few doors down. The local coffee shop on the corner is gone, but a Starbucks took its place. The locally owned pizza

joint came back, doubling its pre-Katrina space.

Driving out of my neighborhood, I see homes brought back to life right next door to residential ghosts, haunting walls stripped to studs that prop up tattered rooftops. But the picture of what this place is going to be gets a little clearer every day. I notice each change, the demolition crew surgically hauling off the misery, the beautiful sound of a carpenter's hammer that tells me someone is going to live there. Crossing into Mid-City, which straddles the flood line, the recovery is more complete. A surprising cluster of restaurants have taken root on North Carrollton Avenue, some of them old favorites renovated and reopened, others new offerings making an investment of faith.

It is interesting, what is happening



John Nemeth works to get his yard in shape on Hay Place, just 200 yards from the breach of the 17th Street Canal, while his next door neighbor's house lies in ruin, untouched since the storm. August 8, 2006. Photo by Ted Jackson/The Times-Picayune.

here. It is true that not everyone who used to live in New Orleans has come back. What is surprising, and certainly under the radar of the national press, is the number of people and businesses coming here who were not New Orleanians before Katrina. The city is learning that it doesn't have to be exactly the same as it was to succeed. In many ways, specifically in the realms of public education and the criminal justice system, it will be a lot better off if it never reverts to what it was.

Overcoming the Fear of Change

All of this change going on around us offers a parallel lesson for print journalists, many of whom are shaken by the prospect of transforming their craft for an online audience. And while it's not uncommon to hear talk in newsrooms of how it's a good time to get out of the newspaper business, I'd argue that there never has been a more exciting time to be in it.

To figure out what's holding us back, look no further than fear. Journalists encourage change in the world but don't change themselves. We're much more prone to pondering our fates with the same cynical energy we apply to just about everything we evaluate. It is somewhat amazing that journalists who, by and large, have great confidence in their individual talents hold such little faith in our ability to achieve collective success.

A change in attitude is needed, with a change in strategy close behind. If innovation and vision, versatility and wide-open creativity are seen as strengths—and if the opportunity to draw your newspaper closer than ever to your community is relished—then staying in the news business is a good place to be. And as we continue to figure out the changing role of newspapers in our communities, Katrina offers an undeniable truth: Our customers might not all want to consume the news in precisely the same way, but they all want the news. And more than any other entity, they trust their local newspaper to give them the information they want and need.

Thinking Local

Our Web site came of age during Katrina for a simple reason—it had to. Virtually all of the New Orleans area had evacuated for the hurricane, and the failed federal levees prevented hundreds of thousands of residents from coming back, some for several weeks. A Web site that averaged 800,000 page views per day pre-Katrina exploded to 30 million per day in the weeks after the storm. Even now, two years later, its daily audience is double what it was before the hurricane.

People signed on from wherever they were, devouring what we were reporting and adding information of their own in forums that sprang up almost instantly. They asked for help finding family members. They posted updates on what they knew about their neighborhoods, specific down to the block. Think about it. The newspaper became a true forum, not just in the stories we posted as quickly as we could, but also in those we collected from our readers.

We would be foolish to ever end that kind of reader engagement. Indeed, we saw it as the blessing that it is. Imagine a town square on every computer, where everyone can see what everyone else is saying, and they can all show up whenever they want. And it is the newspaper hosting a community discussion that never ends, while publishing its own information and welcoming what its readers have to contribute. It's a relationship we'd never had before, but it's one our readers craved. (We always told our readers it's their newspaper, but how many newspapers really have lived up to that claim?)

Yet, even with the changes in how our news gets delivered, The Times-Picayune is not a completely different place than it was before the storm. It would have made no sense to start over. The paper's penetration ranked first in the nation among major dailies long before Katrina, owed mainly to a sustained and substantial commitment to providing readers with a local newspaper—from the front page to the metro section and high-quality community news sections—tailored to the places

they live. When our readers ask us for something, we strive to find a way to say yes, instead of an overintellectualized journalistic excuse to say no.

So when a newspaper announces a renewed commitment to local news, I always ask one question: Who is defining "local?" Is it the readers or the newsroom? To remain the primary source of news in your market, think hard about the answer.

As strange as this might sound, given what we've been through our newspaper is fortunate in many respects. The job we were doing before the flood was as important as what we did during the disaster in bringing our readership back quickly. Our print circulation went from 260,000 to zero in a day. To see it already back over 200,000 in a recovering market tells us we had a solid foundation. And that has allowed us to pursue our online goals from a starting point of success rather than panic. We also are privately held, benefiting from ownership that focuses on long-term goals instead of flavor-of-the-month fixes. We do not underestimate that advantage.

As our online work continues to expand, we are not losing sight of the philosophy that has driven our success. We want to be as local online as we are in the paper, and we intend to play to our primary strength—using the army of journalists we have working across the New Orleans area to gather local news and break it when we get it. From a murder to a mayoral press conference to a traffic-snarling car wreck at the corner of Magazine Street and Napoleon Avenue, we want it. Mainly, we want our readers to know if there's any news agency in town most likely to be on the scene, their best bet is The Times-Picayune. And we want them to believe this whether they live in New Orleans or 40 miles away in Covington, on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain.

We want to keep it short, and we want it online quickly. We don't want our reporters to labor over a finished product for tomorrow's paper, we want whatever they can tell us in five minutes. If we get more details, we'll update. To that end, we've made a

fundamental change in how we equip our reporters. We are issuing laptops and wireless cards to every reporter on staff so that anyone can file a news update from anywhere at any time. It's a learning process, but we're not going to wait until we perfect it to launch it—it's underway. Our journalists are already trained to do journalism; learning how to post to a blog page is as simple as sending an e-mail.

The Web and the Newsroom

There also are a couple of important things we're not going to do. First and foremost, we're not going to create a fancy Internet bureaucracy in the newsroom. The Times-Picayune has always taken a very lean approach to management. It's one of the things that makes it a fun place to work. There is no Internet czar. There is no separate online staff, and we're not going to create one just because it sounds great at a journalism convention. Quite frankly, we do not want to give all of our journalists a reason not to evolve: We're going to evolve together. It will happen not because a guru demands

it, but because self-preservation proves a powerful motivator.

This trend we're seeing is not a fad; this is what we are becoming. Our business is changing, and we don't want to look up in 10 years and be stuck with a bureaucracy we no longer need. So we're skipping that step. Sure, we're going to make some mistakes in the meantime, but we'll learn from them. And as we tackle new endeavors, acquire new skills, and learn how to sell our journalism in every conceivable way, you know what else will happen? We'll have some fun.

The other thing we're not going to do is overthink the Internet. The endless intellectual wrangling that causes newspapers to move at a glacial pace should not preside over our online world. Stop worrying and get going, because nothing gets us there like getting started.

I think about that as I recall the frustration that came with rebuilding our house. I wanted to preserve its best features, its character, yet make it better than it was before. Things didn't always go at the pace I wanted, people didn't always do things how

I wished they would. Sometimes it seemed like we weren't ever going to get back home.

I learned the value of persistent patience, of knowing that I had to keep pushing to move the project a little more forward than it was yesterday. It was an incredible challenge but, one day, we had a brand-new house. Some parts of it are restored exactly like they were, others are gone forever. But the renovation was a success. This different house is a lot nicer and stronger than it used to be. I like to think our newspaper is, too. ■

David Meeks is city editor of The Times-Picayune in New Orleans. When the newspaper evacuated during massive flooding in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Meeks, then the sports editor, remained in the city for six weeks and led a team of volunteers covering the story, working from makeshift news bureaus out of colleagues' dry homes. He and his daughter, Juliet, moved back into their rebuilt home in March.

AN ESSAY IN WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Telling a Tough Story in Your Own Backyard

By Bill Haber

Hurricane Katrina is the most difficult assignment of my almost 29-year career with The Associated Press. Three days after the storm flooded the city, it became very clear that this would essentially be the last story I would cover. There have been only a couple of brief assignments away from Southern Louisiana since August 29, 2005, and there is

no reason to believe this will be any different in the future. This story will be years in the telling.

Telling this story has been a challenge from the start. Even though specific challenges it poses have evolved, they never seem to lessen. Logistics, once overwhelming, are now just plain difficult at times, as all of us deal with competing pressures of fixing what

is broken in our personal lives¹ and continuing to convey to others what doesn't work in theirs. Usually in our business, we deal with only one of these dimensions at a time, given that our assignments about disaster usually take us far from home. And even if we face danger and discomfort, those we love are safe and cared for, so we're able to approach what we do each

¹ Three days after the floodwaters, family members were evacuated, some to Texas, others to Oregon and Mississippi. This July was the first since Hurricane Katrina that all of Haber's family members were home in New Orleans. Four of their family's homes were torn down, one was rebuilt, and three with water damage were repaired.

day with undivided attention. Living in the intersection of family and work can, at times, feel like an impossible place to be. Both are full-time jobs; each requires daily attention, and each influences the other.

For these reasons, and others, Katrina remains a unique assignment.

From a photojournalist's perspective, the ongoing struggle involves capturing that telling image that conveys the scope of human suffering and destruction. Trying to do this every day taxes the limits of my ability as no

other story ever has. There has been no break from Katrina's devastation in two years, as we work still on most of the same stories we did in the early days of the storm—tracking difficulties people are having with housing and crime and safety, with levees breaking and being rebuilt, with vanishing neighbors and empty neighborhoods, with insurance companies and financial aid. The one image that is behind us is the water—rushing through our streets and into our homes. But no one can assure us it won't be there again.

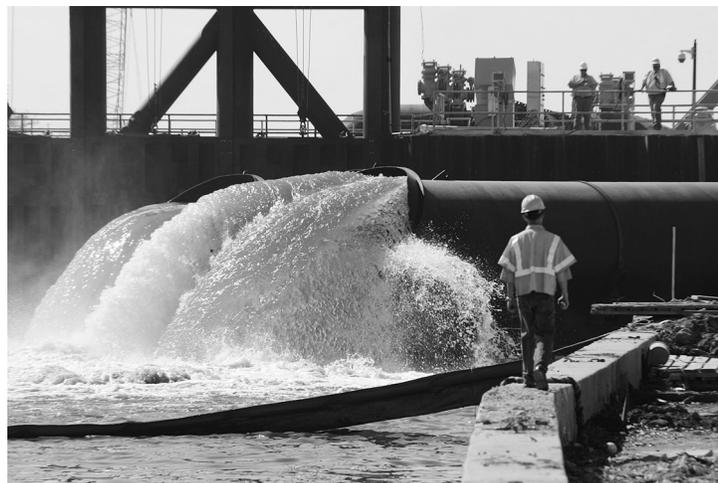
What I now know—two years after Katrina arrived in New Orleans—is that even as the city's population has shrunk and attention to its plight has waned, the stories related to Hurricane Katrina only continue to expand and our resolve to cover them strengthens. ■

Bill Haber is a photographer with The Associated Press; he started with the AP in Dallas, Texas and has been in New Orleans since 1984.

Shredded blue tarps, used as emergency roof repairs, hang from the roof of the Milne Boys Home in New Orleans. January 26, 2007.



Water from the 17th Street Canal moves to Lake Pontchartrain through pumps put in place by the Army Corps of Engineers. March 10, 2007.



Photos and words by Bill Haber/The Associated Press.

A woman marches past a flooded home and two FEMA trailers while participating in the Krewe of Dreux Mardi Gras parade. February 17, 2007.



The air traffic control tower at New Orleans's Lakefront Airport can be seen through a window of an unrepaired building. July 25, 2007.



A flag flies in front of where a home once stood in Long Beach, Mississippi. February 1, 2007. ■



Survival First, Then Needed Newsroom Adjustments

‘All of the silos were leveled, and the Sun Herald newsroom became a blended team with an intense Katrina focus.’

By Stan Tiner

The Sun Herald building on the Gulfport side of DeBuys Road lies within sight of the Mississippi Sound. Built after Hurricane Camille, it is squat and solid in appearance; its narrow windows and thick walls deliberately present a fortress-like statement against the attacks of storms that visit our coast sometimes. The architectural design is but one play in the chess match of survivability against nature’s inevitable challenges; the other is strategic placement—just north of the CSX railroad tracks that traverse the coast and serve as an important defensive mechanism against tidal surge.

Hurricane Katrina’s winds and punishing rains assaulted the fortress/newspaper structure and tore at the roof with a vengeance. The building sprang leaks, and water flooded many areas, including the newsroom, which in the electric-less days of September that followed created a sauna-like atmosphere. But as the hurricane moved northward, devastating regions 150 miles and more inland, the building was still standing, a testament to a good plan and thoughtful design.

In the two years since that fateful August 29th, I have sometimes thought about how the Sun Herald’s newsroom team is like the building, or at least it is an organic extension of the total idea of survivability—strong and steadfast.

To live constantly in the hurricane zone requires a mental toughness and grittiness not unlike the building’s design. Though a glass-dominated structure denoting openness might be appropriate somewhere else, strong and solid works better here. For our staff, Katrina was not their first hurricane test. Many chart their careers by the named storms that have battered

our coast, each presenting unique coverage challenges. The storms are a part of newsroom lore, but none has approached the destructive scale and challenge of this one.

On the Saturday before Katrina leveled Mississippi’s Gulf Coast on Monday, we had a staff meeting in our newsroom. Publisher Ricky Mathews and I described the future in sober, even prophetic, terms, delivering two

As reporters, photographers and editors assessed the damage, we quickly recognized that the scale of this event was epic and that it would be necessary to reorganize our approach to newsgathering in response to the new reality. So we exploded our newsgathering departmental and beat structures. All of the silos were leveled, and the Sun Herald newsroom became a blended team with an intense Katrina focus. There



Sun Herald newsroom staffers, including City Editor Kate Magandy (seated on desk), listen as Publisher Ricky Mathews and Editor Stan Tiner talk to them as Hurricane Katrina approaches the Gulf Coast. August 27, 2005. *Photo by John Fitzhugh/Sun Herald.*

basic messages. Be safe and get out of harm’s way was the first. The second was that our lives, personal and professional, would never be the same.

Good fortune accounted for the paper suffering no casualties, though we did not know that for many days because of the lack of communication. Yet 60 employee homes were completely destroyed; almost none of our 240 employees were spared significant damage.

were no more business reporters, sports reporters, or features writers. Everyone was a news reporter—and newspaper delivery person, I might add, as every employee’s honorable duty was to distribute papers to people wherever they were encountered on our daily rounds.

Katrina also taught us that the Sun Herald is much more than a “newspaper;” through its Web site, it can be a multimedia powerhouse whose

informational reach is worldwide. Even as we delivered the print edition to families in the shattered ruins of their coastal homes, Sunherald.com was flowing the news from the disaster zone to the hundreds of thousands who had evacuated and were hungry for stories told by their hometown news source.

The Web site and newspaper also became a powerful intersection, a place where families connected after the storm as pleas for survivor information were cross-published in an unending conversation. Web traffic exploded in those days and later, and through our tracking method we've been able to observe the phenomena of population relocation and the steady return of evacuees to the Gulf Coast region. From this experience we quickly achieved "Web equity" in our internal thinking about news cycles, and this empowered the Sun Herald not only to have the greatest breadth and depth in local news reporting in our region but also to realize the dream of every editor—to be first with the news as well.¹

As a consequence, our Web site is more robust than before the storm. To each person in our newsroom today, getting words and images on the Web site is no longer the last thing to do in news production; it's the first.

Creating New Beats

The home team should always own a distinct advantage in any post-disaster circumstance, and that was certainly true after Katrina in South Mississippi. Sun Herald reporters knew the people and the places, though it was difficult to locate community leaders in towns spread across the Gulf Coast. Communities no longer resembled their prestorm selves, making it all but impossible to discern where Gulfport ended and Long Beach began. All of the landmarks were gone.

Also, as soon as the levees collapsed

The Sun Herald created a section to give readers guidance on rebuilding projects.

in New Orleans, the giant sucking sound heard in South Mississippi was much of the national media's quick exodus to the west. This led to a sense here that people who had just experienced the worst natural disaster in America's history were being forgotten in their hour of greatest need. Our paper published a front page editorial headlined "Mississippi's Invisible Coast." This circumstance brought an awesome responsibility to our staff that would now become the primary source of the daily news told about the plight of our region and its people.

We took this task with great seriousness. For a while adrenaline carried the team through endless days, but we soon had to learn how to pace our work to keep the staff functioning and in the game, physically and mentally. As time moved on we had to create new beats

to adjust to changing circumstances. Before Katrina, an insurance beat didn't seem so important, but we soon realized it would be of vital interest to people of our region. Transportation would become a key news topic as the rebuilding of hundreds of miles of streets and roads and a billion dollars plus of promised bridge work required close attention. For this assignment, we redeployed Don Hammack, who'd been a sports writer and who had studied engineering. Our watchdog role—holding those responsible for rebuilding activities accountable—has never been more important. With so much money being spent, the stakes are high in terms of the recovery and rebuilding of our region being done right.

Even as the Sun Herald returned to being a "full-service" newspaper—with business, sports, features, comics and so on—we were constantly accommodating the changing dynamics in the post-Katrina world. With 65,000 homes destroyed and more than 55,000 heavily damaged, almost everyone was involved in some rebuilding project as tens of thousands were making the decision to move away from the beach to higher land above the highway. To respond, we created a new section of the paper called "@home," offering approaches to home design and refurbishment with advice to readers who were looking for help on rebuilding projects. A copy editor/designer was moved to edit this section.

South Mississippi was, and to a large extent still is, something like the Wild West during the land-rush period. So we created a beat in our business section dedicated to real estate coverage; there readers can track this information, as much as possible, amid the chaos of recovery. And when a plethora of public health issues followed the storm, we hired a reporter for that beat, Joshua Norman, and he has covered those stories, as much remains un-

¹ The Sun Herald shared the 2006 Public Service Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of Katrina and its aftermath with The Times-Picayune. The Pulitzer judges praised the Sun Herald's coverage "for its valorous and comprehensive coverage of Hurricane Katrina, providing a lifeline for devastated readers, in print and online, during their time of greatest need."

known about the true impact of the storm on people's mental and physical well being. [See Norman's story on page 52.] There are grave concerns about what the long-term impact of air, water and soil-based contamination might produce, and trauma to such a large population is uncharted with consequences measured now in suicides, violent crime, and drug use. The mental health impact on children is also a matter of great worry.

Switching Norman to this beat took us into welcomed but uncharted waters, with the idea I had of creating a medical writer position supported by foundation funding. Seeking such external support to hire a highly specialized journalist might become commonplace, but as we went about doing it we were reminded of its newness. My concept was fairly clear and somewhat developed, at least in my mind. I thought that a person, perhaps a medical doctor with good communication skills, could be hired as a staff writer for the Sun Herald for a two-year period, and that position would be supported by a foundation. In the third year, this person would deliver a book chronicling the health issues following Katrina. I thought this combination would produce much-needed daily journalism about this topic and provide important findings for the medical profession. I pitched the idea to a few foundations, and there appeared to be some interest, but then nothing came of those conversations.

Then, when I spoke to a conference sponsored by the Nieman Foundation last fall that was focused on "The Next Big Health Crisis—And How to Cover



Campers in the Sun Herald's parking lot in Gulfport, Mississippi, were used to house staffers who lost their houses to the storm and visiting journalists. Photo by John Fitzhugh/Sun Herald.

It,"² Penny Duckham, executive director of the Kaiser Media Fellowships, was in the audience, and she was drawn to this idea. Duckham said she would help us, and her foundation has made good on the promise with support for not one but two reporters who will be examining long-term health issues that confront this region. Norman, the staff writer who was shifted to the health beat, has been selected a Kaiser Fellow and will spend nine months reporting on long-term mental trauma. And Kaiser is also generously providing a health intern who will be covering daily health news during this time.

Though our focus is "all Katrina all the time," we cannot forego our other responsibilities as a newspaper. Some of our best investigative reporting has involved coverage of the death of an inmate at the Harrison County Jail, a story requiring almost the full services of Robin Fitzgerald since the paper first reported the beating death of Jessie Lee Williams, Jr. in February 2006. The Sun Herald has been out front on this story ever since, as more and more has been learned about a pattern of abuse at the jail that federal prosecutors allege goes

back years and involves many of the jail's employees as participants and hundreds of prisoners as victims. Six jailers have already pleaded guilty to related federal charges, and the investigation continues.

These two years since Katrina have proven, too, the value and power of editorial pages at a time when

some question their relevance in the digital era. Every week involves some major political decision in a local town or the legislature or Congress. Heavy is the weight placed on our editorial board members, as they need to educate themselves about a vast range of issues so they can "speak truth to power."

Journalism happens despite the fulcrum of personal issues that so many on our staff have endured and continue to confront. Stress is an all-too-familiar guest in our newsroom, one not welcomed but whose presence is by now well understood. Even as we tell the stories of the difficulties and challenges in people's lives—tracking the twists, turns, tears and frustration so common among members of our community—our paper's reporters and photographers, and those who direct them, somehow find the strength to deal with their own struggles to rebuild and recover. ■

Stan Tiner, a 1986 Nieman Fellow, is executive editor of the Sun Herald in Biloxi/Gulfport, Mississippi.

² Excerpts from this conference can be read at www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/contents.html in our Spring 2007 issue.

The Changing Roles and Responses of Reporters

'... objectivity is a newsroom issue we've tackled head-on since the first few days after Katrina hit.'

By Kate Magandy

Hurricane Katrina changed our landscape, changed our lives and changed—in fact, it arguably improved—the way we practice journalism. Nearly everything we publish has been influenced by the storm. With the storm's two-year anniversary just behind us, its aftermath remains the biggest—and certainly the lengthiest—story any of us have ever tried to tell.

Despite post-Katrina's unrelenting dominance in our daily newsgathering, when visitors come to our newsroom they often ask whether we are "back to normal yet."

In many ways, this inquiry about our personal circumstance has morphed into an assumption common outside of our region that we are, in fact, back to normal. When representatives from Lloyd's of London came on a fact-finding tour of the Gulf Coast a few weeks ago, they were shocked that we weren't finished with the recovery and rebuilding process. They were absolutely stunned to find still hollowed-out buildings, vacant lots, and so much left to do.

Amid the devastation in which all of us still live are critical stories to tell. But since the hurricane's first-year anniversary readers have let us know they are "tired" of such stories. What they tell us they want are stories about progress, not what's still not done, though we receive plenty of calls asking us to do a story when debris or abandoned houses sit too long in their neighborhoods. And reporters also want to work on stories that mark progress



Sun Herald reporter Joshua Norman, left, hugging retired New York City firefighter Chris Edwards after spending the day with him. Emotions surfaced as journalists and sources shared the pain of this experience. *Photo by John Fitzhugh/Sun Herald.*

and show signs of our recovery. Images of row upon row of FEMA trailers and reporting on dangerous formaldehyde levels, while an important story, is not one we can keep giving our readers day after day. And these days, when we do FEMA trailer stories, we make sure to ask our photographers to look for new ways—different angles or fresh vantage points—to make an all-too-familiar visual image capture the eyes of our readers.

Recently, on a story we did about construction—one with a lot of different angles in a post-storm environment—our approach was to explore why and how building was slowed due to a cumbersome permitting process in our two large cities—Gulfport and Biloxi. Since many of our readers are feeling frustrated by this process, too, our story was well received. And our photographers thought long and hard about how to best tell the visual story before deciding on a building site with

no one present and very little work completed.

Heading now into our third year of tracking the various directions in which the Katrina story ebbs and flows, we try to focus on stories in which our reporting will make a difference in the lives of our readers. Often this comes in the form of follow-the-recovery-money stories—such as paying a lot of attention to the grants being received and appropriations from Congress. Or it comes as watchdog stories, such as those investigating fraud or those in which our reporters keep a watchful eye on city council meetings when SmartCode [a new approach to zoning] or Advisory Base Flood Elevations (ABFEs) are discussed and adopted, so that people can rebuild homes and know what will be required to insure them.

Angles and questions our reporters pursue include the following:

Angles and questions our reporters pursue include the following:

- What is being done—or not being done—to help community residents recover and move past the damage done by the storm?
- Is a community embracing SmartCode? If not, what does this mean for businesses and residential areas in terms of rebuilding?
- Will city councils in different communities adopt ABFEs?
- Are water and sewer lines being replaced so that people can rebuild their businesses and homes?
- Is money set aside for these purposes being spent appropriately?

Our newspaper's watchdog role, in particular, has increased exponentially. Our reporter, Anita Lee, has been dogged in pursuing stories about insurance—arguably the topic of greatest interest for many of our readers. Her stories have carefully chronicled an insurance company's plan to change their protocol for assessing and paying claims based on wind vs. water. It was Lee's reporting that let our readers know that despite help from the state legislature, a new policy for wind damage would cost about \$5,000 annually for a \$250,000 house—a huge increase from what residents had paid before Katrina—and that makes rebuilding a difficult decision for many.

We know, too, that we can't just write "process" stories or inform readers about government action or inattention. People need to see themselves and their neighbors' lives in our daily coverage, as well as hear about the thousands of volunteers who've come to help them rebuild. These everyday stories—such as the one we recently published about a couple who is raising vegetables and selling them at a roadside stand—are reminders that we haven't forgotten this is a community. It is ordinariness and optimism; the story said to our readers, "We're going to be OK."

Responding to Charges of Biased Reporting

Once the national media left Mississippi several weeks after Katrina roared through, those of us left came to understand—more than we did before—the invaluable role that daily journalism must play in this recovery effort. But the dominant question, even now, is how we report on our community with a staff whose lives are as affected by the storm as those of our readers. This has meant that objectivity is a newsroom issue we've tackled head-on since the first few days after Katrina hit. Everyone at the paper—editors and reporters included—have insurance issues and housing problems, transportation challenges and medical needs. One reporter lost a member of her family in the storm. Name a circumstance

and someone in our newsroom has experienced it. As a result, editors didn't even try to tell reporters or photographers to put aside their lives to tell these stories. Instead, we asked for fairness and balance in the reporting they brought us, and we reminded ourselves to look even harder than we normally do for evidence of any bias that a reporter might inadvertently bring to the piece.

Since Katrina, we've done this by carefully matching reporters with stories that they have the skills needed to tell. (Those beats and stories requiring a watchdog approach, for example, are given to those whose investigative abilities are strong.) And we constantly converse with them as they report and are diligent in the editing process to make certain—as best we can—that what we publish is a fair representation of what our reporters have been able to learn. Editors also check editors in much the same way—an acknowledgment that we are not immune from the possibility that our personal situation might taint decisions about the stories we assign and approaches we could advise our reporters to take.

Getting this formula to work as well as it can is a daily exercise, one still in progress. In the insurance industry, there are those who don't find our reporting "objective," pointing out that our beat reporter has insurance issues since she lost her house in the storm. (The insurance industry might not like our stories, but its representatives have yet to tell us that they aren't accurate.) This assertion of bias has been raised when local agents talk with customers about their policies, from corporate officers on editorial boards, and in comments made to other journalists. We've heard this charge raised in our Sound Off line, an anonymous call-in line that allows readers to bring up subjects or offer news tips. (Others in the business have admitted that our reporter presented fairly their side of the issue.) We publish a sampling of these comments each day.

We believe Lee's reporting about this incendiary issue of insurance has been abundantly fair. It's certainly won her the respect of our readers and her

newsroom peers and even from some in the insurance industry. Yet these criticisms are what she constantly deals with as part of her beat.

Our executive editor, Stan Tiner, said early on that in the post-Katrina world "every story is a business story" as the Gulf Coast recovers from the storm. That's turned out to be true, but I'd add another newsroom maxim that "nearly every story is a post-Katrina story." Even routine coverage of city council and board of supervisors meetings, the business council, and gaming commission has the undercurrent of recovery running through it. Planning and zoning board meetings—once the purview of only a few civic-minded individuals—are now events of great community interest; the Sun Herald devotes a lot more attention to these deliberations than we did before the storm. Our reporters know more about SmartCode as a way to rebuild a community than we ever thought possible. They know how to read detailed insurance policy clauses and calculate bridge spans and flood elevations and, as a result, so do our readers.

Before August 29, 2005, many of our older readers measured their lives by what happened before and after Hurricane Camille, which hit in mid-August of 1969. Katrina is this generation's Camille, only more so. And so as we adjust our coverage—and the work needed to accomplish it—we need to be sensitive to the trauma that all of us in the newsroom have also experienced in our personal lives. As editors, we have accommodated reporters and photographers as they have had to take time away from their jobs to deal with insurance adjusters, contractors, medical needs, permit offices, and dozens of other unexpected situations.

Just as the rest of the community tries to recover—and sometimes looks to our newspaper for help in doing so—we, too, cope with our recovery while finding fresh ways to respond to the community's reliance on us. ■

Kate Magandy is city editor of the Sun Herald in Biloxi/Gulfport, Mississippi.

AN ESSAY IN WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Reminding Readers of What Is No Longer There

By John Fitzhugh

Newspaper photojournalism has immediacy in its impact and power in its ability to quickly tell the story of the day. Yet few daily images end up having a lasting impact in documenting a community's history. Working as a photographer in South Mississippi for the past 20 years, I've had the rare opportunity to visually chronicle the changing contours of this region, not once but four times, and still counting. The most comprehensive of these efforts—and the one appreciated most by Sun Herald readers—is the Sun Herald's "Hurricane Katrina: Before and After" series.

Like then-and-now nature photographs certifying a glacier's retreat, our comparative images render visual what memory itself cannot be relied upon to recall. By returning to places we'd photographed before Hurricane Katrina—to a street scene, a building, or a house—we can show the change in ways no contemporary photograph of debris piles can do. Doing this retrieves memories of the fierce winds and water that forever altered our landscape, but it also rekindles associations with what once was so familiar.

In most cases after Katrina all that was left was an empty slab. When we published these photos each pairing was accompanied by a short story detailing the human experience wedded to the structure. Most of the writing and research was done by Sun Herald feature writer Kat Bergeron, who was the perfect writer for the project because of her knowledge of South Mississippi history and her natural empathy for the subject. She, too, lost her house to Katrina.

The series had been conceived as an effort simply to document the destruction of a major hurricane. It was inspired by work done in 1969 by then-Daily Herald photographers showing Biloxi before and again after Hurricane Camille, which swept across South Mississippi with great ferocity. In my years of culling through file photographs for our annual anniversary

a survey as I should have, but then I didn't expect the project to grow into what it became.

During two decades of documenting the changing face of South Mississippi, I have gotten better at shooting photos as historical documents. When dockside gambling was approved by the Mississippi legislature in 1990, I photographed the areas of Harrison and Hancock counties that were zoned for gambling with the intent of using them down the road to show the changes of the areas. This was the first project I did showing South Mississippi's physical changes.

Five years later, once these new venues were built, the place was so dramatically reconfigured that there was no way to match the earlier images to the later ones. The landscapes where the old shrimp and oyster factories, docks and half-sunk boats had been were now overwhelmed by massive casino developments that I had not envisioned. While the older images are an effective documentation of what the area looked like, the side-by-side approach lacked a broader perspective that allowed for easy comparison. In retrospect, the landscape change wrought by casino development was in some ways more dramatic than Katrina's.

With this in mind, on the next project of this kind—the Katrina "Before and After" series—I was careful to use landmarks more effectively as markers. For example, I took advantage of casino parking garages that provided both a high vista from which to shoot as well as sites I felt confident would withstand a hurricane's fury. This way

Like then-and-now nature photographs certifying a glacier's retreat, our comparative images render visual what memory itself cannot be relied upon to recall.

By returning to places we'd photographed before Hurricane Katrina—to a street scene, a building, or a house—we can show the change in ways no contemporary photograph of debris piles can do.

coverage of Camille—that had long been our region's benchmark event—I was struck by simple street scenes that were carefully matched up with "after" photos.

I wanted to be prepared to create such a document on South Mississippi when the next big hurricane hit. I began shooting specifically for the project as Hurricane Ivan approached in September 2004. That storm turned away, but the need rose again in August of 2005 as Hurricane Katrina approached. In neither case did I do as extensive

I could return to shoot matching after-photos.

For all of us it became very easy to forget what things looked like before the storm. With five- to 10-foot-tall piles of debris lining the streets, the new bleak landscape became our only reference point. You could no longer turn at the IHOP to get to Milner Stadium, because the IHOP was gone. You would drive blocks past the intersection before you realized you had passed it. For miles there were, and still are, huge gashes in the landscape where buildings once stood and lives were lived.

Readers Respond

In this context, the "Before and After" series became hugely popular with our readers. It first ran October 16, 2005, six weeks after the storm. When I conceived the series, I assumed that it would run for a week or so and be finished. As things turned out, we finally stopped the daily series on the first anniversary of the storm after publishing more than 250 of these short features. And in time, the concept of turning the series into a book began to take shape. Volunteers who have come to help in the recovery have carried the book home to show what words can't describe. Since the local Barnes & Noble bookstore became the only retail outlet for the book, "Katrina: Before & After," it has been among their top five sellers every week.

After the hurricane, everywhere you went, survivors wanted to share their stories. The reporters and photographers who covered the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina became improvised therapists, providing a willing ear to listen and often open arms for a reassuring hug. Within days of this series' inception, readers began to send in their photos, asking that we include them in the series. Initially, the photos were unsolicited, but after a while we asked for submissions in the daily column. When the quality was good, we used many of the photos the readers sent us, accounting for up to half of the pictures we published in the series.

Both photos—before and after—arrived sometimes, but at other times I went out to shoot the "after" shot. One time I called a woman—with her submitted "before" photo in hand—who wanted advice on where to stand to shoot the "after" one. In time, I went out and shot photos of rebuilt homes and asked the owners to submit "after"

reminder of destruction. I will never forget the pleading of a coworker who had lost three houses in the storm and asked that we please put an end to the series. For him, it was too painful a reminder; he was ready to move on to the rebuilding phase of his life.

To respond to such pleadings that were echoed by others and to reflect the progress being made in the post-storm recovery, we introduced a modified version of the concept, "After and Now." In this iteration we matched before photos with photos of the Katrina-damaged property, making this the third changing-face community portrait that we've done. And it is more than just showing brick and mortar being raised. Since much of the progress of South Mississippi's recovery is being fueled by volunteer labor, this project has given us the opportunity to highlight the amazing generosity of the human spirit and the gracious thanks of those who have received that spirit.

There is also a fourth changing-face collection begun before Hurricane Katrina that has become accelerated in its wake. High-rise condominiums were never a part of the South Mississippi landscape until 2005. While high-rise hotels have been built as part of the casino developments, their locations were restricted. With the huge gashes of open land suddenly made available by Katrina, developers are sweeping in with grandiose plans to turn the coast into a copy of other waterfront communities.

Again, I am finding solid anchors to shoot from to document what we look like now. I do that so in 10 years we can look back and remember not only the scars left by Katrina but also a time when we looked up to see towering oak tree branches from the shade of their canopies, not down at them from penthouse balconies.

John Fitzhugh is a photographer at the Sun Herald in Biloxi/Gulfport, Mississippi.

Continued on next page.

Arround South Mississippi NEWSBRIEFS FROM STAFF AND CORRESPONDENTS AROUND SOUTH MISSISSIPPI WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2006

Hold on to for debris removal problem The Army Corps of Engineers... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup...

Heating oil in Jackson County... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup...

Grass Sprinkler get help with park... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup...

IN PASCAGOULA Deputies named about road drainage... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup...

BEFORE AND AFTER White Hall in Pass Christian... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup...

Trucks roadwork leading to pavement... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup...

IN BIENVILLE Fighters charged with accessory to murder... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup...

IN HARRISON COUNTY Low bid to remove razor wire to \$250,000... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup...

IN STONE COUNTY Voting machine... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup...

IN STONE COUNTY Voting machine... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup...

IN STONE COUNTY Voting machine... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup... JACKSON COUNTY 1-10 roadwork line closed for cleanup...



BEFORE: This photo shows one of the strips of U.S. Highway 90 in Biloxi, Mississippi that was filled with restaurants, hotels and other tourist attractions.



AFTER: The same stretch of U.S. Highway 90 in Biloxi taken four days after Hurricane Katrina.



NOW: Looking west from in front of the Treasure Bay Casino, this photo shows the remains of the Souvenir City building and the almost completed Ocean Club condominium building.

Photos and words by John Fitzbugh/Sun Herald.



BEFORE: Beachwalk condominiums in Long Beach, Mississippi.



AFTER: None of the structures at Beachwalk survived the force of Katrina.



NOW: Nine months later, condominiums are being rebuilt.

Photos and words by John Fitzhugh/Sun Herald.



BEFORE: Sherry and Kevin Webster's Queen Anne-style home, built in 1889 in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, dominated the block on North Beach Boulevard.



AFTER: Katrina destroyed the house that the Websters bought in 2000.

Photos and words by John Fitzbugh/Sun Herald.



BEFORE: A seaside restaurant overlooked the Long Beach Small Craft Harbor in Mississippi.



AFTER: Only the palm tree, which was used to anchor this photograph, remained. ■

Photos and words by John Fitzhugh/Sun Herald.

was months later that we learned that those troops were in fact temporarily assigned to Keesler as students and were on a tight training schedule. Their presence represented Keesler restoring at least part of its mission. What we saw as a negative—out of context due to the poor communications after the storm—was in fact a positive sign.

Be wary, too, of the extraordinary becoming routine. Just because daily contact causes you to become familiar with shattered lives and a littered landscape, do not allow that familiarity to deaden your senses to the outrageous and the exceptional. The outrageous: Katrina left us surrounded by rubble and consequently deadened our sensitivity to trash and litter. We took too long to distinguish between property owners legitimately waiting on debris removal contractors and property owners who simply did not care about the condition of their lots. The exceptional: We were, and continue to be, blessed with volunteers in our communities. While we can never say thank you enough, we have made many efforts to convey our gratitude.

If this sounds too humdrum for the institutional voice of your publication, I would suggest that no matter how reasonable and rational and erudite your editorials may once have seemed, anything that does not have a practical application appears pompous in print in the aftermath of genuine disaster and tragedy.

Luckily, pomposity wilts around port-a-potties. Port-a-potties? Yes, port-a-potties. Back in the days when there was no time for the editorial board to conduct its regular discussions, I soon discovered that I could touch base with the publisher about the next day's editorial as we were on the way to and from the long line of port-a-potties behind our building. This ar-

angement was not perfect, but then nothing else was, either.

Keeping Our Voice Vital

The Sun Herald never missed a day of publication due to Katrina because we had arranged to print the newspaper in Georgia and truck it to the Mississippi Gulf Coast. But this arrangement did not permit Editorial Page Editor Marie Harris and me to edit and design the opinion page. Not that there always was an entire page devoted solely to opinion. An editorial was usually the only opinion piece in the newspaper during those first weeks after the storm. It could land at the top, bottom or down the side of any page—including the front page on one occasion.

As the newspaper resumed a more familiar layout, it still took some time before the regular run of commentary returned to the opinion page. And we have yet to regain our old share of the news hole. But we cope and hope that egos—inside and out of the newsroom—will not get in the way.

Along the way, do not discount the need for the “stiff upper lip” editorial. It serves a legitimate need. Just don't overdo it. Don't demand too much flag-waving from people with broken

arms—or hearts. And don't underestimate the resilience of your readers. There is power in the printed word, and people will respond when your editorial voice is raised on their behalf.

One of the more difficult editorials in the aftermath of Katrina called on the mayor of one of the 11 cities that line the coast of Mississippi to resign. He simply was not up to the challenge of leading his community out of this disaster. Within days of the editorial, he announced he would step down. Many of his constituents quietly thanked us for providing the necessary nudge.

Of course, some people cannot be nudged—or even shoved—in the right direction. We view this year's statewide elections as our only relief from the deadheaded officials in control of Mississippi's Department of Transportation who are convinced there is no transportation problem that asphalt cannot solve. And it might take the next round of municipal elections (still two years away) to fill some city halls with the vision necessary to seize opportunities that rebuilding on this scale presents.

Within a week of Katrina, Ricky Mathews, the publisher of the Sun Herald, assembled a group of state and local officials from the public and

private sectors to help set a course for South Mississippi's recovery. The plans and possibilities that grew out of that gathering have helped set the agenda of the newspaper's editorials ever since.

We know that our editorial voice has been a steadfast part of the recovery conversation from the beginning. We hope that it will remain a trustworthy part of it until the end. ■

Tony Biffle is the associate editor of the Sun Herald in Biloxi/Gulfport, Mississippi.



Sun Herald Publisher Ricky Mathews holds a copy of the paper's December 14, 2005 edition, featuring a front-page editorial calling for action from the federal government to help the area recover. Legislation in Washington, D.C., was being held up by political wrangling. *Photo by John Fitzhugh/Sun Herald.*

Impossible to Ignore: A Mental Health Crisis Changes a Community and a Reporter's Focus

'Only after several months of covering these issues am I beginning to understand the scope and dimensions of the crisis.'

By Joshua Norman

To be stressed was an assumed state of being for most people on the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina. Yet it took everyone, journalists included, more than a year to recognize and deal with the fact that stress can mean more than just short tempers and upset stomachs. Over the long term stress can easily give rise to mental illnesses and physical debilitation. In disasters, unchecked stress can kill individuals and ruin a society.

The Sun Herald also figured that out slowly, but has ultimately responded by addressing the problem headlong. For five months this spring and summer, as the paper's first full-time health reporter, I wrote several stories focused almost exclusively on mental health, a topic rarely covered before Katrina arrived on our doorstep. Now on a fellowship for the Kaiser Family Foundation to cover mental health exclusively, the foundation also provided an intern so that comprehensive health coverage will continue to appear regularly in the Sun Herald.

It took us a while to get to that point, though. Our first storm-related mental health coverage surfaced only in brief mentions in stories often headed in a different direction. On September 13, 2005—about two weeks after the storm—in a column I wrote: "I am exhausted and it shows My vision is sometimes blurry. I lose stuff while just sitting at my desk. I tell the same story twice. Worst of all, I have locked my keys in my car twice in the last five days, having never done so before."

Stress was assumed to be natural and largely dealt with by way of more church attendance, better rest and, for some of us, more beer. But in reporting

across a range of stories, we started to notice that government leaders and others were behaving erratically, though everyone usually chalked it up to exhaustion. After a few months, as the ruined landscape we woke up to every day was almost surely the same the next, a general malaise settled in. Few in the newsroom had taken vacations and tempers were shorter and the desire to escape greater. I remember escaping once to a wedding in Vermont a few short months after the storm, and people there asked me if things were back to normal. They still aren't.

I wrote the paper's first article fully focused on long-term adverse mental health affects of disasters in January 2006. A local psychologist had held a conference for health care workers on mentally healing themselves, and here is some of what I reported to our readers: "Even five months later, the mental health issues for health care workers and mental health professionals have not improved dramatically. 'You don't cry during the week ... you cry during church,' said Karen Brassell, a social worker at Biloxi Regional Medical Center who stayed at the hospital during the storm. 'We are all affected by it. So many of our people lost everything. It's hard.'"

A short time after this article appeared we started to hear of people dying of debilitating mental health problems. The first of the so-called "Katrina suicides" began happening mostly in New Orleans but occasionally happened here in Mississippi. Domestic violence rates rose dramatically, as did the numbers of those seeking substance abuse help. "We believe that the victims of Hurricane Katrina will be

at an increased risk for mental health problems for many years to come," a doctoral student was quoted as saying in a May 2006 Associated Press story.

Moving to the Health Beat

Still, at the Sun Herald, our watchful eye was turned more on local governments and institutions as they tried to figure out day-to-day recovery issues. Our resources were thin not because of "cheap owners" but because the story of storm recovery was so profound on so many levels that there could never have been enough reporters to tell it in its entirety. I was covering Gulfport, the second largest town in Mississippi situated right on the Gulf Coast dealing with post-storm financial woes. While there was no doubt that traumatic stress had its effect on all levels of society at that point, our stories focused on what were probably the effects of mental health issues rather than the causes. It was an approach perhaps described best as "cover as cover can."

At the first year anniversary of Katrina, as suicides and domestic violence rates mounted, the academics arrived in droves to study mental health issues. Still, at best, our newspaper was only able to report on the growing mental health crisis in a cursory fashion. "Hurricane Katrina's hidden toll of suicides, suicide attempts, and cases of depression remains somewhat elusive, though some say the numbers are reaching alarming proportions," wrote our police reporter, Robin Fitzgerald, at that time. And when mental health issues surfaced—some might say boiled over—we dealt with them by relying on whatever reporter was closest to the

newsmaking situation.

It took until March 2007 before it became too obvious that more needed to be done. Then we were surprised to learn that the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University had been studying mental health issues with FEMA trailer dwellers when they released a devastating report on Mississippi's storm survivors and their mental deterioration. Among the worst of their findings was the conclusion that up to a third of the Mississippi Gulf Coast's children were experiencing storm-related mental disorders and that it was occurring here at a rate worse than in Louisiana. "To me, it's the most significant domestic crisis that we've seen in a very long time," said Dr. Irwin Redlener, founder of the Children's Health Fund and the report's principal architect.

Stan Tiner, the Sun Herald executive editor, was both shocked by the report's findings and upset that we had no idea it was coming. [See Tiner's article on page 39.] In response, he picked me out of the newsroom to seek out a Kaiser Media Fellowship and devote the majority of my attention not just to the plethora of mental health related issues but also to a floundering health care system in the least healthy state in the country. In the ensuing shuffle of reporters, some beats ceased being covered full time by an individual reporter, including at least one municipality.

My first real attempt to understand the big picture with posttrauma mental health issues was a result of my story on the Mailman report, which was largely a rewrite of what they wrote. Before I began my fellowship in September, I spent almost all of my reporting energy on policy issues because getting people to open up and talk about their traumatic stress is difficult, to say the least, and time consuming for sure. While working as a regular beat reporter, I simply did not have time to beg people



Over time, medical care for Hurricane Katrina survivors has become more difficult to find. Clive Squibb puts out the "closed" sign as one last client arrives at the D'Iberville Free Clinic. Squibb and his wife rely on donations to keep the clinic running. *Photo by John Fitzhugh/Sun Herald.*

to tell me about their issues.

Mental health is a subject full of negative stigma and misunderstanding in society at large. Southerners, perhaps more than others, still proclaim to see a bit of "weakness" in those who seek treatment for depression, and I am often told by treatment seekers that they will not go on the record because they are afraid of what people will think. I found, however, that from the beginning most mental health professionals and administrators were all too eager to talk because of how overlooked they feel their field to be.

Only after several months of covering these issues am I beginning to understand the scope and dimensions of the crisis. Many state mental health facilities were underfunded and overburdened before the storm even hit, since mental health is often the first health care service cut when funds are tight. Additionally, FEMA does not believe it is obligated to help local mental health systems in disaster zones like ours treat such disorders; instead it claims to be obligated just to diagnose them through what it terms "crisis counseling." In other words, they funded a mental health counseling system that essentially told the thousands who sought its services: "Yes, you're going crazy because of the

storm. Here's the number for an underresourced system of professionals who may not be able to give you the attention you need. Good luck!" And this dysfunctional system remains in place with no sign of changing to cope with future disasters. Yet the mental health crisis is huge, and its impact creeps into every aspect of life in this region.

During my fellowship, the work I do will continue to shine a spotlight on all of this. As a fellow, I am an unpaid employee of the Sun Herald, with a stipend paid by the Kaiser Family Foundation. This allows me to have my work appear

somewhat regularly in the Sun Herald, as relevant issues arise, and allows me to coordinate my reporting more easily with designers and photographers. And my stories, once published, can go out on the McClatchy newswire. This puts me in the enviable position of continuing to follow this story as my expertise about it increases and gives me the opportunity to follow these stories wherever they lead me, regardless of geography and time. I also get some time to think about the bigger picture, which is something there is scant time to do in the rush of daily reporting. If I write a story the Sun Herald cannot run, I also have the option—as freelancers do—of shopping it to other outlets, without having the worry of paying my bills. I also have the opportunity to ease the transition of a very qualified intern, Megha Satyanarayana, who will hopefully continue my efforts in making Mississippi's faltering health care system more answerable for its missteps.

What I want most of all to do while I have the relative luxury of time is develop human narratives, while still keeping my eye on mental health policy. There are only a few journalists who are able to devote themselves exclusively to mental health coverage—and fewer journalism outlets willing to maintain

a full-time beat on this topic. So I am excited to again step out of my comfort zone, as I did as a Yankee moving to Mississippi, and find my way in the dark on this poorly understood subject. There is a rich trove of information on post-

trauma mental health to be absorbed and shared. I just need to figure out how to make this topic compelling in ways that will engage more people in recognizing the dimensions and direction of this crisis. ■

Joshua Norman is the health beat reporter at the Sun Herald in Biloxi/Gulfport, Mississippi.

Katrina Fatigue: Listeners Say They've Heard Enough

'What we hear is not that it's time to stop our coverage of Katrina's aftermath: We hear that we need to do it better.'

By Susan Feeney

Robert Siegel, the host of NPR's "All Things Considered," had barely finished interviewing a New Orleans City Hall computer tech whose family lost five homes after Katrina when a Houston businessman called to offer his vacation home for them to live in. And every time host Michele Norris talks to a once and future resident of New Orleans East named Sharon White, listeners call to offer money or help. Same thing when Alix Spiegel profiled the Mattio family from the Lower Ninth Ward as they struggled to get out of a dangerous, crime-ridden FEMA motel in Baton Rouge.

We expect some listeners to grouse about our steadfast coverage of Iraq, the Middle East, and topics like Africa's intractable poverty. And in recent focus groups, our listeners have met—and exceeded—that expectation. During a focus group session in Raleigh, North Carolina, one listener tied together all these stories and Katrina with a big black bow. "I kind of always want the hope(ful) ones, but that's me," this listener told us that night. "I just kind of get depressed over the really sad news. Like Katrina stuff, I had to turn it off; I couldn't watch it anymore after a while."

A year earlier, after "All Things Considered" had broadcast a week of stories from New Orleans, David Dick of St. Louis e-mailed "All Things Considered" with this message:

"Pleeeeeeeeeeeeee," he wrote, using these 13 consecutive Es, "stop that constant New Orleans coverage." Dick described the coverage as "relentless," like "OJ and Monica and Michael Jackson" combined.

"Enough already," another listener wrote. "Nobody cares."

Well, those of us who work at NPR don't believe this. And we don't think all our big-hearted listeners have turned into jerks with hearts of stone. Not by a long shot. We continue to cover this story because we believe it is the right thing to do—journalistically and because we have a moral imperative to do so. But even our nonprofit, not-ratings-driven radio network has to listen when devoted listeners send us a message. What we hear is not that it's time to stop our coverage of Katrina's aftermath: We hear that we need to do it better.

One listener in Raleigh pointed the way, though NPR had already started to shift gears. "Sometimes when the stories are about things I've heard a lot already, it kind of—I'm just not that interested in it," this person said. "If I think it's something I already know or something I'm tired of, that's when I turn to music usually. But if it's kind of, if it's something different, or maybe it's the same thing about a different angle and it's clear it's a new angle right away, then to me it's a little bit more appealing."

So our job—as it's always been—is to entice people with compelling journalism. We have to find fresh ways to tell the story. Life is still remarkably hard for too many of our fellow citizens across the Gulf Coast from Jefferson Parish, Louisiana to Waveland, Mississippi and part of coastal Alabama. But coming up with innovative ways to cover it is also difficult. What's happened since Katrina is a big and very complicated story. Television, print and radio journalists have all struggled to convey the physical immensity of it. You still can drive for more than an hour around New Orleans without seeing more than scattered pockets of progress and hope amid a landscape of ruin.

Another challenge is telling a story that is often about inaction. Recovery is painfully slow. Local government still is failing its citizens. The state and federal governments never got their arms around the problems, and the levees—guess what?—aren't ready for another big storm.

With Katrina fatigue settling in, many Americans are tuning out. There is a sense among some across the country that things are fixed and life there is returning to "normal." How wrong this impression is. Follow the money to get a quick grasp of the tortoise-like pace of the rebuilding process. The Times-Picayune reported in midsummer that, of the \$2.7 billion ultimately expected to be spent on "permanent" post-Ka-

trina work in Louisiana, \$2.1 billion, or 78 percent, had been reviewed and approved by FEMA. But just \$532 million, or 20 percent, had been released by the state.

There's been another disconnect in the refusal by some people to accept the breadth of the government breakdown—on all levels. We just can't believe that our can-do country fell down so badly. America doesn't leave people on its streets without food or water for days. And it is hard for many of us to absorb the reality of findings such as when the Annals of Emergency Medicine reported that people in places Katrina visited are about 79 times more likely to attempt suicide than we are.

Those of us in the national news media have credibility problems of our own, of course. And since Katrina, our inattention to several important threads of this story has made these worse. After excellent national coverage of the storm and the levee breaks, we broke our collective promise to take on coverage of the stubborn issues of race and poverty that Katrina unmasked.¹ NPR, NBC News, CNN and The New York Times are among the news organizations that have stuck with the ongoing story. The ground they share is that in each news organization people who were there when the storm hit and the levees broke refused to let the story disappear. NBC's Brian Williams is one. Anderson Cooper another. Once it's in your blood, it's not possible to let it go—ratings be damned.

At NPR, we moved our Southern bureau chief from Atlanta to New Orleans. And at Katrina's two-year anniversary, we were about to sign a new, yearlong lease on a house for our office and reporter, who serve on month-long rotations. Our Atlanta-based reporter is among our staff committed to telling the story of Mississippi's recovery—including its struggles for affordable housing, quality mental health care, and security in future storms.

"This is one of the most important

The Friends of The Times-Picayune Relief Fund

Soon after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, Susan Feeney and three women friends who worked at The Times-Picayune in the 1980's started The Friends of The Times-Picayune Relief Fund to provide support to people in need who work at the paper. Feeney talked with Nieman Fellows in the spring of 2007 about the circumstances of families who the fund has helped. Just over \$300,000 has been raised. More information can be found at www.friendsofthetimespicayune.com/

We knew that newspaper employees needed money, so that's where we started, and there were about 150 employees and their families who signed up. It's at about 190 families now; several families have left, but what's most troubling to me is in even the last few weeks several more people said, "Can I still sign

up? I thought that my family could make it and we just can't." That tells you a lot: It doesn't go away. People thought, well, we have some insurance. But the insurance wasn't anywhere near enough. They are paying the mortgage on their old gutted house, paying the homeowner's insurance on that house that is totally unlivable. People continue to pay this because they'll never get another policy after they rebuild. So they're paying exorbitant rents somewhere else—the stresses are enormous. And there have been an incredible number of divorces and couples splitting, and there's a family now in which the guy's wife left with the kids because it's just too hard to live there. He has to keep his job and his health care benefits at the Picayune because he's dealing with depression. It's just enormous. The fallout does not end. ■

stories of our time," said David Sweeney, acting national editor at NPR. "It is a priority for our desk and the whole network. We see it as a solid, long-term commitment."

But we are trying new approaches. We're taking a step or two back and broadcasting more big-picture stories such as the status of mental health care in the region and personal profiles of the new generation of leaders emerging after the storm. We are doing fewer incremental stories about hearings and individual studies and reports. Through our coverage, we're trying to give listeners information they need to understand and evaluate the long-term impact on the city's people, politics and culture.

As hard as it is to tame this mammoth story—and it's one we'll be chasing for a generation or more—it has

another appeal. It has all the elements of the very best journalism—survival, heroism, reinvention, thievery, government ineptitude, choking bureaucracy, and failed politics. And through it all we hear the drumbeat of real human drama. Futures are at stake.

Now those sound like compelling stories even a focus group could love. ■

Susan Feeney is senior editor for planning at NPR's "All Things Considered" and a former Times-Picayune reporter who founded The Friends of The Times-Picayune. See box, above.

¹ See Nieman Reports, Spring 2006, "What Katrina Revealed, Will Journalist Now Cover?" at www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/contents.html

On-the-Ground Reporting: Why It Matters

‘... sometimes editors—and not just reporters—need to walk in the steps of the people they cover.’

By Liz Szabo

On a damp, drizzly January day, more than a year after Katrina destroyed much of New Orleans, I stood with 16 of my colleagues from the USA Today newsroom in the front yard of what used to be Times-Picayune columnist Jarvis DeBerry's home in the city's Gentilly neighborhood. His house was still painted with a bright yellow X and some scrawled shorthand left by rescue and recovery crews that read “9/10, CA3, WINDOW, 0.” The message told other rescuers that his home had been inspected by a crew from California, who entered through the window on September 10th, and found no one dead. When DeBerry saw his home for the first time after the storm, he wondered why it looked like the search team had climbed a ladder to leave their mark just under the peak of the roof. A friend reminded him that the rescue crews, floating eight feet above ground, were writing at eye level.

To stand under his home's watermark was to understand in a way I hadn't before the destructive power of the murky brown water that spilled across the city in the wake of Katrina. Moments such as this one left a powerful impression on all of us who'd come here at the urging of our paper's editor, Ken Paulson, and what we saw and heard on our trip to New Orleans and the Mississippi Gulf Coast has resulted in changes in how our newsroom approaches coverage of this evolving story.

Seeing Is Understanding

In the fall of 2006, at a board meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), Stan Tiner, executive editor of the Sun Herald in Biloxi/Gulfport, Mississippi, urged fellow editors

to come to the areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina. [See article by Tiner on page 39.] After Paulson attended The Associated Press Managing Editors meeting in New Orleans in October of that year—and had a chance to see what the city was enduring—he came back convinced that his paper needed to find better ways to tell this story. For that to happen he realized that editors from the paper needed to go there so they could grasp the story's depth and dimensions.

Three months later, Paulson returned to Louisiana and Mississippi with a delegation representing the newspaper: its publisher, Craig Moon; top editors from news, opinion, business, design and usatoday.com, as well as editors who oversee special projects and the front page. In designing the trip, Paulson wanted to ensure buy-in from every department, including the newspaper's corporate side. He invited photographers, online artists and videographers, as well, so the paper could tell the story of Katrina with compelling images, both online and in print. Although I cover medicine, I represented the paper's entire Life department. Following our trip I filed several religion stories, for example, looking at the role of faith-based volunteers in the rebuilding effort, as well as the relationship between faith and psychological resilience after tragedy.

The Times-Picayune and the Sun Herald greeted us with equally large numbers of staff.

In both areas, much of the debris—from toppled homes to overturned cars, discarded refrigerators, even rusty barges carried far inland—has been hauled away. But in doing so, the clean-up crews scraped bare entire neighborhoods. In New Orleans's Lower Ninth Ward, whole blocks have

been obliterated, with nothing left but square outlines that were once foundations. On some lots, two or three squat concrete steps are all that remain of front porches.

Most of us hadn't visited the Gulf Coast since the storm. Standing amidst Katrina's destruction—even for just two days—gave us an appreciation of what residents had gone through. All that we learned from our host journalists gave us a better sense of why the region's recovery was progressing so slowly. DeBerry is still waiting on a buy-out offer from the state so he can sell his house and begin again. Until then, he's paying a mortgage for an empty home, plus sky-high rent for an apartment. [See DeBerry's story on page 32.]

“The trip was a valuable reminder that sometimes editors—and not just reporters—need to walk in the steps of the people they cover,” Paulson says. “We returned from New Orleans and Biloxi with a renewed commitment to the story.”

A Substantial Commitment

Like all news outlets, our paper covered the storm's destruction and did regular reports on the region's progress. Visiting Louisiana and Mississippi, however, persuaded the newsroom leadership to make a far more substantial commitment. The paper began sending more staff to the area, filing stories under the title “Water Mark: Tracking Recovery on the Gulf Coast.” In the first five months after our January visit, USA Today published 45 staff-written reports and related letters—more than twice the number published in the five months before the trip and far more than most newspapers. Reporters from nearly every beat in the newsroom have

since visited the Gulf Coast, covering subjects such as the difficult progress of the region's schools, New Orleans' escalating crime rate, and the plight of children in foster care who were dislocated once again by the storm.

One of our most seasoned reporters, former Baghdad correspondent Rick Jarvis (who was part of an investigative team at The Miami Herald that won a Pulitzer in 1999), is the new head of our New Orleans bureau, which was created after the storm. Among the reporters to travel to New Orleans has been Kevin Johnson, who covers national law enforcement and the U.S. Justice Department. "I've been down there about six times, including a period immediately following the storm, and I still don't think I have a full appreciation of the damage and its consequences," Johnson says. "There is no way to chronicle the dysfunction caused or exacerbated by Katrina on the telephone. You have to be there. ... Almost two years after the storm, the police department still is working out of trailers. Some district head-

quarters have no plumbing and no bathrooms. I remember visiting a few battered police stations in Baghdad a few years ago. A few weeks ago, some of the New Orleans's districts were in no better shape. A high-ranking police official said that in one district outfitted with portable toilets, the officers and staff take up collections to have them drained. Evidence gathered from crime scenes is now being stored in the trailer of an 18-wheeler."

News reporter Brad Heath visited New Orleans for the first time since Katrina in December 2006 and has returned twice since then. "I don't think I could have written about the silence in the Lower Ninth without hearing it for myself," Heath says. "I interviewed one man in Gentilly who was working to rebuild his house and noticed he had buckets of empty beer cans outside his FEMA trailer. He was waiting for a long-delayed check from the government and this [the rebate from the beer cans] was his rebuilding fund. That's not something you get over the phone. To me, it's the difference

between reciting a story for our readers and helping them experience it. ... Being there helped me get perspective on the story. It [usually] made it easier to find sources—the man who lives next to a house that was just knocked down or near the marsh that's disappeared into open water."

During our January trip, and in subsequent visits, residents let us know how happy they are that the country hasn't forgotten about them. Stan Tiner spoke about the lasting impact of our delegation's visit at ASNE's 2007 Small Newspaper luncheon in April as he heaped praise on Paulson for taking the important step of bringing many in his newsroom to the frontlines of the story. Our visit, he says, shows the difference that a single editor can make after getting his "boots on the ground." He also expressed gratitude that Paulson's editors and reporters "have not left us since." ■

Liz Szabo covers medicine for USA Today. Research librarian Susan O'Brian contributed to this report.

Investigating What Went Wrong and Why

'As it turns out, many of the systemic failures that plagued the Gulf Coast during and after Katrina should have been predicted ...'

By Jenni Bergal

When the Center for Public Integrity hired me in November 2005, the mission was clear: to conduct an in-depth journalistic probe into one of the worst natural disasters in U.S. history, Hurricane Katrina. Some in the national media, including The New York Times and CNN, were doing excellent on-the-ground reporting, as were many small and midsized papers, especially The Times-Picayune in New Orleans and the Sun Herald in Biloxi/Gulfport, Mississippi. What this opportunity allowed for was several experienced reporters to examine the disaster not

As many news organizations reduce or eliminate investigative staffs, this collaborative model of team reporting ... is a way for the press to continue its essential watchdog role.

only in terms of what went wrong, but to ask why, and to ask whether aspects of what happened here—as a result of the storm and then during the long recovery from it—could happen again somewhere else.

Our findings would be published in a book entitled "City Adrift: New Orleans Before and After Katrina," divided into specific subject areas—environment, health care, housing and other critical topics. Its focus would be solely on New Orleans, a great American city that had been nearly destroyed. As an investigative journalist, I knew we'd want to rely on audits of government

programs, congressional reports, and other public records so decision-making and mistakes made could be melded into the broader context of our storytelling. As it turns out, many of the systemic failures that plagued the Gulf Coast during and after Katrina should have been predicted; there is no shortage of reports and audits and testimony about similar breakdowns and failures by government agencies after previous disasters in other parts of the country.

My primary task was to find reporters either with specific expertise we'd need or with lots of experience in investigative journalism. I turned to a network of colleagues and peers to come up with some names, and in the end I hired five journalists to work on this project. The first one I brought on board was John McQuaid, a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter who had just taken a buyout from The Times-Picayune. He was the coauthor of a series in 2002 that predicted a Katrina-type storm would hit New Orleans. And he knew a lot about the Army Corps of Engineers and its history. He was the perfect person to write a chapter about the levees.

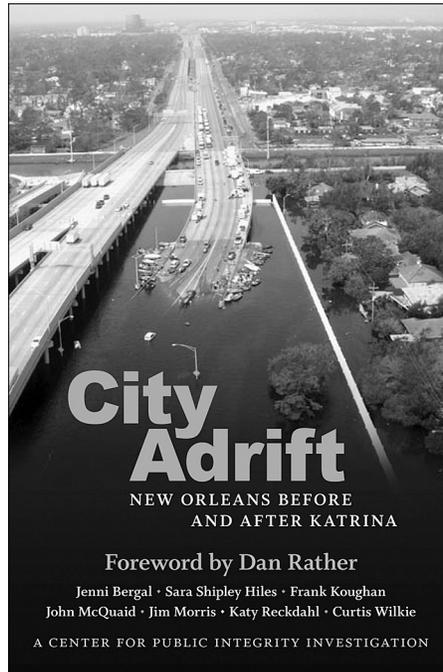
We also hired Frank Koughan, a freelancer who had spent eight years as an associate producer for CBS News's "60 Minutes." While he wasn't a print journalist, he knew a lot about investigative reporting and would be great at humanizing the story because of his TV background. He used those skills to write eloquently about housing and insurance.

We also were fortunate to bring Curtis Wilkie to the team. He was a long-time national political reporter for The Boston Globe and had written books. As a Mississippi native who lived part-time in the French Quarter, he understood New Orleans and Louisiana politics and was able to use his vast knowledge to write about it.

As I pulled together my team of reporters, I decided I wanted to report as well. With my background as an investigative health care reporter I examined the collapse of the health care system in New Orleans. I paid particular attention to the failure of

the National Disaster Medical System, a federal program that is designed to swoop in and help triage and evacuate sick and injured people during a disaster when local health officials can't. After Katrina, it didn't work as it should have.

All of these reporters went to New Orleans. I didn't just want this book to



end up a dull treatise filled with facts and figures, missing the human element. The only way to get a real sense of what happened was to be there, doing what reporters do. I also wanted this book to go beyond many of the stories being told by newspapers and broadcast media. We had the luxury of time and resources to take a step back and closely examine whether decades of ineptitude or inertia by local, state and federal government and private agencies had contributed to the failures in New Orleans.

As each journalist submitted a chapter, I edited it and passed it on to Diane Fancher, the center's editorial director, who then did a final edit. She also served as a valued sounding board for me throughout the process. When one reporter had trouble getting information from city officials, she and I discussed whether he should persist in

this hunt or move on. (When we found out that the chaos at city hall was not dissipating, we advised him to move on.) Another of our journalists had given birth to her son in a New Orleans hospital the day before Katrina struck. Should she include it in her chapter? We decided no, since it was not relevant to our investigative mission.

Perhaps our greatest challenge was figuring out how these disparate chapters would flow. Journalists had written in their own style and done so without conferring with each other. But there was some common ground: In advance of writing, I'd let each of them know that I wanted stories from New Orleans' residents to be woven throughout their chapter and, indeed, as I read the submissions, such stories were there. I'd also asked the authors to put their findings in an historic context to show that warning signs were apparent, but too often ignored, before Katrina struck.

Having these elements present in each chapter helped, but the fit wasn't always easy, and a few nips and tucks—a few tweaks on beginnings and endings—were necessary to make it all work to tell a coherent story.

Readers have responded well to the mixture of human drama and weighty investigative findings. As many news organizations reduce or eliminate investigative staffs, this collaborative model of team reporting—with its findings being published as a book—is a way for the press to continue its essential watchdog role. In hiring a team of experienced reporters and having them tackle specific topics, we produced a relevant, serious and much-needed investigation. We hope our reporting can help prevent the kind of chaos that ensued in New Orleans and that continues to haunt its recovery. ■

Jenni Bergal supervised, edited and coauthored "City Adrift: New Orleans Before and After Katrina," published by Louisiana State University Press in June 2007, in her role as project manager at the Center for Public Integrity, an investigative journalism organization in Washington, D.C..

Teaching Journalism in the Digital Age

In our Winter 2006 issue, *Goodbye Gutenberg*, journalists described the ways in which digital technology affects their work, and adjustments being made within newsrooms were front and center. What wasn't told, however, was how those who want to be journalists are being educated and trained to take on vastly different roles than those once assumed—or studied about—by faculty now teaching them. In this issue journalism educators write about what is happening—and what needs to happen—in classrooms to prepare future journalists for the demands of the digital age.

Dianne Lynch, who will become dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California at Berkeley in January, sees in students entering college that “a childhood lived as much online as off” has given them the necessary building blocks “to be journalists in a digital age.” She writes about a pilot project of “innovation incubators” at seven journalism schools where ideas generated by students and faculty mentors will be transferred “from the academy to a news industry.” In doing this, she says, “we’ll have reexamined the very nature of journalism education in a participatory media culture.”

At Kent State University, **Karl Idsvoog**, an assistant professor of journalism, writes that the j-school recently moved into “a new building with wireless Internet, high-speed video servers, and a converged newsroom.” Yet the long-standing “imbalance of university requirements vs. faculty relevance [that] has always been a part of journalism school’s uneasy fit inside the academy” continues to pose the greatest challenge. In this digital era, he argues, “the fit isn’t just uneasy, it’s untenable.” As former *Newsday* Editor **Howard Schneider** went about designing a new approach to teaching journalism as the incoming dean of the School of Journalism at Stony Brook University, he realized that it would not be enough to focus academically on only those who want to become journalists. His goal—made possible with a News Literacy class open to all students—is to also educate consumers of news to “differentiate between raw, unmediated information coursing through the Internet and independent, verified journalism.” **Kim Pearson**, an associate professor of English and interactive media at The College of New Jersey, also addresses this issue of how best to “promote news literacy among children who spend increasing amounts of their time finding and sharing information online.” She offers suggestions of ways to engage middle- and high-school students through such groundbreaking approaches as the use of “database-driven presentations” in place of hard-news storytelling.

With a new content management system in place, **Nicholas Lemann**, dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University, describes the ripple effect that technological change is having as class-based Web sites proliferate. “As much as we groan at budget time over how heavily we are investing in technology,” Lemann writes, “we can afford to get ourselves much closer to professional levels of production on the Web than we can in the print or broadcast media.” As dean of the City University of New York Graduate School of Journalism, which opened in the fall of 2006, **Stephen Shepard** explains why students “choose a media track—print, broadcast or interactive” on which to focus, and content specialties are taught, while all students are “required to do assignments across media platforms.” **Jean Folkerts**, dean of the University

of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Journalism, seeks out alumni “to learn what graduating students need to know.” As changes in teaching respond to what’s taking place on the Web and in newsrooms, Folkerts is mindful that “establishing trust with readers and viewers is as important in digital journalism as it was before the telegraph was invented.”

After 13 years as an editor at The New York Times, the syllabus **Mark J. Prendergast** prepared for his journalism students at the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University “overlaid traditional journalistic values onto new-media realities of the sort I had encountered on the Times Continuous News Desk, a pioneering bridge between the paper’s newsroom and its Web site.” Photographer **Lester Sloan** looks at lessons of visual storytelling being taught in journalism schools as he contemplates the changing demands that digital media place on photojournalists. “One inescapable challenge visual journalists will have is to simply keep up with not only the rapidly changing tools of their craft but also the demands of the industry,” he writes. In an article adapted from his book “The Big Picture: Why Democracies Need Journalistic Excellence,” **Jeffrey Scheuer** suggests that “it will require a paradigm shift to see journalism and education as tap-roots of the same democratic tree and part of an information environment cohabited by citizens, journalists and scholars. It will mean relaxing the boundaries, and perhaps the very definitions, of academic and journalistic institutions.”

When **Lou Ureneck**, chairman of the journalism department at Boston University, talked with a colleague from the economics department about how journalism is taught, he emphasized not the new technologies but the “journalistic value system” with idealism and skepticism at its core. These values and others, he writes, “are what make someone a good journalist, and they are what lift this work above the trivial.” **Mike McKean**, who is department chair of the convergence journalism faculty at the Missouri School of Journalism, begins with the declaration that “convergence journalism, as we teach it at Missouri, is more about new attitudes than new skills.” He includes among these attitudes the “need to be humble in the face of overwhelming social changes made possible by digital media.” **Jerome Aumente**, professor emeritus at Rutgers, contends that “the key word that encompasses these changes in the classroom is ‘interdisciplinary.’” Given his experience at Rutgers with instituting a multidisciplinary approach, Aumente talks about the value of such an integrated effort in teaching journalism in a time of digital change.

Guillermo Franco, content manager of new media at Casa Editorial El Tiempo and a professor in postgraduate journalism programs in Bogota, Colombia, worries that at a time when online journalism is so prevalent, too many Latin American journalism schools employ the “strategy of using patches, of adding an elective here and an elective there.” “Instead,” he argues, “entire programs must be completely redesigned” so that the next generation won’t be reminded “of how bonded we are to the old way of doing things.” **Michele McLellan** and **Tim Porter**, coauthors of “News, Improved: How America’s Newsrooms Are Learning to Change,” point out that “only a third of news organizations increased their training budgets in the past five years Yet nine in 10 journalists say they need more training and nine in 10 news executives agree.” They also highlight examples of news organizations in which newsroom training has been implemented and the impact these initiatives have had. ■

Incubating Innovation at Journalism Schools

With the online generation entering college, some key ingredients for new ways of practicing journalism are arriving with them.

By Dianne Lynch

In 2001, as a columnist for ABC-News.com, I interviewed a 13-year-old girl whose AOL screen name was UWannaLoveMe7. I asked the obvious question: Why would a nice girl like her adopt a screen name like that? “I have different screen names for when I am feeling different ways,” she explained. “I use that one when I want more attention.” I called UWannaLoveMe7’s mother, who was unaware that people employ pseudonyms online or that her daughter was trolling virtual space in search of “more attention.” “My Melissa?” she squeaked. “UWannaLoveMe7? Are you sure?”

That was five years ago, an eon in Internet time. Since then, I’ve devoted much of my professional life to exploring the experiences and identity development of kids in virtual spaces. UWannaLoveMe7, a member of the first generation of digital natives, spent hers growing up in a virtual world.

That world changed permanently the year she was born, the same year that CERN¹ and Tim Berners-Lee launched the World Wide Web. She and her peers were fourth-graders when Shawn Fanning’s Napster upended our notions of copyright and intellectual property; fifth-graders when Wikipedia replaced the Encyclopædia Britannica as the source of universal knowledge, and high-school juniors when YouTube became the site of all-things-video and MySpace the glorification of all-things-me.

This fall, UWannaLoveMe7 and her friends will arrive on our college

campuses. They’ll come to us as eager as freshmen always are. But it’s a watershed, nonetheless, one as worthy of note as the relative trends in their collective SAT scores and high school GPAs. For these are the kids who grew up online, whose childhoods evolved in a virtual universe as interactive and age-blind as it was dynamic and immediate. That experience exposed them early to pornographic images and sexual advances.

It also prepared them to be journalists in a digital age.

Participatory Culture and Journalism Education

Henry Jenkins at MIT has proposed a new definition of literacy appropriate to our “participatory culture.” It privileges play, negotiation, transmedia navigation, and collective intelligences over reading, writing, arithmetic and iconic deconstruction. In fact, it captures precisely the characteristics of our class of 2011:

- They’re information junkies who define knowledge production in terms of access rather than storage.
- They’re multitaskers who process input at broadband speed, who assume that content morphs easily from one medium or platform to another, and who are certain—always—that the answer is out there somewhere, waiting to be discovered. By them.
- They’re bricoleurs,² who grew up

playing with technology (and are perplexed, therefore, by journalism education’s collective obsession with the tools of media production: If you need to learn Photoshop, you learn Photoshop. What’s the big deal?).

- Many are gamers, masters of collaborative engagement and targeted outcomes; all have performed multiple identities in virtual spaces and understand intuitively how to tailor a message to a particular audience.

Contrary to our persistent (and self-righteous) complaint that they cannot discern credible from incredible content, they value truth and accuracy—and a decade of virtual experience has produced in them the ability to recognize both. And they operate from a set of assumptions that defies the premises of our journalism schools and the profession it serves: In the worlds they inhabit, online and off, content is free, knowledge production is collaborative, and media are participatory.

That means they’ll listen to us talk about intellectual property, the authority of the “professional” journalist (not to mention the professional faculty member), and the inherent credibility or value of longstanding journalism traditions and structures (like the inverted pyramid, for example, or newsrooms). They may even nod and take notes (it could be on the test). But their experience—as valid and

¹ The European Organization for Nuclear Research.

² As defined on Wikipedia, bricoleurs are people who engage in a design approach called bricolage, meaning that they invent their own strategies for using existing materials in creative, resourceful and original ways.

real as our own—instructs them that such ideas are historical artifacts of a pre-Web culture, leftovers from how things used to be.

And they are certain (and right) that that's not how things are anymore.

Emergent Innovation

About 18 months ago, a friend of mine, the executive vice president of one of the country's largest media companies, was describing his frustration with corporate culture. "After you've been in the corporate environment for more than six months, it's impossible to have an original idea," he told me. "So we all end up just talking to ourselves, telling each other what we want to hear."

It reminded me of my colleagues in journalism education during the past few years, all struggling to figure out how we're going to inject convergence and "new media"—whatever that means—into curricula that haven't changed all that much since pre-cable TV.

We've done, in good faith, what our own experience tells us we should do: We've set up committees and attended workshops. We've benchmarked the programs that looked like they knew what they were doing (even as they benchmarked us). And we've earnestly debated the banal: Are bloggers journalists? (Answer: When they're doing journalism.) Will they replace "real" journalists? (Answer: No.) Should we incorporate "new media" into all of our courses or create a "new media" requirement for all students? (Yes. Both.) And we have drummed into our students—with an archaic resolve—that there is no moral difference between sharing a music file and shoplifting a CD. (Is it possible we believe that? Really?)

We've been talking in circles. Just like our corporate counterparts.

But there is one significant differ-

ence: Every fall, we enjoy the privilege of newness. Millions of first-year students arrive on our collective doorstep, perpetually 18. And increasingly, those newbies will be culturally literate as Jenkins defines the term, multitasking bricoleurs armed with the confidence of youth and the perspective of a childhood lived as much online as off. That represents a whole slate of challenges—to our egos, to our pedagogy, to the core mission of the academy—which we have not yet begun to anticipate. But in an era of extraordinary chaos and unpredictable change, that also

In the worlds they [the students] inhabit, online and off, content is free, knowledge production is collaborative, and media are participatory.

may be among the greatest and most undervalued assets we have.

A corporate colleague and I decided to test that theory, to leverage that creative capital in a process of open innovation that would produce executable results. Last summer, we piloted an innovation incubator with six students at Ithaca College. We worked with his executive team, which established the deadlines and served as our client. And we gave the group a single instruction: Create something new in the online travel market.

That was it. No rules. No grades. No limits. No answers. It took six weeks, and it challenged the students in ways they didn't expect; in fact, they were furious when we refused to set parameters, answer questions, or provide direction (that's what faculty do, isn't it? Well, isn't it?) It was an open playing field and, at the end of the project, they hit it out of the park.

Now we've expanded the model. Under a grant from the Knight Foun-

dation's News Challenge project, seven journalism schools across the country are collaborating on a network of innovation incubators.³ We're testing John Seely Brown and John Hagel's notions of productive open innovation: big ideas, firm deadlines, and clear outcomes.

And the project's faculty mentors are tracking the processes through which students collaborate and generate original ideas as a baseline for future research and model development. By spring, we'll have produced three "marketable" projects, field-tested them with media partners, and piloted a system for transferring intellectual innovation and creative capital from the academy to a news industry desperately in need of both. And just as important, we'll have reexamined the very nature of journalism education in a participatory media culture.

Following the Leaders

That process must begin with an admission that cheap paper—no matter how familiar—is a lousy platform for content delivery. That doesn't mean journalism is irrelevant; it just means we've stopped reading newspapers. And contrary to the handwringing going on in our newsrooms and our classrooms, that's the result not of cultural crisis but of a failing business model. It's also a wake-up call for American journalism education, a signal that our own future depends entirely upon our willingness to move beyond the tools of our trade and the practices of our past.

For starters, we need to stop teaching software (except, perhaps, to each other). Our students will come to us knowing it, or knowing they can learn it when they need to. We need to stop conflating the newspaper industry with journalism itself. When we see yet another study about how kids

³ The participating schools are: Michigan State, University of Kansas, Kansas State, Western Kentucky University, Ithaca College, University of Nevada-Las Vegas, and St. Michael's College.

aren't reading daily newspapers, we should worry less about the democracy and more about the insularity of our research frame: Journalism is alive and well on digg.com, YouTube, Crooksandliars.com, and The Smoking Gun.com. And when our students challenge our authority or fact check our proclamations during class, we need to stop scrambling for classroom management techniques and start addressing the widening gap between their assumptions about knowledge production and our own.

In short, our core mission, as educators and as journalists, is platform neutral—even if we are not. And our currency and credibility will depend not upon our ability to provide access to equipment or train students for a moribund industry, but upon our capacity to nurture collaborative innovation that produces accurate, informative and interactive content—for every screen and every audience.

Fortunately, our future is as participatory as it is inclusive; we have all the intellectual capital we need, right

where we live. Her name is UWannaLoveMe7 and, if we pay attention and adjust our assumptions—and our pedagogy—accordingly, her generation will lead us everywhere we need to go. ■

Dianne Lynch is dean of the Roy H. Park School of Communications at Ithaca College. On January 1, 2008, she will become the dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California at Berkeley.

Adapt or Die of Irrelevance

The clash between academic requirements for professors and the education students of journalism need to have grows more intense.

By Karl Idsvoog

I'm doing something few university student journalists ever do. I'm writing an article to be published on the pages of a magazine. There won't be an iPod version, or a video to accompany its eventual appearance online, or interactivity for discussion and debate about what I say, or a blog or slide show—just words on the page. Only gradually is Nieman Reports adapting to what every journalism student must adapt to quickly—the evolving multimedia environment. With university journalism education, we can no longer train print journalists, or radio or TV journalists, or photojournalists; today, these are all pieces of a larger pie we call multimedia journalism.

Boom! That's the sound heard as journalism schools blow up their curriculum. That's what we're doing here at Kent State, and the leadership comes from a pleasantly surprising place—Fred Endres, the senior faculty member, who is like Thomas Edison in that he will stop coming up with

innovative ideas on the day he dies. A former print reporter turned professor, in 1987 Endres started the computer-assisted reporting course at Kent. He then developed our first online journalism class in 1999, and three years later

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started a collaborative course where print and broadcast journalists fight—I mean work with each other—on news projects.

“It is all about multimedia, interactivity, 24-hour deadlines, and new methods of delivering the news,” says Endres. “It's more than we ever expected of students 10 to 15 years ago.”

In every class, students are forced to think—and perform—across a variety of platforms. Photojournalism professor Teresa Hernández observes that “multimedia has become the way of the still photographer,” and this means the

visual gets immersed in sound. “People want to hear and see things more and read less,” she says. “Like it or not, that is the reality.” There's another reality, too, that every journalism professor must recognize—the job market. “Many of the photo internships are now for multimedia,” Hernández says.

Jan Leach, a journalism professor who came to Kent State a few years ago from a print newsroom, shares this experience. “I'd be surprised if any newspaper editor would hire a student right out of j-school who didn't have a good understanding of writing/producing online,” she says.

In the school's legal issues class, Barrett v. Rosenthal is to the Internet what New York Times Co. v. Sullivan is to libel, as citizen journalism becomes the

“next major battleground” for online speech, in the view of Professor Tim Smith. In the courtroom as well as the newsroom, the news media landscape is changing rapidly, so for students to succeed, the classroom—and the university in which it is embedded—must change as well. “If we want our kids to be competitive, we need to prepare them for the world they are about to enter,” Smith says.

In Kent State’s audience analysis class, Professor Max Grubb’s students don’t analyze only the TV Nielsen ratings, but they also examine the use of the Web. It’s no longer just about circulation and ratings. Grubb, who spent 15 years on the sales/marketing side of the broadcast business, contends that blogs, citizen journalism, and interactivity have transformed the structure of the media business into what he calls the “architecture of participation.” “As media professionals,” says Grubb, “our students need to understand and facilitate rather than resist it.”

Resisting Change

Creative thinking consultant Roger von Oech contends that nobody likes change except a baby whose diaper is wet. Too many j-school students seem proof of that notion. Beginning this fall semester, the j-school is moving into a new building with wireless Internet, high-speed video servers, and a converged newsroom. Student leaders are working with faculty to develop the organizational structure for student media. At a recent planning meeting, one of our brighter and more talented students listed a few potential stories, then asked the student from the school newspaper what she would put on the front page. He then posed the same question to the student representative from the TV station; how would she lead her newscast? He was demonstrating the ways in which newspapers and broadcast media approach the telling of news differently. But nobody raised any questions about how to cover these stories for a multimedia Web site. Each saw coverage only from inside of his or her own silo.

Such attitudes spell doom—in con-

temporary newsrooms and classrooms. “The more ostriches in your newsroom or on your faculty, the more likely your organization will quickly join the list of endangered species,” Endres cautions. Amid the downsizing of newsrooms now going on, even veteran journalists are finding it essential to learn new skills. And some are returning to school to do so. Kent State’s graduate coordinator, Von Whitmore, recognizes that “graduate programs will have to adapt to this new demand by developing alternative ways for working professionals to take classes [that] must teach students about multiple platform content from the very first course in the curriculum.” Graduate student Susan Kirkman spent 20 years working as a journalist at the Akron Beacon Journal, most recently as the managing editor for multimedia and special projects. Kirkman’s advice to journalists for managing change applies as much to newsrooms as it does to journalism schools: “Figure out how to create cultures that support innovation.”

This is the toughest challenge we face—given how difficult cultural shifts can be to make within a university. “Some faculty will never be able to collaborate with those in other disciplines; others will do so, but reluctantly,” says Endres. “Still others, maybe a third of current faculties, will find the move out of silos to be exciting and invigorating. You can probably identify those faculty members already. They’re the ones with all the most forward thinking and aggressive students hanging around their offices.”

Building a J-School Faculty

It’s impossible to teach what you don’t know, yet learning new software programs and developing multimedia skills requires the investment of time, resources and money. “It’s the trifecta of money, time and personnel,” says Whitmore. “[But] foundation money for journalism programs is shrinking while federal and state support for higher education has all but vanished.”

Without universities willing to bring in faculty members with the skills

and experience necessary to prepare students to meet the rapidly changing demands by getting rid of some academic barriers—such as requiring faculty members to have a PhD—journalism schools will remain on the precipice of becoming irrelevant to the profession. Editors are not determining which stories to tell and how to tell them by reading academic journals, yet universities reward publication of such articles more highly than they do teaching or passing on cutting-edge multimedia skills or figuring out how to get students to think creatively and broadly about how journalistic values mesh with the changes brought about by technological progress.

With this in mind, the requirements posted in the advertisements in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* for jobs as j-school professors seem all the more troubling. Recently I checked 20 of them, and all but one indicated that a PhD was required or preferred. Most did not require or give the preferred number of years of professional experience, though for one position the ad stipulated two years of professional experience. (I certainly know how much I knew after only two years on the job.)

Why so little experience would be deemed sufficient by any journalism program pinpoints a major disconnect between academia and the demands of the marketplace. Hiring someone to teach a reporting class who has never reported is like signing up a doctor who’s never been in the operating room to teach surgery, or asking a lawyer who’s never had a client or filed briefs or been in a courtroom to teach law. Educating journalists has always required more than an academic orientation—and this imbalance of university requirements vs. faculty relevance has always been a part of journalism school’s uneasy fit inside the academy. But today the fit isn’t just uneasy, it’s untenable.

Universities will need to adapt or their j-schools will die of irrelevance. With soaring tuition costs, prospective journalists will refuse to waste time and money learning what they don’t need to know while a glance over their shoulder

will spot plenty of young people finding stimulating, on-the-job tutorials in places other than classrooms.

Journalism's Importance

Kent State understands this. In its rich mix of faculty—in which nearly every member has spent years working as a journalist—a tenure-track professor can focus either on research or on practice. At a recent Investigative Reporters and Editors conference, a professor from another university asked me how I could be on a tenure-track position without having a PhD. At Kent State, I am the only faculty member on staff who has worked professionally in digital media. Indeed, our situation may currently be out of the norm, but to survive, it's the direction j-schools that want to remain relevant must head. To achieve that, those directing j-school programs must be able to explain to provosts and deans and university presidents the ways in which journalism differs from other scholarly pursuits—and why the mesh of classroom learning and on-the-street and in-the-newsroom reporting lessons and experiences are essential.

At Kent State, the faculty also appreciates what many news corporations

have forgotten—that journalism is essential for our democracy to function. In the Winter 2006 issue of *Nieman Reports*, former *Nieman* Curator Bill Kovach stressed the importance of the “journalism of verification.” Journalism isn't rumor, isn't about repeating gossip, and isn't about celebrity. The statement of purpose for the Committee of Concerned Journalists—the organization Kovach founded—should be placed at the entryway of every school of journalism. It states, “The central purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with accurate and reliable information they need in order to make informed judgments in a self-governing society.” As former “Nightline” producer Tom Bettag in his article “Evolving Definitions of News” so aptly stated, “Credibility is so valuable today because it is so scarce.”

For these reasons, and so many more, journalism education has never been as important as it is today. All of the software, streaming video, interactivity, flash animation, blogs and audio all become irrelevant when the journalism they are called to serve isn't solid. Students need to learn how to secure and dig through documents, to comprehensively prepare for interviews, to determine whether a story holds up to

tough scrutiny or loses its legs as more information is gathered and assessed, and to appreciate what journalism is and why it matters. “The major obstacle facing journalism schools is the stark realization that students need to have critical thinking skills first, and then we need to ask them to start applying the multimedia skills on top. Without the first, there can be no use of that second that makes any sense,” says Kent State journalism professor Barbara Hipsman.

Delivery platforms for news and information have changed—and at breakneck speed they will continue to change. In the past, it might have been possible, if not ideal, to pass along to students the fundamental principles and skills of journalism even if professors never had direct engagement with newsroom techniques and skills. Too much is changing too quickly in the digital news environment—and consequently in the marketplace these students will enter—to allow this mismatch to continue. ■

Karl Idsvoog, a 1983 Nieman Fellow, is an assistant professor at Kent State University.

It's the Audience, Stupid!

At Stony Brook University, thousands of students are learning how to critically examine the news they encounter.

By Howard Schneider

The road to conceiving a radically different approach to journalism education—one that not only focuses on training future journalists but on tens of thousands of students with no journalistic aspirations at all—began for me in November 2004, when I abruptly left my job as the editor of *Newsday*. My sudden departure after 35 years of employment was prompted by a series of escalating disagreements

with our new publisher over the direction and future of the paper.

On Election Night that year, I struggled mightily to write a nuanced headline that proclaimed the President's apparent reelection. One week later, my only occupation was how to best remove two decades of accumulated debris from the family basement. I was exhausted and drained of ambition. I was determined to defer

for several months any thinking about the future, my own or of the future of journalism, my lifetime profession clearly roiling—one might even say wallowing—in turmoil.

Forty-eight hours later, all of that changed when I received a telephone call from the president of Stony Brook University, the largest research university in the New York State public college system. The campus was renowned for

its hard sciences, presided over for the past decade by a politically savvy, native Texan who had earned her academic stripes as a scholar of 18th century British drama. As editor of the dominant newspaper on Long Island, I had casually encountered Shirley Strum Kenny on many occasions, had been charmed by her Lone Star patois, and impressed with her intelligence, but I hardly knew her. Now at our first meeting in her homey but cluttered third-floor office, with the nameplate “Steel Magnolia” affixed to the desk, she kicked off her shoes and revealed why she had called.

“I want to do something big with journalism,” she said. “It’s time. I want to know if you will help me.”

I muttered something about the basement.

“We have the chance to create a program for the future, not the past,” she went on. “We can do something with distinction. But I need a plan. Will you at least think about it?”

We talked more, and I promised an answer. In a week’s time, three factors convinced me to help Kenny create her program. I discovered that in the entire New York State public college system—which sprawled across 64 campuses with 415,000 students—there was not one accredited journalism program or undergraduate school of journalism.

Second, my extended conversation with Kenny had revealed an abiding interest in the press. I learned that she had graduated with a journalism degree from the University of Texas, had become only the second female editor of the Daily Texan, and had set off to become a reporter in Austin before a dumb, but not atypical male editor of the 1950’s, had exiled her to the women’s pages. She would be a trusted and committed partner in this venture.

Finally, in the week between my two visits, my anger had been rekindled at the pessimism, shortsightedness, panic and even cowardice that had marked so many decisions by top media executives in recent years. A former colleague even asked me, “How will you sleep at night knowing you will be training students who can’t find jobs?”

No, I was a hopeless believer that responsible journalism would endure if only we could inspire young reporters with the courage, skills and passion to act in the public interest. Creating a journalism program would be my revenge—a powerful statement of optimism about the future. The question was, how to do it?

Charting a New Course

I set out to interview dozens of deans of journalism programs, industry leaders from the “old media” and gurus from the “new,” visionaries, scholars, professors, authors, TV producers, and newspaper editors. We talked about convergence, the digital revolution, the inability of many journalism graduates to write a clear, declarative sentence, and the growing gender gap that had resulted in women occupying two-thirds of the seats in many communications programs. I visited huge communications schools that warehoused thousands of majors—of whom only a relatively few majored in journalism.

Always, there were the same questions: What values and skills will students need to succeed in the future? How will we sustain quality journalism in the face of a 24-7 digital news cycle, unprecedented competition, audience fragmentation, unreasonable financial goals, and the devaluing of serious news coverage?

It wasn’t until later that I realized that many of the answers were unfolding right under my nose. I had agreed to teach a class called “The Ethics and Values of the American Press” so I could get to know Stony Brook students, a student body remarkable for its diversity and drive. About half the students were the first in their families to attend college, nearly 20 percent were not yet naturalized citizens, and many had SAT scores of 1,200 or higher. On the first day 35 upperclassmen stared back at me, representing majors from more than a dozen departments.

“I want you to do something anti-theoretical to everything you have learned here,” I told them. “I don’t want you to think. Just react to the two words I

put on the board.” Then I wrote THE PRESS.

Words and phrases tumbled out. “Nosy.” “Bias.” “Ratings.” “Lack of privacy.” “Crime.” “Liberal.” “Sensational.” “Television.” “Not patriotic.” “Slanted.” “Nonstop.” “Controversy.” “Orange juice.” (This last association came from a rare student who had grown up with a newspaper at the breakfast table.)

In the following weeks, I probed the students on how they made their news decisions. (To varying degrees, they all consumed news.) I deduced that about a third believed *everything* they watched or read that came from a “news brand,” though they equally trusted news from an obscure Web site, an entertainment magazine, or The New York Times. Another third believed *nothing*—cynics at 19, convinced the mainstream press was hopelessly captive of greedy corporate interests and corrupt government spinmeisters. The last third often didn’t know what to believe, confused about what news accounts to trust or who even was a journalist. Was Jon Stewart? Oprah Winfrey? Bill O’Reilly? Michael Moore?

Spirited discussions ensued on what freedom of the press actually means, on whether Stewart is a journalist (despite his disavowals, more than a third of the class turned to him as their *primary* source of news), on whether news decisions are driven more by profit motive or social responsibility and—using a series of hypothetical cases based on my own experiences—to what extent journalists exercise ethical decision-making.

Meanwhile, outside of class, I felt I was making good progress on my plan for a journalism degree program. It would be comprehensive, requiring majors to earn 47 credits in journalism—far more than most programs—and an additional 80 credits in the arts and sciences. It would emphasize the fundamentals. There would be three news-writing courses, a rigorous grammar test, and a writing immersion program for those who failed the test. It would be innovative. We would teach students to thrive across all media platforms. It would be practical. We would prepare students

to compete for entry-level jobs in a new digital “newsroom of the future” that we would build on campus.

But again and again scenes from my classroom forced me to think in new directions. There was the afternoon a student asked if O’Reilly was a reporter or commentator, and what difference it made. (Only a handful of students, it turned out, had ever seen a newspaper editorial page.) Or the day the class had a fierce debate about whether news coverage of the Iraq War was too negative, with students digging ideological bunkers that were impervious to incoming evidence. My informal survey found the class equally divided as to whether the press had too little power or too much. (That semester a Knight Foundation survey of more than 100,000 high schools students revealed that 37 percent felt that newspapers should first get their stories approved by the government.)

As the deadline for getting my proposal to Kenny drew near, I knew I had to make a major change. A journalism school of the future would need two missions, not one. Our first mission was daunting enough: to train the next generation of reporters and editors in a period of media transformation. But the second mission was of equal—perhaps greater—importance: to educate the next generation of news consumers.

Preparing News Consumers

An open, cacophonous, freewheeling press always would include those who practiced the dark arts of the information age: disguising reality through sleight-of-hand and half-truths, conjuring up assertion as verification, masquerading ideology as news analysis, and morphing news values into entertainment hype, not to mention the veritable journalistic sins of sloppiness, laziness and naiveté. The digital revolution might bring the promise of enlightenment, but in its pathological lack of accountability might just as

easily spread a virus of confusion and disinformation.

The ultimate check against an inaccurate or irresponsible press never would be just better-trained journalists, or more press critics and ethical codes. It would be a generation of news consumers who would learn how to distinguish for themselves between news and propaganda, verification and mere assertion, evidence and inference, bias and fairness, and between media bias and *audience* bias—consumers who

Our first mission was daunting enough: to train the next generation of reporters and editors in a period of media transformation. But the second mission was of equal—perhaps greater—importance: to educate the next generation of news consumers.

could differentiate between raw, unmediated information coursing through the Internet and independent, verified journalism.

Yet most journalism programs largely ignored the issue, choosing to focus almost exclusively on the supply side of the journalism equation. We would focus on the *demand* side, as well, and build a future audience that would recognize and appreciate quality journalism.

I told this to Kenny in our last meeting that spring. I proposed a course called News Literacy—a class on how to use critical thinking skills to judge the credibility and reliability of news reports. I urged that she make it available to all students on campus. The university would nurture a more informed citizenry. Our students would acquire a lifetime asset: the ability to assess what to trust and distrust in the news media, when to act on information and when to suspect it, whether in choosing a President, a controversial medication, or a news “brand.”

About a month after receiving my

“dual mission” proposal, Kenny called back.

“Let’s do it,” she said.

In the two years since we launched Stony Brook’s School of Journalism with nearly 30 new courses, we have taught News Literacy to several hundred students from across the campus. The syllabus for the three-credit, 42-hour course continues to evolve, but its backbone has hardened. The class begins with a 48-hour news blackout imposed on the students—no news, ball scores, or even weather for two days. Some students report they are so anxious they can’t sleep, others carry umbrellas as insurance, and almost all are surprised by the ubiquity of news and to the extent to which it intrudes in their lives.

After teaching the course for one semester, we made a major adjustment. We realized that before we could help students assess any journalism, we had to help them find the journalism. So we employ a grid to demonstrate the differences between news, propaganda, advertising, publicity, entertainment and raw information, with particular emphasis on areas where the lines are often blurring—or collapsing.

Journalists visit the class and describe how they make decisions. Students study the inherent tension between the press and government in America and how the U.S. press differs from the press overseas. (Unfailingly, students are shocked when they visit the Web site of the Committee to Protect Journalists. “I couldn’t believe how many people want to kill journalists,” one student said. “I had no idea.”)

But the heart of the course is a sequence of classes on “deconstructing the news.” Students critically examine news Web sites, newspaper stories, and cable and broadcast news reports, separate information that is asserted from information that is verified, analyze each source in a story based on five guidelines that help them judge reliability, and seek out any evidence of bias, including their own.

A powerful metaphor for verification emerged during a discussion of Hurricane Katrina. According to one erroneous news account, the bodies of 40 dead citizens had piled up in a freezer at the Morial Convention Center. The reporter based his story on second-hand information from two National Guardsmen. In his subsequent mea culpa, the reporter regretted never looking inside for himself. Students seized on the image and suggested a new rule for news consumers. Before believing any story, always ask, “Did

the reporter open the freezer?”

Student evaluations have been largely positive. In a story in The New York Times one sophomore said, “I think I learned more skills that I’m going to use for the rest of my life than I did in any other course in college.”

Our work has just begun. With the help of a \$1.7 million grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, we launched a program this fall to teach News Literacy to 10,000 students during the next four years. The Knight grant also will allow us to test over time

whether the course makes a significant difference in their academic, professional or personal lives. And in May, Kenny established a national Center for News Literacy at the School of Journalism. Its goal is to extend our mission to other universities, high schools, and even the general public.

Needless to say, I never finished cleaning out the basement. ■

Howard Schneider is dean of the School of Journalism at Stony Brook University.

Start Earlier. Expand the Mission. Integrate Technology.

A journalism professor offers a fresh approach to training journalists alongside those who consume news and one day might publish it.

By Kim Pearson

Most journalism majors don’t become journalists, but most journalists are graduates of journalism programs. This means that how educators approach the preparation of students in this digital age will shape journalism’s future direction in significant ways. And in this transformational time for journalism, what is best represented by a liberal arts education needs to be placed front and center so those who become journalists will be, at their core, ready to act as intellectually sophisticated producers and disseminators of information.

Sensing this need, the Knight Foundation and Carnegie Corporation of New York sponsored blue-ribbon conferences and demonstration projects aimed at reshaping undergraduate and graduate-level journalism programs.

In May 2006, they issued a progress report entitled “Journalism’s Crisis of Confidence: A Challenge for the Next Generation.”¹ It stressed the need for curricula to ensure that aspiring journalists be educated to become worldly intellectuals who retain the common touch necessary to reach audiences in an evolving media landscape of almost infinite complexity. With this in mind, a few programs, such as Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism, Northwestern University’s Medill School, and USC Annenberg’s School for Communication, are in the process of designing enhanced curricula and joint degree opportunities with other departments and schools. In September 2006, a task force of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication reported

on the state of its affiliated doctoral programs,² and spoke to the need for improving theoretical engagement with key issues and smoother integration of communications research into craft-focused undergraduate and master’s-level courses.

Neither report sheds much light on exactly how the suggested approaches will prepare journalists to deal with the enormous challenges and opportunities of the digital age. Nor is much attention paid to assessing the roles journalists or journalism educators might play in shaping the technological and economic frameworks in which newsgathering will be practiced. And no consideration is given to what journalism education might do at the pre-college level to promote news literacy among children who spend increasing

¹ www.carnegie.org/pdf/journalism_crisis/journ_crisis_full.pdf

² www.aejmc.org/_scholarship/_publications/_resources/_reports/taskforcereport_06.pdf

amounts of their time finding and sharing information online.

Fortunately, some academic leaders are undertaking new initiatives, such as the new Graduate School Journalism Scholarship for students with undergraduate computer science degrees. However, we must do more to prevent a widening gap between academic preparation and the technological and economic forces of the digital age into which students will emerge. And the consequence could be that the valued place journalists have long held in our democratic process could be endangered.

Seeking a New Approach

There are ways to act on critical aspects of these problems. For example, while it's not unusual for middle and high school English teachers to have students create print and online newspapers and magazines as a way to teach writing and information gathering, journalism education—including media literacy—needs to be more directly infused into the curricula. Multimedia research and communications skills are essential for students as they become critical consumers and producers of information and news; but they must also take to heart the rights and responsibilities that accompany this privilege.

To do this requires the development of a degree track for teachers with certifications in language arts, art education, and computer science. Therefore, undergraduate journalism education should offer a liberal arts track *and* an education track, just as happens often with other liberal arts disciplines.

Concern is now being expressed about the future of investigative reporting as newsroom staffs and reporting resources are cut. So I offer some examples of how such an approach might help in this regard:

1. If middle and high school students practiced the skills of online journalism in the course of their studies—researching public records, assembling databases from information they gathered, doing podcasts of interviews and their own production—then their lifelong connection to news and to the importance of its reliability could be strengthened.
2. Young people taught in this way might be more likely to enter the newsgathering field, either as journalists or as publishing entrepreneurs.
3. Even the majority of students who don't become newsgatherers might become more civically engaged, perhaps using online sites such as YouTube as places to practice their own local watchdog reporting.

The challenge for journalists—and journalism educators—is to think about ways to create dynamic curricula to enhance the practice of journalism.

The challenge for journalists—and journalism educators—is to think about ways to create dynamic curricula to enhance the practice of journalism. Such a challenge lends itself to the development of new and closer partnerships among journalists, technology specialists involved with communications tools, economists looking at new business models, and educators working with the next generation of potential journalists.

Adrian Holovaty, a programmer involved with journalism Web sites, eloquently argues that journalists need to move beyond the linear narrative and think of stories as chunks of data to be segmented and cross-referenced

so readers can easily find what interests them.³ His new direction relies on the database capabilities of content management systems. But Holovaty's experience working in newsrooms has shown him that for this to happen, those who manage newsrooms need to learn to treat their technology people as partners, not as mere support staff.⁴ In the future, especially if students emerge from school with greater adeptness with technology, this divide might be lessened.

But Holovaty goes further in proposing that journalists abandon hard news storytelling in favor of database-driven presentations. This question is one I've been researching with a computer scientist. Her background is in computational linguistics and gaming; mine is in literary journalism and narrative theory. Together we are trying to create a prototype storytelling engine that delivers chunks of story content from a database that is programmed to allow the end-user flexibility and control while ensuring that related chunks of material—which might be text, image, audio or video—are presented in a sequence that preserves context and coherence. We are well on our way to designing

the information architecture for the prototype. We presented our research at the 2007 summer conference of the New Media Consortium. Notes on the project, including links to the slides from the presentation, are available at the blog, The Nancybelle Project.⁵

It's impossible to know how well such content management systems will function as future tools of journalists in terms of their power, flexibility and esthetics. What we do know is that undergraduate and graduate journalism curricula need to provide opportunities for students to participate in and reflect on the intersection of storytelling and technology. Exposure to linear and nonlinear storytelling should already be happening. As for techno-

³ www.holovaty.com/blog/archive/2006/09/06/0307

⁴ www.holovaty.com/blog/archive/2006/10/02/2300

⁵ www.kimpearson.net/labels/presentations.html/

logical knowledge, it will be important for students to understand the limits of artificial intelligence technology, because those limits constrain the ability to use gaming as a journalistic medium. They ought also to grapple with ethical questions raised by the semantic recognition programs and recommender systems that power the most advanced search engines and e-commerce marketing software programs.

High-quality research will inevitably

lead to new communication technologies and techniques, which can be employed earlier in the educational process and will likely end up in the toolbox of future journalists. If this approach to journalism education takes hold, it might also improve the media literacy and civic engagement of non-journalists. And in the digital world of our future, those who see themselves as readers today are increasingly likely to become publishers and editors of their own words tomorrow. ■

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The Web Resides at the Hub of Learning

‘For us, the Web is entirely positive: It is a journalistic tool with wondrous powers . . .’

By Nicholas Lemann

The academic year now underway is the first one in which all professional students at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism will have been trained to work on the Internet. Our school was relatively early to embrace the Internet and other new technologies for delivering journalism. We established a New Media major back in 1994. But we treated the Internet as one of several forms of journalism in which a student could specialize. The size of the New Media major waxed and waned with the fortunes of the Internet economy. In my first year as dean, 2003-04, we had only a handful of New Media majors.

Since then a lot has changed. First, jobs that end in “.com” are waxing again and as a result so is our New Media concentration. This year we have 38 New Media majors, by far our largest number ever. Second, and more important, many of our students who major in one of the old media are finding, when they graduate, that they spend much of every day working for their

news organization’s Web site.

So we have been making a lot of curriculum changes at the school. We invested in a content management system—something most news organizations have—that permits students

It’s amazing to us how quickly and pervasively the Web is permeating nearly everything we do at the school.

and faculty members to post lots of material to their own class-based Web sites, without needing to consult a Webmaster. All faculty who teach our core skills courses are required to be trained to use the content management system, and many other faculty have chosen to be trained as well. Every section of our basic reporting and writing course now operates its own Web site, and every student learns to write for the Web and also to gather images and sound about news stories and post them to the Web. We have hired a small squad of Web experts

who go from class to class helping to iron out whatever problems arise in this new regime.

We have also launched this fall three sections of a new class called New Media Newsroom. Here the idea

is not to emulate the new life of a newspaper reporter but to experiment with the capabilities of Web journalism in a way that assumes no anchoring presence of another medium. The students experiment with new ways of delivering information, using all of the

Web’s rich capabilities for interactivity, linking, and the use of words, sound, and still and moving images. The written “news story”—an 800-or-so-word piece of text meant to be read from beginning to end—is not assumed to be necessarily the basic unit of journalistic production.

It’s amazing to us how quickly and pervasively the Web is permeating nearly everything we do at the school. Quite a few classes other than the ones I just mentioned (including the class I teach) operate their own Web sites. On our school’s home page, click on

“Student Work” to find an assortment of Web sites that reside in specific classes.¹ We also operate a site called “The Columbia Journalist,” which is a juried selection of some of the best work students in various classes are producing.

Our Columbia Journalism Review now publishes daily on the Web, as well as six times a year in print. The participants in our brand-new Punch Sulzberger News Media Executive Leadership Program—senior executives in news organizations—spend much of their time trying to figure out the economics of journalism on the Web. Another of our new ventures—an initiative to create business school-style case studies about journalism—is developing material that explores the challenges and opportunities that the

Web’s ability to efface the line between professional and “citizen” journalists poses to editors and reporters and will also use the Web as a teaching tool for all cases, whether or not they deal substantively with the Web’s impact on journalism. When we teach the history of journalism, we take special care to include material on moments in the past when new communications technologies changed everything.

What makes the Web so attractive to us is that the barriers to entry are so low. As much as we groan at budget time over how heavily we are investing in technology, we can afford to get ourselves much closer to professional levels of production on the Web than we can in the print or broadcast media. The Web has the greatest inherent capability of any journalistic medium

we use at the school and the lowest production and distribution cost. And, although we are interested in the economic challenges the Web poses to news organizations, so far it has not been a “disruptive technology” in the economic sense for graduate schools at research universities. For us, the Web is entirely positive: It is a journalistic tool with wondrous powers, and to the extent that its advent requires a rethinking of journalism’s professional norms, well, what better place for that than a journalism school? ■

Nicholas Lemann is dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University and serves as its Henry R. Luce Professor.

¹ www.columbiajournalist.org/

How a New J-School Takes on a Changing Profession

CUNY is integrating new digital technologies with the ‘eternal verities’ of reporting, writing and critical thinking.

Stephen Shepard became dean of the City University of New York Graduate School of Journalism when it opened its doors to students in the fall of 2006. Prior to his appointment in 2005, he had been editor in chief of Business Week since 1984. To delve into some of the challenges confronted in preparing students for digital journalism—and to explore the opportunities—Shepard borrowed from Socrates his method of rhetorical examination, asking and responding to questions that he, his faculty, and students are hearing and discussing all the time.

This is a helluva time to start a journalism school. Where are your students going to get jobs?

I hear this sort of thing quite a lot, ever since we announced plans to launch

the Graduate School of Journalism at the City University of New York. And, yes, it’s true that hardly a day goes by without word of another layoff at a major news organization or a decline in audience and advertising. But that is only half the story. The more encouraging news is that every day also brings talk of phenomenal growth at a newspaper Web site or the launch of a new innovation that enhances storytelling. Think of podcasts. Or citizen journalism. Or YouTube.

This bad news/good news moment is actually a wonderful time to start a j-school, an opportunity to participate in the re-imagining of journalism now going on throughout our profession. It is a time for students to learn the new tricks of the trade—what Jeff Jarvis, who runs our interactive program, calls the new “tool kit.”

Universities, after all, are the natural incubators of new ideas in every field. Why not journalism? Let’s think about the possibilities that technological change brings. Let’s think about new business models, or about hyperlocal content for newspapers, or how journalism can become a genuine conversation with our audience, or about the role of “citizen journalists” as eyewitnesses, using laptops, cell-phone cameras, and audio/video recorders.

As a new graduate school, we start with a clean slate. But we cannot escape a basic question facing all schools: What is the proper balance between teaching the new techniques of the digital age and imparting the eternal verities of journalism—the reporting, writing, ethical concerns, and critical thinking that are more important than ever? Like

other schools, we are still grappling with these and other questions, but I believe we have taken some important initial steps.

Let me try to anticipate some of your questions:

Why did you choose a three-semester program?

We felt strongly that one year was too short to teach everything these times require. A three-semester program enables us to run a summer internship program between the second and third semesters. It gives us the time to go beyond teaching only the craft of journalism (reporting, writing, ethics) and add content specialties. We chose four: urban reporting, business/economics, arts/culture, and health/medicine. Each specialty offers three courses, enough to build a substantial base of knowledge, enabling students to develop the expertise and sources to do more sophisticated stories.

Finally, of course, a three-semester program enables us to teach all those new technologies—from Dreamweaver to GarageBand. Students can still choose a media track—print, broadcast or interactive. But they are all required to do assignments across media platforms.

How does your building lend itself to this new digital age?

We have more than 40,000 square feet built from scratch on two floors in the old New York Herald Tribune building in midtown Manhattan. The whole facility is wireless and, as our 50 pioneering students walk around with their Macintosh laptops (required), they are connected to the Internet from any place in the school. We have a large newsroom, TV and radio studios, and editing suites. In short, we have the Tribune's traditional DNA in our walls and the new media convergence in our very air. It's the perfect metaphor for what we hope to become as we gradually ramp up to more than 100 students.

Why even bother with media tracks?

Why didn't you just converge the entire curriculum?

Three reasons: First, when we studied other schools that had tried it, we saw lots of problems, primarily an overemphasis on technology at the expense of journalistic skills. Second, the idea of convergence is still developing, and many students and faculty feel more comfortable with traditional media tracks. Third, many news media companies demand specific skills, particularly in broadcast. The job market hasn't yet shifted as much as rhetoric would suggest.

Will the day ever come when you'll abolish media tracks?

Maybe. We talk about it all the time.

What is the most popular media track selected by your students?

Even in this day and age, print is the most popular, followed by interactive, then by broadcasting.

But isn't print obsolete?

Print isn't just about ink on paper. It emphasizes in-depth reporting, analytical writing, and critical thinking. It is journalism that seeks to provide understanding, context, insight and, on our best days, something approaching wisdom. This kind of journalism, which people associate with newspapers and magazines, can and should be done in all media formats.

Sounds very lofty. How, then, will you teach convergence?

In several ways. First, all students take a first-semester course called "Fundamentals of Interactive Journalism." They discuss how technology is reshaping the media world. They learn to create Web sites, videos and podcasts. They blog. They learn to use the new tools.

What else?

We created something called the Janu-

ary Academy, a four-week intercession in which we offer workshops in new media technologies. For example, print and interactive students can take a workshop in audio and visual tools and production. Or learn how to use Final Cut software. Or take instruction in Photoshop. Throughout the year, we offer evening and weekend seminars in various multimedia skills for interested students.

Sounds like you're training technicians.

No. We're simply giving them tools to tell a story in new and different ways. It's up to them to decide how best to report and present a story—in words, pictures, audio, video or interactively with a community. There's more choice, more opportunity.

What about the eternal verities you mentioned earlier?

The traditional tools—reporting and writing—are the first tools they learn here. They remain front and center in every course. And if students want to become long-form magazine writers, they'll find plenty of help here.

How do you teach convergence in the subject specialties, like business/economics?

Glad you asked. Let's say we have a print student specializing in business journalism. In each of the three business reporting classes she'll take, the student will do at least one story in another media format—for example, as a multimedia, interactive piece. It will likely be a Web-based package, with audio and video, with interactive elements, with links.

Can your faculty handle all this?

Some can. For example, our business and urban programs are headed by Sarah Bartlett, who was a reporter and editor at The New York Times and Business Week. She also worked at Oxygen Media and knows a lot about interactivity and multimedia. She'll be

able to evaluate the students' work for both content and presentation.

But surely that's not true for all of your faculty, right?

Right. That's why we're also training our faculty in these new tools. And if a faculty member doesn't feel qualified to judge a video clip or podcast, we'll ask Linda Prout, who runs our broadcast program, to take a look, or Jeff Jarvis, or Sandeep Junnarkar from the interactive program. We also plan to use multimedia "coaches" to work with faculty and students on these cross-platform projects.

How are the students taking all this? Some of them must be a bit confused.

Some of them are. Times of profound change are often confusing. I recently talked with two students about their choice of media tracks. They wanted all the advanced writing they would do in the print track, but they also wanted to use the new tools in the interactive track.

What did you tell them?

There's no one-size-fits-all answer. We talked about their career goals, their strengths and weaknesses, their experience before they came here, and what they could best learn at school vs. on the job. I emphasized that, regardless of their choice, they would have opportunities to learn both sets of skills at CUNY.

What did they decide?

One chose interactive because he felt his reporting and writing skills were already pretty strong, and he wanted to work more with the new tools. The other chose print because she wanted to do more advanced writing and felt she could learn the technical skills on the job, if she needed them. They each made the right decision.

Have your views changed?

Sure. I'm learning along with everyone else. It's great fun for an old magazine guy like me to participate in such profound change. ■

Credibility Resides at the Core of Teaching Journalism

The challenge involves adjusting to the new rigors of the practice and getting students to think in digital ways.

By Jean Folkerts

It was nearly 150 years ago that Washington and Lee University inaugurated journalism education in the United States. By this action, which took place soon after the Civil War ended, the university sparked an enduring debate about the appropriate balance between a university education and on-the-job training. Not even momentous changes in the technology that enables people to communicate—the telegraph, telephone, radio and television, and now the Internet—have put an end to the arguments about the role of journalism education and what form it should take. But amid this disagreement has been acceptance of a shared goal: to prepare those who will practice jour-

nalism to be able to provide citizens with accurate and credible news and information to ensure participation in the governing process.

To achieve this end, journalism education has changed only slightly from the 1960's until the mid-1990's. The most noticeable change has been the rising influence of broadcast media as educators came to regard radio and television as important forms of journalism and as schools expanded to include multiple forms of mass communication, such as advertising and public relations.

More recently the Internet has upended our world by calling into question the ways that most journalism teaching happens. At a time when many

universities had developed specialized sequences of courses in print, broadcast, advertising and public relations as a way to resolve debates about how these disciplines could share an academic home, the fast-moving digital revolution—with its varied multimedia dimensions to storytelling—challenged this model.

Some journalism schools have merged specialized sequences of course study into two categories. One is called "journalism" or "news and information," and this includes reporting and writing news for print, broadcast and the Web, along with "info-graphics," design and broadcast and multimedia production of stories. The other carries adjectives such as "strategic" or

“persuasive” before the word “communication,” and this category combines advertising and public relations. Some of these schools require a generalized multimedia or visual communications class as a basic course. Others teach writing, information gathering, and multimedia production in a single course.

There are two problems with this structure:

1. In some curricula, beneath the newly required visual communications course, much of the rest of what students study looks just the same as it did in the separated sequences. The same courses are taught, with a heavy emphasis on traditional examples.
2. The other problem is one of depth. Can news writing, reporting skills, programs such as InDesign and Flash, along with photography, be taught in a single course? Can one person be all things to all media?

Seeking Guidance

Since I became dean of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill in July 2006, I've spent considerable time talking with alumni, turning to them to learn what graduating students need to know. I seek their advice about how to best address the decline in newspaper circulation and the ascendancy of the Web. Our alumni journalists are concerned more about whether our students master substantive knowledge than they are with how students master technology. Alumni believe they should be learning more about world and American history, how the economy and business decisions affect social and political behavior, and media ethics and media law.

Journalists have offered me good examples of how such substantive study paid off in their newsrooms. I recall one of them telling me how he'd cautioned his editor to move slowly when Richard Jewell was named a bombing suspect by various news media at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. He

said he could hear his ethics professor whispering in his ear about leaping too fast with limited evidence. But the editor responded, “CNN is using it.” Days later, when Jewell was exonerated, the editor apologized. Jewell later sued a number of news organizations.

Given their experiences, our alumni think digitally—and they assure me that everyone must be able to “think” digitally. What this means is that we need to reorganize our teaching about

Given their experiences, our alumni think digitally—and they assure me that everyone must be able to ‘think’ digitally.

how to report and produce a story across media platforms. One alumnus working for USA Today told of her trek from Basra to Baghdad; carrying a video camera and sound equipment, along with her pen and notebook, she joined the swelling ranks of backpack journalists.

Our journalism school is known for its in-depth education and for preparing students to be ready to work in the business when they graduate. Students take at least 80 of the 120 credits required for graduation outside of the school, as the accreditation council for journalism schools requires. At the journalism school, students must take a course in media law, ethics and news writing, and complete a mix of theory and skills courses.

A Different Direction

Like other journalism schools, how we are teaching—and what we are teaching—has been in the midst of change for a decade or more. Ten years ago, when educators started exploring convergence, the head of the visual communications sequence at our school, who was trained as a photographer, taught himself computer programming so he could understand better the underpinnings of multimedia. Out of this

experience, he developed a superb sequence of courses; today this sequence is updated constantly and prepares students to work as newspaper and Web designers, to compose info-graphics, to be photographers, and to create multimedia documentaries and shorter multimedia news stories. Students who take these courses are much in demand in the job market. A visual communication graduate recently found himself deciding between job offers from The New York Times and MSNBC.

However, core skills taught in broadcast and print sequences are not replaced by visual communication alone. Students still need to learn to develop quality story packages for television and to study writing, reporting and editing. They need specialized information to master areas such as business journalism.

As we think hard about how to move forward—merging sequences or creating new ones—we want to add depth to our students' education. So we are considering which nine or 10 classes are the ones to best prepare students to work in the new media world. And we are thinking about what happens if we require students to take additional credits as part of their study at this school (we now require 28 credits): Would such a requirement shortchange their liberal arts education—a vital part of the education journalists need? Would this curtail their opportunity to take business courses, which are increasingly important for journalists?

At a minimum we must make sure that students and faculty think and work across a range of media platforms. Our challenge isn't relegated to the combining of sequences or adding new courses, but involves progressive professorial practice and interaction with working journalists as we enable students to think in digital ways. Learning such critical thinking is essential if they are going to participate in shaping the digital environment in which they'll be working. Our approaches include the following:

- We must teach students to work with others; students in a graphic design

class and a magazine editing class work in teams across course lines.

- Our business journalism professor writes a popular blog and is a contributing editor and columnist for a monthly magazine, *Business North Carolina*. In his classes, students think and work across media platforms.
- A professor who teaches editing explores alternative story forms; he works with the Poynter Institute using new curricula to assess their impact.
- One of our design professors is coauthor of a column on digital design for the University of Southern California Annenberg's Online Journalism Review.
- Broadcast students stream their newscasts on the Web.
- A professor's advanced design students do readability and eye-tracking tests for a new Web design at a nearby television station.

Research done by our graduate faculty reflects the new communications landscape but also emphasizes the ongoing study of journalism his-

tory and law—traditional strengths of our school. In the midst of rapid change, graduate inquiry into what has happened in the past, as well as the legal environment of this practice, contributes to shaping—and not just reacting to—the emerging digital era. This year we also will add a senior person to our faculty who specializes in digital media economics.

Just as 19th century pioneers at Washington and Lee led the way into uncharted academic territory, journalism educators today are responsible for helping their students navigate through this territory of upending change. My advice is this: While we find ways to integrate new skills into our teaching, let's be sure to keep our eye squarely on what has remained a stationary goal—to have students leave our classrooms with the wisdom and skills they need to provide citizens with accurate and credible information.

The digital revolution, wherever it takes us, will not erase the need for educated professionals whose work is trusted by readers and viewers. The news may come to us in amazing ways. It may look different. Citizens who are

not professional journalists might help construct it. It might be mixed with a thousands bits and bytes of random and even entertaining information. Establishing trust with readers and viewers is as important in digital journalism as it was before the telegraph was invented. The next generation of journalists will engage a host of new challenges and opportunities, some of which we will likely be unable to foresee. But accuracy and credibility should never feel like outmoded ideals. Passing on tools to keep those principles at the core of journalistic practice remains our greatest responsibility. ■

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Teaching What We Don't (Yet) Know

A course about change becomes a constant work in progress as it looks to the newsrooms, audiences and forms of the future.

By Mark J. Prendergast

The core question as I moved from newsroom to classroom last year was what should I teach? After a 30-year newspaper career, the temptation was to dip into the well of experience to pass on the time-honored skills of our craft. But that approach didn't feel right at a time of such tumult. So at the suggestion of Ohio University's E.W. Scripps School of Journalism, where I had accepted a visiting professorship after 13 years as an editor at The New York Times, I

developed an experimental, forward-looking seminar I called "Journalism in Transition."

Inspired by research I had recently done for my master's degree at Columbia University, it was intended as a timely look at where we are and where we may be headed. But at its heart, the syllabus overlaid traditional journalistic values onto new-media realities of the sort I had encountered on the Times Continuous News Desk, a pioneering bridge between the paper's newsroom

and its Web site.

The course began with readings and discussion about the core questions of who is a journalist and what is journalism in a media universe in which anyone with a computer and access to the Internet has instant, global reach in reporting "news" and the ability to claim the title "journalist." In that spirit, we considered just what "truth" might be and how it should not be assumed to be synonymous with "facts." We discussed objectivity,

agendas, advocacy, privacy, identity and allegiances, the public sphere, the journalistic process, and the perilous reportorial shoals of Google, Drudge, Facebook and Wikipedia. We argued over the effects of moving from a print culture to a visual culture, of pictures rather than words driving stories, of emotion trumping intellect through the power of imagery.

In the context of an ever-expanding universe of bloggers, citizen journalists, “I-reporters” and the like, I offered a five-point test for ruling out what should not be considered journalism. The students avidly dissected, debated, employed and poked at the criteria throughout the course. My underlying purpose, one that I believe was realized, was not to formulate hard-and-fast, all-encompassing definitions for journalist and journalism, but to have these aspiring young practitioners contemplate the nature of their chosen field in a time of niche news, crowd sourcing, e-paper, multimedia platforms, 24/7 news cycles, and information centers focused on the hyperlocal.

Some students were unsettled by my message that the traditional j-school track system of newspaper/magazine/broadcast needs to be rethought and broadened and that 21st century journalists of all stripes need to possess some level of facility in multimedia skills beyond their chosen genre. But I argued that the Internet is a new, dominant medium that will resist efforts to wholly graft existing forms onto it and that their generation might well be the one to mold it into an effective, sustainable journalistic form.

Crucial to that task is an understanding of audience, and I pressed the students to explore just who’s out there now. Our resources included Pew research surveys, the Project for Excellence in Journalism, and even Robert Putnam’s “Bowling Alone” Web site, along with Time magazine’s rebuttal of his thesis.

We paid particular attention to how advances in communication technology have empowered audiences to bypass established media and seek out information on their own, share it with each other, analyze it, and validate or challenge it. We considered how the era of news by appointment is over. We explored ways in which journalists in the digital age might compensate for their diminished roles as gatekeepers

I argued that the Internet is a new, dominant medium that will resist efforts to wholly graft existing forms onto it and that their generation might well be the one to mold it into an effective, sustainable journalistic form.

and primary news providers by expanding their role as information arbiters to help audiences separate the wheat from the chatter. We also faced the fact that audiences now look over our shoulders as we work, ready to share their thoughts and assessments, for better or worse, directly with us or with the world—watchdogs for the watchdogs, and we had better get used to it.

Journalism’s Evolving Paradigm

A major concern I sought to convey was my belief that our business is in trouble—audiences shrinking even as the population balloons—in part because we have lost touch with our constituents, at least at the “big media” level, where I spent about half my career. Drawing upon the work of scholars like Robert Darnton of Princeton and Cass Sunstein of the University of Chicago, we considered how journalists are formed and why diversity in the newsroom—including

that of perspective and background—is critical for news organizations if they are to connect with the larger public they purport to serve. And we considered how newsmakers—government, political, commercial and other interests—were progressively finding ways to bypass the journalistic filter and reach around us directly to audiences and how readers, listeners and viewers were reaching back.

We took a cautionary look at journalism scandals in the context of professional credibility and accountability and examined secrecy, national security, and varying cultural sensibilities in a world where online anywhere means online everywhere. We weighed the rise and the role of “soft” news and the nature of reporting on communal tragedy in a diverse society. The Poynter Institute site, especially its Romenesko page,¹ became required daily reading and the spark for many class discussions that the syllabus never anticipated.

To help everyone appreciate that the future is now, I embraced a graduate student’s suggestion in the fall to devote a week to student media, both on campus and far beyond. The use of peer-produced newspapers, magazines and edgy Web sites fanned the students’ enthusiasm, because they could identify with the material and the people producing it. It proved a perfect illustration of the benefit of knowing your audience.

To accommodate such productive detours, I kept the course schedule flexible, and the world of news did not disappoint. When the Don Imus controversy erupted during the spring term, we spent a week researching it, writing about it, and discussing it. The episode dovetailed nicely with my planned examination of the coverage of a racially charged street crime in New York City in 2005. In that exercise, students read and analyzed reams of first-day newspaper and wire service

¹ www.poynter.org/ and www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=45

accounts. After class discussion, they watched an episode of the Bravo cable channel's "Tabloid Wars" series² chronicling how the New York Daily News had covered the story as it unfolded. In the fall term, I persuaded two senior Daily News editors to talk about the coverage via speakerphone. In the spring, I showed "The Paper," Ron Howard's riveting 1994 film about a fictional New York City tabloid's handling of a racially charged street crime.

In each term, virtually all the students said their initial, critical views of how the story was covered had been softened by watching "Tabloid Wars." I took that as a testament to the power of visual imagery, a growing force in media and culture that we explored elsewhere with examples as disparate as Abu Ghraib, convenience store hold-ups, the Muhammad cartoons, car chases, and dogs stuck on ice floes. "Tabloid Wars" was also an argument for greater media transparency; sometimes watching the sausage get made can have a salutary effect, conventional wisdom notwithstanding.

In the spring, we departed from the script to spend a week examining coverage of the Virginia Tech shootings from almost the moment the news broke. Early on, I took a survey of my students as to where they had turned first for information. All but one had gone straight to established mainstream news media—either online or on cable—before heading off to their more usual informational Web haunts like blogs, news aggregation services, and start-up sites with attitude. Even the students were surprised at their collective behavior, and the finding underscored the seminar's message that credible, authoritative journalism is worth serving and preserving regardless of the medium.

Putting It All Online

From my previous experience as an adjunct professor at St. John's University in New York City and the three years I had spent studying part-time at Columbia for my master's in journalism, I was already aware of the limited appeal that "dead tree" formats held for today's students. So instead of spending hours at the photocopy machine

Early on, I took a survey of my students as to where they had turned first for information. All but one had gone straight to established mainstream news media—either online or on cable—before heading off to their more usual informational Web haunts like blogs, news aggregation services, and start-up sites with attitude.

churning out reams of paper handouts, I put all my class readings—or links to them—online at a Web site I created and paid for until I could gain access to Ohio University's restricted academic Intranet. Further, I insisted that all written assignments be filed via e-mail—no hard copies allowed—which I corrected using the "track changes" and "comment" modes in Word and then returned via e-mail.

I took advantage of the high-speed Internet connections in the school's classrooms to pull up Web sites that augmented class discussions. We also went online to watch videos of network news programs and PBS documentaries, live netcasts of news conferences, replays of "The Daily Show" segments, snippets from YouTube, and slide shows and podcasts shot, narrated and produced by dyed-in-the-wool print reporters to accompany their articles on nytimes.com.

At first, I rather smugly regarded all this as somewhat cutting edge, but I came to learn that for Americans of a

certain age, watching TV online—even network news or prime-time entertainment shows—is becoming unremarkable. One disappointment, however, was my inability to arrange high-tech video teleconferences with the dozen or so speakers who addressed my students from afar. I had to settle instead for low-tech speakerphone engagements.

From the outset, I emphasized that since this was a journalism course, not only would I demand fine writing but also rigorous research. One result was a highly successful spring exercise in which students trolled the Web for two examples of novel storytelling—one good, one bad. Most cast a wide net and collectively returned with a bounty of highly informative, diverse examples of how our craft is evolving. I devoted four hours in each section to collective dissection and discussion. I could probably have developed a whole course from that exercise alone.

Fittingly, for a course about change, one of the biggest challenges was finding material with a shelf life. By the time September 2006 rolled around, information and even themes I had plucked in June or July had already withered or been overtaken by events. Similarly, the course I taught in the spring was dissimilar in many respects to the course I taught in the fall. Now I'm preparing for a new fall term at a different university, and already I know my seminar will be a significant departure from its two previous iterations.

Everything new is old again. ■

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² www.bravotv.com/Tabloid_Wars/index.shtml

Digital Media Push Images to the Foreground

In the midst of big changes in the working lives of photojournalists, a former news photographer looks at how journalism schools and programs should respond.

By Lester Sloan

In 2001, D. Michael Cheers returned to the United States from South Africa, where he had headed up the Johnson Publishing Company's unsuccessful efforts to produce an African edition of *Ebony* magazine. That five-year experience, along with 25 years he'd spent as a photographer on the staff of *Ebony* and *Jet*, provided him with enough knowledge and professional experience—he thought—to handle anything the academic world that he was about to enter had to offer.

What he wasn't prepared for were the vast changes sweeping through journalism as a result of the Web's demand for convergence strategies and multimedia storytelling, as well as diminishing revenues in the newspaper and magazine business. It wasn't so much that the fundamentals of journalism were no longer valid; it was just that students' needs seemed so much greater. They had to be taught to multitask their efforts at a time when diminishing newsroom budgets meant news organizations could no longer hire people to do a single task. Even with his considerable academic credentials—a PhD in African Studies and Research, master's degrees in Journalism and African American History—and his professional experience, Cheers's impending return to the journalism classroom got him thinking anew as he attended seminars and technology shows and sought out online instruction sites so he could prepare students for the jobs awaiting them.

In 2002, he joined the staff at the University of Mississippi, where he taught the basics along with as much of the new technology as he had mastered. Each semester, he found more he needed to know, and his engagement in these emerging new media arenas played an important part in reorienting the journalism program. In the spring

responsibilities as storytellers—providing pictures, both still and moving, along with capturing sound to use with the images on different media platforms. In assuming their new role, photographers now threaten the entrenched hierarchy of the newsroom. Greater responsibility warrants greater respect, which might point to the end of expressions like “my photographer” being used so often by reporters.

According to Dirck Halstead, a former staff photographer for *Time* magazine, a journalist working today is seen as a “producer” and not identified as a photographer, writer or editor. Ten years ago, Halstead put his still camera aside and became an advocate of video as the medium best suited to addressing the needs of the profession today. And he started a program called The Platypus Workshop to teach the skills of video shooting and the editing of tape and sound. His is a short-course taught in a mobile classroom.¹

As the years went by, more and more newsrooms began sending their photographers to his two-week seminars. In assessing why journalism schools have been much slower to respond to these kinds of changes in the craft, Halstead is blunt: “They didn't get it. Most journalism schools are populated by reporters who haven't been in a newsroom in the last 10 or 15 years.” Steve Shepard, dean of the City University of New York's (CUNY) School of Journalism, is more charitable: “We're creatures of habit. It was the same with

Like other journalists, photographers are being asked to take on greater responsibilities as storytellers—providing pictures, both still and moving, along with capturing sound to use with the images on different media platforms.

of 2007, Cheers was hired by San Jose State in California and given a mandate to revamp the school's photojournalism program. Working in partnership with the San Jose Mercury News, he created a program in which he will take a class to South Africa, where his students will produce stories for all of the newspaper's platforms—providing a workshop environment with genuine expectations but also the promise of mentoring as they learn. The paper agreed to also pay the expenses of a staff photographer who will work with them as an instructor.

Lessons in Visual Storytelling

Like other journalists, photographers are being asked to take on greater

¹ <http://digitaljournalist.org/workshop/weekend-short.html>

television's arrival. But these were profound and revolutionary changes."

Shepard, who was editor of *Business Week* for 20 years and a senior editor at *Newsweek*, heads up CUNY's start-up degree program, one he describes as being a "new model in journalism." [See Shepard's article on page 71.] He believes mistakes have been made—at news organizations and at journalism schools. "The newspaper industry was trying to 'repurpose' what the print product was and that was a mistake. They were not taking advantage of the new medium, which is interactive and multimedia." Schools, he said, weren't striking a proper balance between teaching journalism's principles and practices and applying them to the new demands of the new media.

Cheers stresses the need to help future visual journalists develop storytelling abilities with whatever technology they have to use. He agrees with Halstead that video works well as a medium since it forces its user to think in terms of a beginning, middle and an end. For photographers, this is not a giant step to take, especially for those who have done photo essays in which they've researched and devel-

oped a story from beginning to end. This past summer Cheers, as a fellow at National Geographic, used his time to develop his skills in this direction so he can pass on both his missteps and successes to his students.

One inescapable challenge visual journalists will have is to simply keep up with not only the rapidly changing tools of their craft but also the demands of the industry. No longer can a photojournalist's job be described as "go fetch;" now it is as much the job of the visual journalist to "tell the story" as it is the one who does so with words.

In its essence, the job of being a journalist has less to do with tools that we use and more to do with the breadth of knowledge that we bring to each story. History, economics, sociology and the arts are as important for photographers to absorb as they are for reporters. The Spanish artist Goya was one of the first visual journalists; familiarity with his work can inform how to visually report stories today. Every story is enveloped in history. While it's not always possible with breaking news to convey its broader context, there's a better chance of do-

ing so when we are not simply reacting to the moment.

News organizations should work more closely with journalism schools and programs. Cheers's partnership with the San Jose Mercury News offers a promising model. And he is hoping to establish a similar working relationship with National Geographic. At a time when we have an amazing array of tools to gather information—and we encourage nonjournalists to send us photos and video via cell phones and other digital devices—what will distinguish the trained photojournalist from the amateur is the knowledge we bring to the moment and the preparation we have to seize it. ■

Lester Sloan, a 1976 Nieman Fellow, was a staff photographer for Newsweek for 25 years. Prior to that he worked as cameraman/reporter for the CBS affiliate in Detroit. For a period, he was a contributing editor to Emerge magazine and an essayist with NPR's "Weekend Edition." He is a freelance photographer and writer based in Los Angeles.

Journalism and Academia: How They Can Work Together

'Neither the practical (newsroom) model nor a purely academic one is ideal for either the aspiring or the working journalist.'

By Jeffrey Scheuer

Journalists, like scholars, formulate knowledge by knitting facts to contexts. They need analytic and critical as well as narrative skills and substantive knowledge. The intrinsically hybrid nature of journalism—its dependence on both concrete skills and broader academic knowledge—cannot be resolved in the abstract; subject knowledge and practical skills

will always jointly affect the quality of reporting, just as they jointly affect the quality of teaching.

What, then, can journalists learn in an academic setting, and when and how should such study combine with or yield to the actual practice of journalism? The first question is the easier one: Journalists should study whatever brings depth and sophistication to their

work; without begging the question, that could be almost anything. Some forms of journalism require generalists, others demand expertise; specialization or expertise is what university campuses best provide at the graduate level, just as they provide general breadth to undergraduates. Columbia's master of arts program aims to do that through its four areas of concentration,

but why limit it to those? Why not offer, for example, a journalism track with a concentration in Arabic and Middle Eastern studies, or environmental science, or public health—or anything else of journalistic relevance?

A vast range of academic subjects are potentially of such relevance—including history, politics, law, economics, business, sociology, psychology, the sciences, technology, urban planning, regional and language study. History is perhaps most relevant of all, especially to the generalist, given its intrinsic connections to journalism; but it doesn't hurt to be a polymath. A master's degree in any of these subjects would be more useful than a degree in journalism *per se*; better still, a master's degree with a concentration in journalism, similar to existing joint-degree programs.

In addition to the many areas of possible specialization, there is a well-defined core of academic subjects that are directly relevant to all journalists. These include media history, law and ethics; media and society, or the interpenetrations of media and politics, and (especially) rigorous media criticism. Thus, it would seem logical to divide a journalist's education into four parts or phases: undergraduate breadth in the liberal arts; graduate-level specialization; core media-related courses, and skills training.

Journalism education should be refocused to pursue two overlapping goals: first, and most important, to better prepare journalists to strive for excellence and second, instrumental to that, to encourage stronger bonds between journalists and universities. Refocusing, in this case, means both broadening and narrowing: broadening the basic conception of what journalism is, and how education can

improve it and even blend with it, while providing more concentrated, specialized learning for individual journalists. Here are some suggestions:

1. Undergraduate journalism skills courses should be actively discouraged, because they displace more important learning. They should be

Practical experience and intellectual knowledge both count toward excellence—along with curiosity, imagination and courage. The ideal journalist, in short, is both well rounded and an expert.

replaced by campus journalism and professional internships.

2. Skills training should also be phased out of graduate journalism school curricula. Again, campus journalism and internships are the better option. (Stanford's journalism department has moved in this direction.) Certain advanced courses, such as investigative and documentary journalism, should be retained, along with the core media courses (law, ethics, history, criticism, etc.), because they are important, fit naturally into an academic setting, and are difficult to replicate in the job environment. An interim measure would be to confine practical training to intensive short courses, preferably involving work at a news organization. The simulated-newsroom training that still predominates in j-school curricula could easily be condensed, leaving more time for core courses and specialization.¹
3. A third improvement (however implausible) would be to abolish journalism degrees. Such degrees (unlike those in law, medicine, architecture, etc.) do nothing for news

consumers; they merely underscore the awkward and synthetic nature of journalism education. The academic degree system is unsuited to the differing and complex needs of modern journalists and is probably inappropriate to many other fields as well. It radically simplifies and distorts the extent and depth of study, and the level of actual accomplishment, and ignores the disparate needs of different students. The degree thus functions as a kind of credentializing tollbooth for career advancement and little else. Instead, master's programs in the many fields relevant to journalism (as well as

focused interdisciplinary programs) should be offered with journalism concentrations that involve actual reporting and collaboration between academic departments and news organizations.

4. More schools should implement the widely endorsed idea of offering short, focused seminars on the fellowship model for working journalists. The thrust of journalism education should shift to early and midcareer journalists. The diverse needs of recent college graduates, with and without campus journalism experience, and of journalists at various stages in their careers, require flexible programs of differing types and lengths—and cast further doubt on the value of granting degrees. As Orville Schell observes, "Journalism schools can ... justify their existences by striving to become workshop-like places where older and more seasoned journalists team up with younger journalists to do actual projects that get published, aired or exhibited."²
5. All journalism schools should strive to be independent centers of criticism and debate about journalistic

¹ In his report to the Bollinger Task Force, Nicholas Lemann proposed a short, intensive skills-based course in the summer preceding the academic year.

² Schell, "Some Ruminations on Journalism Schools as Columbia Turns," www.journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/debate/forum.1.essay.schell.html

issues and society (for which the Internet is an excellent vehicle) and should incorporate that critical spirit into their curricula. Students should learn by critiquing the work of their peers and that of the professional media and should study the principles and history of media criticism.

Neither the practical (newsroom) model nor a purely academic one is ideal for either the aspiring or the working journalist. What is needed is a more dynamic fusion of the two models and one that is more flexible to the needs of particular individuals. Practical experience and intellectual knowledge both count toward excellence—along with curiosity, imagination and courage. The ideal journalist, in short, is both well rounded and an expert. He or she will have a critical and skeptical temper, an understanding of the legal and moral parameters of the journalism profession, and a clear sense of its history, civic function, and critical standards.

Given the barriers that exist at

present, and which are exacerbated by the marketplace, it will require a paradigm shift to see journalism and education as tap-roots of the same democratic tree and part of an information environment cohabited by citizens, journalists and scholars. It will mean relaxing the boundaries, and perhaps the very definitions, of academic and journalistic institutions. But since knowledge abhors artificial boundaries, and cultural barriers only serve narrow constituencies, this will no doubt happen eventually.

Perhaps the Carnegie-Knight Journalism Initiative, a three-year, six million dollar program begun in 2005 by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, can help to move journalism education in this general direction. This initiative, a joint venture with the Joan Shorenstein Center at Harvard and several leading journalism schools, is intended to “improve subject-matter education for journalists,” develop investigative reporting projects, promote research, and encourage curricular enrichment and team-teaching

between journalism schools and host universities.

Finally, journalism schools can serve as laboratories for alternative models of both teaching and doing journalism—and alternative economic models—in keeping with Joseph Pulitzer’s vision of journalism as “one of the great and intellectual professions.” In the long run, there is great potential for synergy between j-schools, universities, foundations and research centers, with or without the help of traditional news organizations. They can produce knowledge that is timely, relevant and accessible to the public, but also free of commercial constraints and enriched by society’s deepest reservoirs of knowledge. That way points toward excellence. ■

Jeffrey Scheuer’s article is adapted from a chapter of his book “The Big Picture: Why Democracies Need Journalistic Excellence,” to be published by Routledge in the fall of 2007. He is also the author of “The Sound Bite Society,” published in 1999.

Values Reside at the Core of Journalism

It is these essential values that ‘make someone a good journalist, and they are what lift this work above the trivial.’

By Lou Ureneck

I found myself at lunch one day trying to explain the content of a journalism education to a colleague from the economics department at Boston University. He is a world-class economist and scholar—the sort of man whose career affirms the importance of research and academic publication. Fortunately for me, he is also a professor who writes op-ed articles for newspapers on public issues and seeks a broad audience for his work. This put me somewhat at ease.

In explaining what I and others in

the journalism department teach, I mentioned, of course, that we seek to give students the skills to be clear and direct writers. I also said that we teach them how to conduct interviews, search for documents, and be good and careful observers.

At some point in our conversation, the matter of whether newspapers have a future arose, and I told him that while I believed they do have a future, teaching students to practice journalism in other formats is important. I explained how we want print

reporters to learn how to shoot video and record sound, but how that is just one part of how we are groping for ways to introduce more multimedia skills into the curriculum because of the obvious importance of the Internet to the future of journalism.

But at this point in our conversation, I turned back, importantly, to the content of a journalism education and found myself elaborating more on the values and attitudes we are working to inculcate into students rather than focusing on particular skills, especially

technical ones. A look came across his face—a look of surprise, curiosity, bemusement or maybe a combination of all three. I think it was my departure from a description of a body of knowledge or even a regime for research and analysis—and my emphasis on values—which he found unusual.

Replying to his expression, I said something like, “I try to teach students to challenge authority by asking hard questions. I want them to develop a strong sense of skepticism. In a sense, I’m trying to acculturate them into the profession of journalism.”

Up until that moment, I don’t think I had stated this point quite so clearly to myself. Yet as these words entered our conversation, I grasped the essential strength that comes with the teaching of values to student journalists. Yes, of course, I have taught the necessity of fairness and accuracy, but in the midst of this exchange I realized the significance of our ability to draw out more visibly and with more elaboration some of the fundamentals of what I call the journalistic value system.

Core Values of Journalism

As we move through a tumultuous period in journalism and journalism education, mostly forced on us by the Internet, it’s important that we name these values. By naming them, we will then find ways to encourage and teach them. In enunciating these values—in reminding ourselves, then teaching our students—it might be that we will understand at a deeper level what it means to be a journalist.

Two critical values are idealism and skepticism. These seem oppositional, but in our craft their pairing can offer us a potent way to engage the world. For young journalists, these two values inspire as well as energize them to do useful, even penetrating, work.

The day-to-day and night-to-night work of a journalist can be grinding

and difficult. There is all that travel and the phone squeezed for hours between the head and shoulder. To get it right, and to make it good, the work often takes one more phone call, one more check of documents, or one more trip to the scene of the story. The ability to stay with it requires that journalists have a reliable source of strength on which to draw. I can think of no better source than their idealistic belief that the story they’re working on might in some, perhaps small, way contribute to improving people’s lives.

Even as they draw on that idealism, reporters must cultivate their skepticism. In other words, they need to be hardheaded idealists, to ask to see the evidence, the documents, and check

Ultimately, the purpose of journalism has to be more than about distracting and entertaining an audience with ‘content’ that eventually is monetized for profit.

the numbers. They want a second confirming source and then a third. Their skepticism should be implacable.

Joel Rawson, executive editor of *The Providence Journal*, told me a delightful story years ago that captures the spirit of inspired skepticism. It seems that a dog (Jess) that once had lived in East Greenwich, Rhode Island but had moved to Colorado with his owner was reported to have found his way back to his original home and owners—a trek that took him 18 months over 2,200 miles. It was a great feature story, of course, and it made the papers. But Joel was skeptical: He asked reporter Peter Gosselin to get to the bottom of it, and Peter did. The Colorado dog had a veterinary history that included an x-ray for a broken leg. The *Journal* had the second dog x-rayed, and—yes, you guessed it—the second dog’s x-ray was clean. No broken leg, wrong dog. The second dog was named Smoky, and

he lived less than a mile away.

A funny tale, yes, but think of how history might have unfolded differently if the Rawson standard had been applied to, say, Iraq’s alleged weapons of mass destruction.

There are other values, too. Independence and courage come to mind. So does a certain prosecutorial zeal to nail the “bad” guys: the ones who game the system, steal from the public, or exploit those over whom they have power.

All of these values are a part of being a reporter. They are what make someone a good journalist, and they are what lift this work above the trivial. Ultimately, the purpose of journalism has to be more than about distracting

and entertaining an audience with “content” that eventually is monetized for profit. In this regard, the core principals of journalism are well articulated by the Committee of Concerned Journalists¹ and in “The Elements of Journalism,” the book written by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel. Among them are

these: journalism’s first obligation is to the truth, and its first loyalty is to citizens.

As journalism educators ponder how best to train future reporters—whose work might never appear in a newspaper or on television but will be seen and heard on the Internet—we’d do well to find ways to explain and demonstrate the importance of the value system that underpins how and why we do our work. ■

Lou Ureneck, a 1995 Nieman Fellow, is chairman of the journalism department at Boston University and former deputy managing editor of The Philadelphia Inquirer. His book, “Backcast: Fatherhood, Fly-Fishing, and a River Journey Through the Heart of Alaska,” was published in 2007 by St. Martin’s Press.

¹ www.concernedjournalists.org/

Passing Along the Value of Humility

‘Students need to be open-minded about the best way to tell each story rather than seeing rich media as mere add-ons to word-driven narratives.’

By Mike McKean

Convergence journalism, as we teach it at Missouri, is more about new attitudes than new skills. Don’t get me wrong. We do our best to train students in audio, video, photo, graphics and Web production. We emphasize strong writing skills. We put them to work in all of our news operations—a daily newspaper, an NPR affiliate, a commercial TV station, plus various Web sites and mobile services. Students blog, make podcasts, create Flash animations, design interactive databases, and widgets—things they have to know to find good first jobs in today’s media environment.

Still, who among us in the profession or the academy can predict the exact hardware, software and distribution systems that freshmen entering j-school this fall will need to know by the time they graduate and hit the job market in 2011? Sure, we’re trying to develop reliable standards so they can more easily create compelling multimedia stories, organize our newsrooms so they can produce those stories consistently on deadline, and identify stable economic models so they can count on a rewarding career when they leave here. But the finish line is constantly moving.

The attitudes we need to instill in our students, however, seem clearer to me. They need to thrive on constant, rapid change. Students need to be open-minded about the best way to tell each story rather than seeing rich media as mere add-ons to word-driven narratives. They need to embrace teamwork. Very few lone wolf, backpack journalists can do it all with equal

skill and panache. And they need to be humble in the face of overwhelming social changes made possible by digital media.

Humility is not something journalists model well. Professionalism, integrity, social responsibility—sure. Humility? Not so much. But a YouTube/Facebook/Blogger world demands we do better.

... we push ahead with various approaches to keep well-trained journalists relevant at a time when we believe they are needed more than ever.

Our dwindling, skeptical audience is increasingly capable of creating and sharing its own news, however they define the term. Traditional journalists can belittle these “amateurs” or embrace them in a new reporting system that makes us both better. But we can’t stop them. User-generated content, citizen journalism—whatever one wants to call it—is here to stay.

Teaching Convergence Journalism

There’s still a crucial place in society for professionally trained journalists. So here’s a glimpse at what’s been happening at the Missouri School of Journalism since we created a formal convergence major in the fall of 2005.¹ Sophomores and first-semester graduate students begin with a skills course, Convergence Fundamentals, in which they learn the basics of still photogra-

phy, audio-video recording and editing, slide shows, and some simple Web design. During the final few weeks of the semester, students break into teams to produce in-depth, multimedia feature stories. We team-teach this course, as we do all of our required convergence courses. Convergence Reporting is next, and in this class students split their time between weekly deadline features reported in teams and individual rotations through our newspaper, radio and TV newsrooms where they work on short deadline stories. Then, in Convergence Editing, students learn more about personnel management and quality control as they again rotate through our newsrooms. They also spend four weeks acting as leaders of the teams working on features in the reporting class.

It is at this point, if it hasn’t happened already, that our students typically decide how to solve their “jack of all trades, master of none” challenge. We don’t want them to leave Missouri until each has a strong grounding in at least one journalistic specialty. So we require them to choose one of several, two-course concentrations designed by the faculty with a focus on newspaper and magazine writing, radio-TV reporting or producing, investigative reporting, photojournalism and design.

While completing their concentrations, students sign up for their final required course—Convergence Capstone. Again they work in teams, this time to research a practical problem or need, then create a journalistic product to address it. Students have designed

¹ Details about this major are available at <http://convergence.journalism.missouri.edu/>

everything from an interactive voter guide and a high school video-sharing service to a cross-platform advertising campaign for a local auto dealer and a Web 2.0 collaboration with a local documentary film festival.

Is our approach working? Two years is too soon to reach a conclusion. But our first graduating class in May landed some great internships, and they're now finding well-paying jobs as online sports editors, magazine designers, newspaper video editors, TV newscast producers, and Teach For America volunteers from Billings, Montana to the Rio Grande Valley to Orlando, Florida.

The convergence sequence has quickly become a popular major, and it can be difficult to get into. We're limited by a relatively small faculty (three full-time teachers) and lab space we share with our radio-TV colleagues. Those bottlenecks should be cleared when the facilities of the new Reynolds Journalism Institute² open at the Missouri School of Journalism with the fall 2008 semester. At that time, we'll hire more instructors, equip a larger lab, and open a technology demonstration center from which we will take its best ideas into our so-called "Futures Lab" to gauge their practicality in a working newsroom.

Collaboration and Convergence

Let's return to the value of humility and our desire to imbue students—and ourselves—with it. We know we don't have all the answers to teaching and practicing convergence journalism, but we push ahead with various approaches to keep well-trained journalists relevant at a time when we believe they are needed more than ever. At the same time, we make students aware of the increasingly interactive quality of their endeavors by offering new learning opportunities, some of which are highlighted below:

- Ask the audience what they want. We explore how major convergence projects should be based on sound research before launch and carefully evaluated after.
- Give the audience a voice. We've created a local Web site modeled on South Korea's OhMyNews that pairs student editors with citizens who want to write stories or share

[Students] need to be humble in the face of overwhelming social changes made possible by digital media.

pictures, sounds and video on topics they care about.³

- Find industry partners in the technology sector. We've been working with digital media firms such as Apple and Adobe Systems to keep abreast of what technology is emerging and to learn how to exploit those changes, especially in mobile communications. We're also starting to do regular visits with technology leaders, including some of our alumni, in Silicon Valley.
- Give students a larger voice. Let them choose and design their own projects. For example, we're about to launch a student competition to come up with the best desktop widgets to support the content and business sides of traditional media companies. Finalists will receive development money and programming support. The winning team will split a significant cash prize.
- Find nonjournalists on campus who know what you don't. In the competition (above), journalism students will team with students from computer science, education

and business. Professors in those and other disciplines can also plug holes in traditional journalism curricula.

- Look beyond the borders. Journalists and journalism educators in other countries are finding new and better ways to tell compelling stories with digital technologies. Our partners at Moscow State University's Faculty of Journalism, for example, are focusing most of their convergence efforts on independent documentaries because of severe government limits on newspapers and television news. Our partners in China are studying how citizens with cell phones can sidestep media censorship to shine a light on important social problems. Broadband mobile companies in Japan and South Korea are showing us what will be possible with live video, GPS mapping, and gaming when third-generation cellular networks finally become available in most American communities.

The convergence faculty at Missouri makes significant changes to each required course every semester, and yet we still can't keep up with all the new ideas and best practices. Our convergence major is just two years old, but most of the faculty already see it as only a temporary solution. If we're still here in our present form five years from now, I'll be surprised. In fact, we've already started a wholesale, school-wide curriculum review designed to ensure that all students are exposed to convergence journalism skills. Now that's a humbling experience for any turf-protecting department chair. ■

Mike McKean is the department chair of the convergence journalism faculty at the Missouri School of Journalism.

² <http://journalism.missouri.edu/reynolds/about-reynolds.pdf>

³ www.MyMissourian.com

Multimedia Journalism Changes What Universities Teach

‘Creating multimedia stories will require flexibility, a collaborative spirit, and strategic planning,’ and these are essential skills that must now be learned.

By Jerome Aumente

Just as print and broadcast news media are reinventing themselves to fully embrace the Internet and newer media, schools and departments of journalism and communication are revamping their courses to acknowledge the Web’s growing dominance, powers of interactivity, and the convergence of print, broadcast and online environments. But how rapidly or radically the changes will happen are difficult, unanswered questions for the media and the universities.

In a short time since the emergence of the World Wide Web, the news media, especially newspapers, have significantly altered their attitude toward the Internet. After earlier bouts of arrogant skepticism, anger and denial, the traditional mass media now concede the seismic transformations of the newer media are irreversible. Google, with a market value of \$144 billion from its Internet-based businesses, commands attention from a newspaper industry worth \$55 billion in the United States and experiencing steady meltdown in circulation and advertising revenue.

Tom Curley, president and CEO of The Associated Press and a champion of online journalism, told me that while some in the newspaper industry still are “trapped in the ‘word world’ and need to go 10,000 feet higher into the multimedia world,” most have accepted the transition to online journalism. Internet users number more than one

billion worldwide, and many eagerly participate in the interactive exchange as news-as-lecture gives way to the news-as-conversation. None of this is lost on the 458 universities and colleges in the United States and Puerto Rico from which 48,750 students graduated in 2005 with bachelor’s degrees in

Though change can come slowly in the conservative, consensus-driven and budget-strapped halls of higher learning, it is underway.

journalism and mass communication (and 3,500 with master’s degrees), according to a survey by Professor Lee B. Becker at the University of Georgia.¹

Paradigmatic shifts in information exchange are causing universities to revise their course offerings, internships and applied research priorities. Though change can come slowly in the conservative, consensus-driven and budget-strapped halls of higher learning, it is underway. My experiences related to founding a journalism department and journalism resources institute and then in helping

design an interdisciplinary communication school at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, reminds me of challenges involved in keeping pace with rapid and significant technological changes.

Aligning Lessons With Newsroom Changes

Last year, I interviewed editors and publishers from all the daily newspapers serving New Jersey and many of the weekly community chains. My inquiries were made for a book I published in 2007, “From Ink on Paper to the Internet: Past Challenges and Future Transformations for New Jersey’s Newspapers,” when the New Jersey Press Association (NJPA) celebrated its 150th anniversary as the oldest continually operating press association in the nation. NJPA supported my research.

With these editors and publishers, I discussed two topics in particular:

- What they regard as the fate of newspapers 10 and 30 years from now and why.
- How universities can better educate future journalists or train existing newspaper staff.

I’ve written extensively about newer media, including a book on electronic publishing in the embryonic days of

¹ Becker’s 2005 survey also found that eight of 10 graduates believe people will get most of their news via the Internet in 20 years. Most of them already get most of their news from the Internet. The median salary of entry-level, Web-related journalism jobs was \$32,000 entry salary compared with \$28,000 for daily newspapers, \$23,000 for TV, or \$26,000 for radio.

videotex, teletext and online databases, which were prelude to the explosion of personal computers that paved the way for the Internet's mass appeal in the 1990's. Many from print media who once were so dismissive of interactive media today regard the Internet as central to their survival. Larger metro and midsized dailies are reinventing themselves as 24/7 news centers, distributing multimedia news, and smaller community papers are also involved. When we spoke, many predicted that in three decades newspapers would survive but in sharply altered form and in a secondary role to their multimedia, online Web sites, with many more print niche publications. Some even wondered if their papers would exist at all, and many foresaw a major financial shift, with their print profits being eclipsed by their online revenues.

The task faced by journalism and communication schools and departments in upgrading their curricula is akin to training pilots to fly experimental planes that are only partially operational for an aviation industry being totally transformed. Some are headed toward wholesale revision of their course offerings; others are choosing to retrofit their existing courses to accommodate the interactive, multimedia world. A go-slower, gradual revision approach might work best for some programs, or it might simply be dictated by the lack of a budget to do much more. But all agree that new course work is required so students have a comprehensive, hands-on experience working simultaneously in doing stories for print, broadcast and the Web. These skills—taught until recently as separate majors—must be converged in the curricula as they are now being used in newsrooms.

Such flattening of curricula is not easily done. Until now, faculty have been hired and promoted as specialists,

while interdisciplinary experts—who are willing to teach—have been more difficult to recruit at a time when interactive multimedia news is still so new. Those who have this expertise command a higher salary. Graduate programs are preparing multimedia teachers, but this, too, requires resources and time. Universities also must be responsive to their students, many of whom remain focused on print or broadcasting and may resist being forced into a multimedia curriculum

The task faced by journalism and communication schools and departments in upgrading their curricula is akin to training pilots to fly experimental planes that are only partially operational for an aviation industry being totally transformed.

experiment. The fine line universities walk today is to be enough ahead of the change curve but not so far out in front that their graduates cannot perform in the print and broadcast environments where most jobs still reside.

Recognizing—and avoiding—short-lived media fads are other challenges. “Synergy” was seen as journalism’s path to a prosperous future just a few years ago, as media companies gobbled up competitors to create conglomerates of newspapers, magazines, television and radio, cable, satellite and online services. The belief was that once these media worked together in harmony—sharing content and consolidating newsroom resources—financial stability and journalistic success would materialize. Instead, the debris of such endeavors—with the travails of the Tribune Company and Time Warner—ought to be part of what students learn today. The dismantling of the revered Knight Ridder chain last year would serve to

remind future journalists of how even an enlightened company investing in good journalism and newer media became a victim of stockholder feeding-frenzy.

Students should be taught to function in this age of convergence. “Repurposing” news and information might be an achievable strategy for future economic survival, but these students should be taught the necessary journalistic imperatives that go along with such use of material. And the dumping of news reporting into a super-processing vat and piping it out through multiple channels of print, broadcast and the Web can be seen as an easy task, but doing this becomes more meaningful work when it is done with an eye toward keeping journalism’s basic principles in mind.

Learning to work collegially in a wholly reorganized newsroom will be a skill that no student can afford not to acquire. Creating multimedia stories will require flexibility, a collaborative spirit, and strategic planning. These attributes are not now sufficiently emphasized in newsrooms or in classrooms. Yet these abilities must be part of what a potential journalist is able to offer an employer who now knows that success will depend on the Internet being fed stories told in multimedia ways. And some of the news and information to tell these stories will arrive from citizen journalists, Web forums, and Weblogs; finding ways to seamlessly integrate these various avenues of news will be essential, too.

To accomplish this, various approaches can be tried:

- Universities can test the possibilities and limits of convergence and multimedia journalism in controlled classroom news laboratory settings.²

² These labs can offer students relevant exposure to the Internet, Web site building, experimentation with Weblogs, hands-on work with software packages for graphics and photos, and lots of time to report, write and edit for a range of platforms with text, graphics, sound, video and photos digitally mixed.

- Faculty can work closely with news organizations, which might be able to provide extra resources and equipment and monitoring.
- Internships can offer students a chance to participate in multimedia story-building in newsrooms.
- Journalism faculty doing applied research can measure what happens to their students in these classroom and professional settings through field visits and seminars.
- Universities must assess their faculty's increased time pressures and the skills needed to teach effectively in this multimedia environment to prepare students for the realistic expectations of the workplace.

Editors and publishers told me they want to hire journalists who have multimedia skills and experience. Young people already come to them attuned to the Internet, but some newspapers, such as Newark's Star-Ledger, train every incoming journalist in computer-assisted reporting and database research. Increasingly, however, most papers will likely want journalists to have a firm foundation in these skills when they arrive.

Restructuring the Curricula

The key word that encompasses these changes in the classroom is "interdisciplinary." Twenty-six years ago the provost at Rutgers asked me, as the head of the journalism department, to join the directors of communication and library sciences to design a new School of Communication, Information and Library Studies. Since then, information technology and several other centers focused on the media have been added. At that time, some thought this collaborative experiment would fail; as we attempted to do this, we endured critics who felt we

were being unfaithful to our separate disciplines. Instead, this new school thrived, receiving many additional resources, and was positioned well when it came time to integrate new media advances. Since then, many schools have duplicated this multidisciplinary approach.

At European universities, there is much interest in this integrated approach, and Rutgers has shared its curriculum and training in many countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

'Repurposing' news and information might be an achievable strategy for future economic survival, but these students should be taught the necessary journalistic imperatives that go along with such use of material.

Presently, I am a program evaluator for a joint program of the journalism schools at the University of Missouri and Moscow State University in which its centerpiece has been funding of a new convergence news lab and curriculum, brought to Russian students by the talented Missouri faculty.

Media management courses should be used to help future journalists learn how to work with complex budgets, strategic planning, personnel issues, and decision-making about technology in this multimedia environment. Communication law courses can be used to help students become familiar with ethical, privacy, libel and copyright concerns that grow out of online delivery of news and information and media convergence. Other topics deserving careful academic attention include: audience and reader analysis; the behavioral impact of interactivity; social and educational policy; technological understanding of computers, the

Internet and mobile devices, and the storage, retrieval of secondary use of information.

Journalism majors can be imbued with the excitement of gaining mastery of multimedia toolboxes. These will be tools they will use not only to get short-form news reports out quickly but also to develop longer, narrative accounts with links to documents to enhance credibility and the use of video, audio and graphics to place readers vividly at the scene. With these tools they will also be able to offer readers multiple perspectives on global stories as well as many dimensions of coverage of local news. And by knowing how to benefit from interactivity, these journalists will be able to tap into reader reactions, develop a network of new and valued sources, and gather reporting tips.

The editors and publishers I interviewed emphasized that universities should keep as their priority the core curriculum strengths of journalism education. These include teaching of solid research, interviewing, reporting, writing and editing skills; the broad knowledge of liberal arts and science studies; critical thinking and analysis, and high ethical standards and knowledge of press freedom and responsibility. Only when grounded in the fundamentals of journalism will this tree—from which many multimedia branches are now sprouting—be strengthened by the changes that are coming to our classrooms. ■

Jerome Aumente, a 1968 Nieman Fellow, is distinguished professor emeritus and special counselor to the dean in the School of Communication, Information and Library Studies at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

Pushing and Prodding Latin American Journalism Schools to Change

A Colombian journalist makes it more likely that students will learn how to ‘think online’ so they will be prepared to enter the job market in this digital era.

By Guillermo Franco

Not too long ago, C. Max Magee, when he was a graduate student at Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism, focused his research for his master’s degree program on the topic of “The Roles of Journalists in Online Newsrooms.”¹ It was an attempt, Magee explains, “to define which skills and intangible characteristics are most important in online newsrooms.” His findings came from online surveys he conducted in 2005 with 438 people who work for online news sites. His goal was to identify “the skills and characteristics that hiring managers are looking for” and also to learn what online journalists need to know and do in the context of their typical workday.

Magee’s survey identified 35 skills that he divided into four categories:

1. Attitudes and Intangibles
2. Editing and Copyediting Skills
3. Content Creation
4. Online Production Tools

Despite his precise recording of the comparative usefulness of each of these skills—and his helpful assessment of how and why many “old” skills still matter greatly—what Magee learned from online journalists is that the technical aspects of their work are not what sets them and their work apart from those working in “old media.” Instead it is “a different way of thinking” that is characterized by “a willingness to learn new things, multitasking and teamwork.” When summed up, the online journalists’ attributes amounted

to the ability to “think online,” paired with convincing “others to do the same.” It is these qualities that those who are hiring journalists for online media are seeking in applicants who come their way.

To think about Magee’s findings—and his conclusions—is to challenge some of the ways in which our universities and graduate school programs in Colombia, and in the rest of Latin America, now approach the teaching and training of future journalists. It’s very clear from studies such as this one (and other less rigorous ones conducted in Latin America) that students need to become actively engaged with online journalism. This means not only encouraging them to immerse themselves in what it is producing but also to help them analyze what they are reading and seeing and hearing. Additionally, they actually need to be producing it as part of their classroom experience.

Yet little of this appears to be happening in many of the 1,300 communication and journalism schools that exist throughout Latin America. Financial considerations—figuring out how to get the highest possible income from students—has convinced many programs on this continent to offer certificates and postgraduate study programs with pompous names and dubious quality without touching the undergraduate programs, which is where education designed to promote “digital thinking” should start.

One problem in having this happen is that to develop these online competencies would mean that many journal-

ism programs would need to redefine their academic curricula. And this task would reside with scholars who, for the most part, are not prepared to do what is necessary to push their programs into the digital age. Often today, the students criticize their professors and administrators for not having contact with the “real” world of journalism, and this criticism is aimed at their separation even from traditional media.

Another consequence of gaining this level of understanding about online journalism is knowing that when students leave journalism programs the newsrooms they enter—if they even enter a newsroom at all—will define jobs in new ways. And the roles they assume are likely to be expanded as opportunities for serving other communities—such as online social groups and niche audiences—evolve. Job opportunities might also open up at Web sites looking for people to “manage content” in order for them to sell their products or services through the Web or to figure out how to use content in corporate Intranets, to mention a few possible directions.

The emerging journalist’s multimedia abilities should go hand-in-hand with the spirit of an entrepreneur, and the attributes of entrepreneurship should be nurtured at college, too. Given the kind of less structured environment in which these graduates will be working in the future, acquiring these skills would provide more comfort for them in taking risks as they create new ways of distributing what they produce.

¹ <http://journalist.org/news/archives/MedillOnlineJobSurvey-final.pdf>

I share my pessimistic perspective with other journalists in Latin America, including my El Tiempo colleague Julio César Guzmán, with whom I published “The State of Online Journalism in Latin America” in 2004.² In our research, more than half of the Latin American journalists who responded to our survey told us that the quality of available journalism schools’ academic programs were not good enough. Also, 77 percent of those surveyed said that the biggest need in terms of training was to teach students how to create multimedia content; 17 percent indicated that the second most important need was how to write for the Internet. (Those who responded to our survey included journalists responsible for the Web edition at 43 of the most important newspapers in Latin America.) In the 2007 version of our report, which will soon be published on the Poynter Institute’s Web site, journalists insist again on the need for additional training for students while they are at school; these newsroom leaders also tell us that at least 55 percent of those working in online operations for the major Latin American newspapers do not have formal training in online journalism.

Another frequent approach in this region—one to be avoided since it only reminds the next generation of how bonded we are to the old way of doing things—is the strategy of using patches, of adding an elective here and an elective there. Instead, entire programs must be completely redesigned. Those who advocate the patch-here-patch-there approach tend to be the academics in Latin America; these are the same people who argue that this new direction in journalists’ training—whose strongest advocates are often from the United States—is not valid here because our context is totally different from that in developed countries. They contend, for instance, that Latin America has a relative low

rate access to the Internet or that interest in news at all is concentrated in the smaller realm of the higher social classes.

As journalists we insist on the importance of looking at this issue with its globalized context. What is going on now in more developed countries is showing us a path that sooner or later we will have to walk—and to prepare students now is our role and our responsibility.

‘We Media’—in Spanish

In February of 2004 the Spanish edition of “We Media: How Audiences Are Shaping the Future of News and Information” was posted online.³ I was involved in its translation, which I felt was important so that Spanish-speaking journalists could have access to the kind of information about online journalism that English-speaking audiences have been able to absorb. And this report offers plenty of evidence of why and how the Internet poses a big challenge to journalism schools in Latin America. But it also is a great opportunity for those who work at these schools to increase their level of understanding by gaining this access to material otherwise unavailable to them.

Commissioned by The Media Center at the American Press Institute, “We Media” can now serve as a textbook about online journalism at many schools where classes are taught in Spanish. According to its authors, Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis, the Spanish version has been downloaded almost 100,000 times since it was posted—more times than the English version.

The reasons for its online success—due to it being free and available in Spanish—speak to yet another difficult circumstance of many journalism schools in Latin America: their dependence on expensive and outdated course books. The reason:

Spanish-speaking journalism programs do not represent an attractive market for book publishers who specialize in these topics, and the few translated versions there are take too long to reach our students. And this lag time is especially dramatic when it comes to receiving current information about the Internet, new media, online journalism, or convergence. Though few acknowledge it, especially at journalism schools, language becomes a great barrier to accessing available information. The development of and the most vigorous debate about journalism’s digital challenge is happening and being documented most fully in English.

To try to repeat the successful experience of “We Media,” a Spanish version of the manual “How to Write for the Web,” a 300-page handbook, will be published and will be available for free at El Tiempo’s Web site,⁴ which is the leading Web site in Colombia. It provides a good balance of theory, research and real-world examples.

While these are examples of steps that can and are being taken in Colombia, it is important to point out that the developed world could—and should—make a greater effort to share its knowledge about journalism with those in the developing world and do so in languages that aren’t English. This would be a good start toward prodding our universities and journalism programs to move out of the 20th century and teach our students for the jobs they will find as the 21st century marches on. ■

Guillermo Franco, a 2006 Nieman Fellow, is content manager of new media at Casa Editorial El Tiempo and editor of Eltiempo.com in Colombia. He has been a professor in postgraduate journalism programs and lecturer on online journalism.

² www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=64532

³ www.hypergene.net/wemedia/espanol.php?id=P64

⁴ www.eltiempo.com

Newsroom Training: Essential, Yet Too Often Ignored

‘Only a third of news organizations increased their training budgets in the past five years . . .’

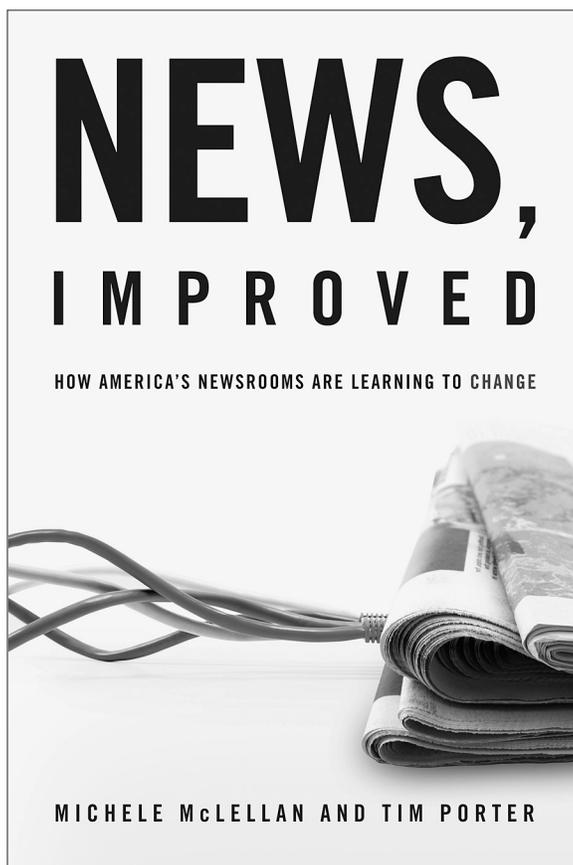
By Michele McLellan and Tim Porter

When The Atlanta Journal-Constitution’s editor Julia D. Wallace announced a major newsroom reorganization and buyout offers in February, she made this pledge: “As we implement changes, we will boost our commitment to training.”

This promise was impressive because Atlanta was already doing more training with its newsroom staff than most news organizations in the country despite facing the same financial pressures as other major U.S. metros. This newspaper is also in a minority of U.S. news organizations that have increased midcareer staff training in recent years. Along with several other savvy newsroom leaders, Wallace realizes that strategic training can help news organizations cope with the competitive and financial quakes now rocking the industry.

As the news industry strives to become a dynamic competitor in a fierce information economy, good newsroom leadership requires finding an edge to distinguish their news products from the glut of other media offerings. Improving reporters’ and editors’ skills, while raising their energy level and spurring motivation, can mean the difference between a news organization successfully reinventing itself and one that doesn’t.

“We want people to perform new types of work, some of which is not yet defined. Offering training lowers the fear associated with changing job duties and roles and offers an incentive both for staff members and managers, as training promises to improve the



work,” says Melanie Sill, executive editor of the Raleigh News & Observer, where newsroom training has been significantly increased.

Wallace and Sill have learned the lessons of the business world: Successful companies regard training as an investment, not as an expense, and lowering the fear factor is just one of the return benefits of consistent and continuous training. In other industries and professions—whether for pharmaceutical salespeople, Starbucks baristas, or even lawyers—training is a vehicle for financial success. Compa-

nies that invest in their people and create environments that support innovation adapt better to changes in their markets. They also have highly satisfied employees and outperform their peers financially.

“It’s something the leaders in the best companies talk about all the time, says Amy Lyman, president of Great Places to Work Institute, which puts together Fortune magazine’s “100 Best Companies to Work For” list. “If you want people to be innovative, they need to have the smarts and the skills and the knowledge, but they also need to have the freedom, the comfort, and the support to try things that are new and may fail.”

That attitude is rare in the U.S. news industry, which trains only sporadically, relies mostly on training offered by nonprofit organizations, and inevitably cuts the training budget (if it has one) when revenues fall. On average, U.S. companies invest 2.3 percent of payroll on training, according

to the American Society for Training & Development. In contrast, the newspaper industry invests less than one-fifth of that, 0.4 percent of payroll, according to an analysis by Inland Press.

Only a third of news organizations increased their training budgets in the past five years, according to a 2006 survey sponsored by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. About 30 percent have maintained training budgets in that time while 20 percent have cut them, according to the survey of 2,000 journalists and news executives conducted by Princeton Survey

Research Associates International. One in 10 newsrooms provides no training at all.

Yet nine in 10 journalists say they need more training and nine in 10 news executives agree. The executives—typically among the more experienced and knowledgeable journalists—say they need more training themselves, particularly in management and new media. Lack of training is the top source of job dissatisfaction among journalists, ahead of pay and benefits.

The Value of Newsroom Training

News organizations that have increased training budgets tend to take a more sophisticated approach, the survey found. These organizations train their staffs with specific goals in mind, have a training coordinator, and receive higher-than-average feedback from their staffs for the training that is offered.

That finding echoes what we and other program directors in Knight's \$10 million Newsroom Training Initiative learned between 2003 and 2006. The initiative, which includes Tomorrow's Workforce, The Learning Newsroom, and Poynter Institute's News University, demonstrated in dozens of newsrooms that training linked to actionable goals and encouraged by forward-looking leadership drives innovation and audience appeal by improving newsroom culture and news content. The culture change is key to learning and reinvention, including development of print and digital content that is more engaging to audiences with links to many information sources.

Many of the newspapers, large and small, that were part of the Knight initiative found that an investment in training paid off. Among them:

- The Herald-Times in Bloomington, Indiana (circulation 29,000) participated in The Learning Newsroom project and designated a staff member to coordinate training just five

hours a week. This training helped the newsroom become more adaptive and creative. Editor Bob Zaltsberg cites training as a factor in a 10 percent increase in single-copy sales of the newspaper and a robust drive to improve the Web site.

- The Waco Tribune-Herald (circulation 38,000), a Tomorrow's Workforce partner, achieved a more constructive culture that helped the staff embrace online journalism quickly and enthusiastically. Editor Carlos Sanchez said increasing the training also resulted in a 40 percent decline in turnover, which had been

... training linked to actionable goals and encouraged by forward-looking leadership drives innovation and audience appeal by improving newsroom culture and news content.

a significant drain on money and management time.

- One year after boosting its training in 2005, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution (circulation 350,000), another Tomorrow's Workforce partner, doubled the number of beat watchdog stories to 90 per year and turned its front page from one dominated by standard institutional stories to one that featured more engaging story forms. Improved culture and communication at the paper help to drive the newsroom's aggressive push onto its Web site. "The common understanding, the common language, the common sort of culture that you get from training everybody in the consistent way we have is a really big deal," says Bert Roughton, managing editor/print at the Journal-Constitution.
- The Oregonian (circulation 310,000), working with Tomorrow's Workforce, developed a staff-driven beat-reporting curriculum. "Our

beat reporting has sharpened reporters' sense of news and ability to mine daily and enterprise stories, says Editor Sandy Rowe. "We are, more than ever, holding people and institutions accountable through document-driven reporting."

The lesson from successes such as these is a simple one: When editors understand how necessary training is to achieve their goals, they will find ways to make sure it gets accomplished. Mike Jenner, executive editor of the highly innovative Bakersfield Californian (circulation 61,000) shares this view.

He and his staff, working with The Learning Newsroom, radically improved its newsroom culture while pushing more news content onto the Web. By mid-November 2006, the Californian staff had produced 600 online videos that led to 120,000 downloads. By comparison, a year earlier the staff had produced just six videos. "Our overall page views are up," says Jenner. "Our posts and our comments are way up on our blogs. And downloads of our videos are through the stratosphere."

For Jenner, training made the difference. "This is a different place than it was a year ago, two years ago," Jenner says. "Training is really what's gotten us where we are today." ■

Michele McLellan, a 2002 Nieman Fellow, is founder and director of Tomorrow's Workforce. Tim Porter is associate director. This article was adapted from their book "News, Improved: How America's Newsrooms Are Learning to Change," published by CQ Press in March 2007. For more information, go to www.newsimproved.org

Foreign Correspondence: Old Practices Inform New Realities

'Evelyn Waugh's book can't be read without thinking of today's wars and how reporters cover them.'

Waugh in Abyssinia

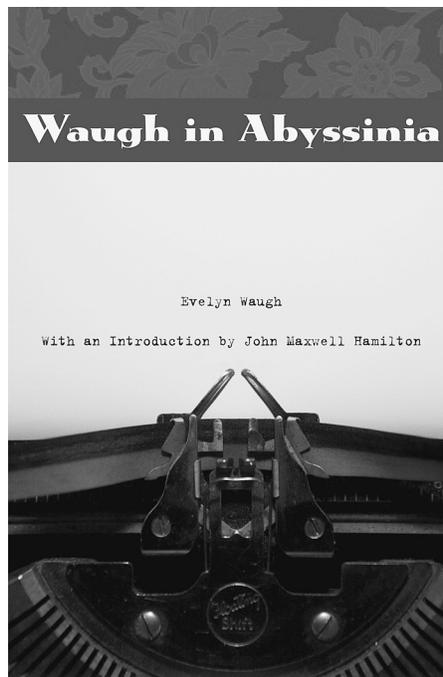
Evelyn Waugh

Louisiana State University Press. 288 Pages. \$18.95 pb.

By Cameron McWhirter

Evelyn Waugh endeared himself to generations of journalists with "Scoop," his comic trashing of foreign war correspondents. His main character, William Boot, and his episodes in the imaginary African kingdom of Ishmaelia have become touchstones for reporters grappling with the more ludicrous aspects of their craft, whether they are working the cop beat or Baghdad. At some point in our careers, we all have worked for "The Daily Beast."

Now comes an ugly truth. Waugh wrote so perfectly about bad journalism because he was a bad journalist himself. He was biased. He was lazy. He made snap judgments and stuck to them, unwilling to explore the true motivations of the people about whom he wrote. He didn't seem to really care that much about what he was covering, even something as profound and tragic as a war. Decades after "Scoop" entered the canon of fiction about our bruised profession, Louisiana State University (LSU) has reissued Waugh's nonfiction twin to his famous novel, the long-forgotten "Waugh in Abyssinia." The book is the first in LSU's "From Our Own Correspondent" series of out-of-print books and never published manuscripts by foreign correspondents. First published in 1936, right after Italy's successful conquest of Ethiopia, "Waugh in Abyssinia" is equal parts reportage, history, political analysis, and travelogue. This forgotten book provides great insight into foreign news coverage during Waugh's



time and raises questions about such reporting today.

The war between fascist Italy and Haile Selassie's Ethiopia in 1935 and 1936 was a calamity, one of several crises that set the stage for the coming Second World War. Among other horrors, the Italians used mustard gas against their ill-equipped enemy in violation of international treaties. Yet Waugh demonstrates that none of the journalists sent to cover the war, least of all Waugh himself, had any real idea what was going on. In lieu of facts, which Waugh appears to have only half-heartedly attempted to col-

lect, his personal prejudices dominate the book.

For Waugh, the Italo-Ethiopian War was more about his own lack of creature comforts than armies clashing. He never once saw a shot fired in combat. He spent most of his time in the Ethiopian capital instead of at the front. He only visited the Italian Army after it had controlled Ethiopia for months. A reader gets the impression that if the Ethiopians provided better hotel accommodations, he would have written a more favorable book.

The biggest problem modern readers will have, as did many British readers at the time it was published, is that Waugh backed the fascists. "Waugh in Abyssinia" would have, and probably did, make Mussolini smile. Waugh unabashedly embraced an imperial view that reeks of racist arrogance. Take this example from page 25: "However sordid the motives and however gross the means by which the white races established—and are still establishing—themselves in Africa, the result has been, in the main, beneficial, for there are more good men than bad in Europe, and there is a predisposition towards justice and charity in European culture; a bias, so that it cannot for long run free without inclining to good; things which began wickedly have turned out well."

These lines were written only two years before the Nazi Kristallnacht and only four years before the eruption of a European war that would engulf

the world. It's only one example of Waugh, the tepid war reporter, not having a clue and not trying very hard to get one.

Former journalist John Maxwell Hamilton writes in his insightful introduction that "The problem was Waugh disdained journalism work." Hamilton, dean of Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication, writes that the atmosphere in Addis Ababa in the run-up to the war proved perfect for someone wishing to "ridicule rather than understand."

And this general disregard for the professional task is the book's importance. It's a warning to modern reporters and readers. Waugh and the gaggle of reporters who covered the Italian invasion of Ethiopia trafficked in rumor with the voice of authority. (Waugh mocks this failing then commits the sin repeatedly himself throughout

his book.) They discussed battles and troop movements with no idea of where, or if, they had taken place. (One journalist made up an entire battle.) "Scoop" was written to cast these absurdities into sharp relief. In many ways, "Waugh in Abyssinia"—the novelist's attempt to produce serious reportage—accomplishes the same end.

Today foreign reporting is much better than in Waugh's day—if for no other reason than technology and global competition have made it more difficult for mendacity to stand as long as it once did. Yet Waugh's approach to foreign reporting has never fully left us. We still have our William Boots. Recently I heard a foreign correspondent asked about reporting from Darfur. He said it was awful: He couldn't find a decent hotel near the refugee camps.

Evelyn Waugh's book can't be read without thinking of today's wars and

how reporters cover them. "Waugh in Abyssinia" puts the reports of insurgent deaths in Iraq or the capture of a "senior" Taliban commander in context. Think of the snarky Waugh, pen in one hand, cocktail in the other, jotting down his report as he sat miles from the battlefield.

The "From Our Own Correspondent" series states its purpose as follows: "illuminating the development of foreign news gathering at a time when it has never been more important." Its first book is an excellent choice, illuminating the noble profession's inherent weaknesses. ■

Cameron McWhirter, a 2007 Nieman Fellow, is a reporter for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. He once freelanced in Eritrea and Ethiopia, and he says he took great measures to avoid other journalists while there.

Type Creates a Visual Signature for Newspapers

'In a marketplace where content and quality once drove consumer decisions, the newspaper now competes visually in a design-savvy, 24-hour free-information age.'

From Gutenberg to OpenType: An Illustrated History of Type from the Earliest Letterforms to the Latest Digital Fonts

Robin Dodd

Hartley and Marks Publishers. 192 Pages. \$29.95 pb.

By Ally Palmer

Type is a strange thing. Even as you read this you shouldn't be aware of the chosen font or the shapes of the individual characters or their size and the space between the lines. All those things have been taken care of so the experience of absorbing the information can be as pleasurable and seamless as possible. However, now that it has been mentioned you can't help but be aware of it and wonder just why it is important.

Like many things, typesetting and type design have undergone a transformation during the past 20 years. The advent of desktop publishing—and, in

particular, the arrival of Apple's Macintosh computer—was a quantum leap for the publishing industry. In fact the Mac is what gave me the opportunity in 1986 to work in an industry I had not even considered until then, when as an unemployed musician I found a job at a new music magazine, *Cut*, in Edinburgh, Scotland. A local publisher owned a new Mac Plus and quickly we saw the potential to produce a magazine with limited up-front cost.

Viewed from where we are today, this was a primitive machine; but its biggest problem was the limited amount of type available. There were Times, Palatino,

Helvetica, Optima and a few others. All perfectly functional, readable fonts, but not the inspiring selection we needed to create a youthful music publication. Instead we resorted to using Letraset, a dry transfer type, for headlines. This was a painfully slow, laborious process, but working with it gave me a crucial insight into the subtleties of handling type and the importance of such arcane matters as word and letter spacing.

As the Macintosh became more powerful and design and layout software such as PageMaker and Quark Xpress became more sophisticated, those of us using it to create pages for publica-

tion were able to control properly our designs and reduce the time it took to move an idea to final artwork. Nowhere was this ability more in evidence than in editorial design; with newspapers, in particular, this transition was noteworthy since until relatively recently decisions about layout were often in the hands of those who were neither designers nor journalists.

But the single most liberating aspect of this technological revolution was the sudden availability in digital format of hundreds and hundreds of hitherto inaccessible typefaces. After decades of plodding along with the usual suspects, an immense vista of typographic opportunities opened up. This had its drawbacks. It is easy to date the design of a publication to the era of the explosion of digital type: It will be the one that excitedly uses 25 different fonts on a single page, where one would suffice.

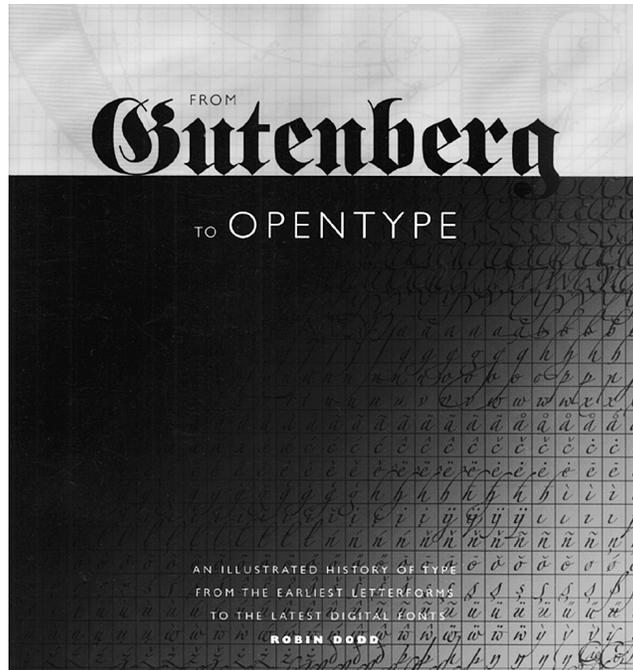
In his book, “From Gutenberg to OpenType,” Robin Dodd, an associate lecturer at the London College of Communications, takes us back to the time of Gutenberg’s movable type and then sweeps us forward through the intervening eras of typesetting strategies and opportunities, carrying us into the time we now inhabit when a plethora of typefaces are at our fingertips with the click of a mouse. It’s a remarkable journey, as it reminds us of the generational similarities of this thing called “type” and lets us see how all that we work with today has deep roots in very different technologies that have been used to bring us images and words through the centuries.

The Guardian’s Changing Look

For more than 200 years, newspapers have given us the first rough draft of history, providing a mirror to changing tastes and social customs, as well as changes in industry and technology. Recently, The Guardian in the United

Kingdom published its 50,000th edition. A newspaper that began life in 1851 as a regional publication in Manchester, in the north of England, is now one of the most modern and groundbreaking in the world.

To mark this moment it published in both print and online, of course, a selection of its most notable and memorable front pages. From the death of Napoleon—the news was published



several days after the event—to the 1963 assassination of President Kennedy, from the 1969 moon landing to 9/11, the accelerating pace of news-gathering was apparent.

To my designer’s eye, the most marked change was the way in which the paper’s design—and particularly its typography—had developed during the past 20 years. In the mid-1980’s, The Guardian bore a distinctly old-fashioned look that had barely changed in four decades or more. It looked, like almost all newspapers at the time, a bit scruffy, a bit dirty and messy, like it had been hastily put together with little thought for its appearance. In the late 1980’s it introduced a radical redesign. By the late 1990’s it underwent a sophisticated development that was striking for the way in which it took the paper’s trademark use of

Helvetica, one of the world’s most common typefaces, and made it feel completely contemporary. Continuing with its reinvention in a Berliner (midsize) format in 2005, The Guardian is one of the few newspapers whose modernity of design allows it to sit comfortably alongside such icons of 21st century design as the iPod.

Of course, printing developments have played a part in this, but without doubt the most important underlying factor in this transformation is the attention given to typography.

The newspaper commissioned two type designers, New York-based Christian Schwartz and Paul Barnes, from London, to create a complete family of typefaces. Guardian Egyptian, as it was named, has 96 different “weights,” or varying forms—from the classic form seen in the nameplate through to a special “agate” weight for such elements as stock market listings and sports results. All were created for use exclusively by The Guardian.

This was not in itself a revolutionary development. Newspapers, particularly the larger-circulation ones, have been doing this for many years. The New York Times famously created a font that became so common that a version is installed on almost every computer in the world. While this must please its original designer, it has had another, less-welcome effect for the newspaper itself: Any publication, no matter how small, could produce something that looked in some way similar to a title that is regarded as one of the most prestigious in the world.

Type Matters

This ubiquitous availability of many common fonts creates a problem for the modern newspaper. Twenty years ago it would have been hard to meet anyone who had an interest in type, let alone knew what a font is. Now everyone has their favorite typeface (among

the tens of thousands available); scrolling down a type menu is as much a daily occurrence for many people as discussing the latest episode of “The Sopranos” at the water cooler. And this means that anyone with basic layout skills and proper software can create a reasonably good-looking newspaper. But newspapers, particularly those selling their product at the high end of the market, need to retain a certain exclusiveness, and typography is one of the key elements in doing this.

Newspapers have for many decades been conservative products as they’ve made changes slowly, carefully and at times painfully. But now a genuine and urgent desire exists for change as these publications fight for a diminishing share of the market. In a marketplace where content and quality once drove consumer decisions, the newspaper now competes visually in a design-savvy, 24-hour free-information age. More than ever, there is a need for distinctive, exclusive, high-quality type, and at the same time a greater focus on the skills involved in handling typography.

Many typefaces are free today, and many others are relatively inexpensive. But most of these fonts are not designed for newspaper use, so it is up to newspaper designers, art directors, type designers, and design consultants to find a suitable type. Trying to choose the right font for the right publication is far from an exact science; it can have as much to do with instinct and feel as it does with theory and study.

Today, however, most newspapers are just one strand of a “multichannel” news operation alongside the Web (and, increasingly, mobile phones and PDAs). While the content of online and offline newspaper editions can be closely connected, the two are utterly different environments for which to design. The typographic limitations of the Web are extreme. Designers can use any fonts they like, but if those fonts are not on the reader’s computer (and they almost certainly won’t be) they will default to one of the handful of “Web-safe” fonts installed on the overwhelming majority of computers—Arial, Helvetica, Times, Courier

and a few others.

The only way to ensure text appears as the designer intends is to create it as a graphic, which slows down the speed the page loads and is unrealistic with dynamic content. Therefore, most newspaper Web sites feature a few elements that mirror the graphic identity of the printed newspaper; everything else is presented using Web-safe fonts. Even then, there is little control over the way the page will appear since different Web browsers treat fonts differently, and some “users” will specify that particular fonts are to be read at specific sizes. This is why so many newspaper Web sites—and indeed all of those with dynamic content—have a generic feel.

All of this emphasizes how so much of a newspaper’s identity hinges on the typography. There are some developments taking place to address this, with fonts being designed for Web pages to address the “softness” of on-screen type, but it will be some time before these are prevalent.

Whether offline or online, typography is but one element in a redesign process. At the heart of any change must be the publication’s content and basic structure. From a purely creative point of view, however, type can be the catalyst, and it often is the most inspirational part of the entire process. By combining and mixing fonts from different type, designers can produce surprising results. Using fonts that were never intended for use in newspapers can turn out to be the answer to a difficult creative problem.

In some ways the type designer has become the rock star of the newspaper design world. They are regarded as slightly mysterious but highly creative people who spend too much time locked in their studios worrying about details few other people would ever notice. Without this attention to detail—and the obsessive nature that designers bring to this task—progress would be stymied.

The process of creating new type is complicated, and the inspiration can come from many sources. “I tend to create my typefaces with some historical context and background,” says

Portuguese type designer Mario Feliciano. “Looking at type history creates a connection between what I do and the real world.” And the process has an inherent logical structure. “I normally start with a lowercase ‘n’ and, with the ‘n,’ I can make ‘m, i, l, h’ and ‘u.’ These letters give the basic rhythm of the typeface,” Feliciano explains. “To get more personality I move to ‘o, e and a.’ Using the uppercase ‘H,’ I start testing the first words, make corrections and move to the ‘b, d, p, q’ group and a few other uppercase letters: ‘I, E, F, T’ and ‘L.’ Then comes a delicate group of letters: ‘M, R, S, s’ and ‘g.’ When all these letters are designed, then most of the personality of the typeface is designed.”

Designers worry a lot about the “Starbucks effect” in the newspaper designs they produce. There is awareness of how much the world’s sense of distance is shrinking in this era of instant communication and access to information. When a new design is launched in Mexico City, for example, by the next day everyone in the industry can see how it looks and what typefaces have been used; within hours bloggers will have viewed it, analyzed it, and launched discussions about it. Twenty years ago it would have taken weeks, months or years for that design to be seen and evaluated in the visual community.

In this environment, homogenization of newspaper design can emerge internationally, but if it does one can hope that it will be with design standards raised across the board. If this happens, the people who benefit will be the readers. ■

Ally Palmer is a founding director of Palmer Watson Ltd. He has been a consultant since 1998 and has a record of creating internationally acclaimed designs for newspapers across the world. Before becoming a consultant, he was an award-winning art director with The Scotsman, Scotland on Sunday, and The European. In recent years he has been involved in launches, redesigns and relaunches across Europe and in South America, Africa and Russia.

The Lure of China

‘... we need to find a way to be both passionate about a subject and dispassionate about its effects and influences on our own country.’

By David D. Perlmutter

Writing in the *Washington Monthly* at the time of the Tiananmen events in the spring of 1989, journalist Jay Mathews noted that “the emotional commitment to China remains among today’s correspondents, particularly for those of us who fell in love with the romance and intrigue of China’s history, culture and size when we were still in school.”

I know what he means. That feeling began for me when, as a child, I read about and then traveled to the Middle Kingdom, and it has stayed with me during the past decade as I researched and wrote a book about the Western view of China by analyzing how *Time* magazine portrayed China in maps, cartoons, photos and other kinds of imagery from 1949 (the year of the Communist revolution’s victory in mainland China) to 1973 (the year after Richard Nixon’s famous visit to meet Mao Zedong). My bigger question was how the physical images of China that Western correspondents crafted reveal our conceptions and misconceptions about China.

For example, for several decades, publications like *Time* had no reporters in country so they could only reprint material from the People’s Republic of China (PRC) government. But *Time* was anti-Mao and anticommunist; simply posting “Red” propaganda pictures with neutral captions was ideologically impossible. Instead, *Time* used its captions to counter the images it described—that is, the visual content is mocked, questioned, discounted by the surrounding words. So an intended-to-be-flattering PRC-created image of Mao might be labeled “pudgy dictator.”

Time’s editorializing of images could be more subtle. Throughout much of



the early part of the Korean War, *Time* assumed that China was a puppet of Moscow and would not intervene to help North Korea. To “illustrate” this “fact,” maps of North Korea’s borderland show “Manchuria” (often crossed by “Soviet” supply lines) but nothing labeled China, although at the time Manchuria was China. Out of cartographic sight was a reflection of the closed ideological mind; hence the shock when hundreds of thousands of Chinese troops crashed into American forces on the Korean peninsula.

China Connection: Promise and Perils

Time, which until 1967 was directed by Henry Luce, was a fascinating focus for China images because the great press baron, a son of China-placed missionaries, was intensely concerned about

China and had strong opinions on what kind of China he wanted readers to believe. The “Lucepress,” as it came to be known (the publisher also controlled *Life* and *Fortune*), worked relentlessly in the late 1930’s and through 1941 to build American sympathy for China as a victim of Japanese aggression. Such sentiment spurred the United States to enact embargos on sales of critical resources to Japan such as oil, which in turn set the stage for the attack on Pearl Harbor. In addition, it was Luce and other friends of China, such as Pearl S. Buck, who would push for the repeal of the Exclusion Act in 1943, which had for more than half a century allowed the United States to ban Chinese immigration. Then in the late 1940’s and ’50’s, the Lucepress led the charge in accusations against State Department officials of being pro-communist and of “losing China.” Luce also was one of the leaders of the China Lobby, a coalition of U.S. congressmen, publishers, businessmen and upper-level military personnel that sought until the 1970’s to prevent America’s diplomatic recognition of Communist China.

Luce was not alone in being China-obsessed. The truth is that most of us who write about (or picture) China as journalists, commentators or academics are more than dispassionate observers. Many years ago, the late political scientist Alvin Z. Rubinstein commented to me that, in his experience, “people in the West who studied China tended to love the Chinese people, while people who studied Soviet Russia tended to be indifferent or actually dislike the Russian people.” He did not mean this observation to be taken as scientific fact, but in general a preponderance of Westerners

who have influenced our visions of China—from Marco Polo to the Jesuit fathers, Buck, Luce, many of the “China Hand” diplomats and reporters of the 1930’s and 1940’s, and most students of China in the academy today—loved or love China. They might have found fault in political situations in China, governments of China, or even aspects of the Chinese character, but basically they were or are fascinated and romantically attached to the Chinese people and culture.

What’s wrong with an art history professor, a magazine reporter, or a department store CEO being a Sino-phile? Problems arise when their bias skews our foreign policies and our coverage of news. Many Chinese political leaders, for example, have found such “lao peng you” (old friends) useful for affecting U.S. foreign policy as well as press coverage. Indeed, consulting for the Chinese has proved a rich field

for former diplomats and secretaries of state, as Harper’s magazine’s Washington editor Ken Silverstein has documented. Likewise, most business leaders today are “pro-China” because that is where the money, production and markets are located. But it does not serve the American public if the talking heads on television introduced as “China experts” are not disclosed to be, in effect, on the PRC payroll.

Perhaps worse, China-lovers have a long history of covering up the unpleasant facts. After 1973, for example, China experts in the West found the human rights situation in the country to be only a minor topic of study and commentary. Even human rights crusaders gave China a pass. As journalist James Mann asserted in his 1998 book “About Face: A History of America’s Curious Relationship With China, From Nixon to Clinton,” “[President Jimmy] Carter and his aides gave China virtually a

blanket exemption from the human rights policies they so readily applied elsewhere.” Indeed, such a characterization could be applied to practically all China watchers in the 1970’s and 1980’s. As historian Roberta Cohen observed before and after rapprochement, “No systematic or serious effort was made by governments or human rights organizations to call the PRC to account or even to document its abuses. No detailed analysis of China’s human rights record appeared.” Cohen made this point in 1987 in writing about the 1980’s; within a few years China’s human rights problem would be an often-reported news story.¹

In all, writing a book on visual journalism about China has not undermined my esteem for the Chinese people or Chinese civilization. But my studies have also reminded me that blind love, in the end, serves neither the interests of the lover nor the object of his or her affection. Generally, we need to find a way to be both passionate about a subject and dispassionate about its effects and influences on our own country. People who write about China tend to be fascinated by it; that will always be a given. But our obligation is for that curiosity and affection to lead us to upholding the most basic duty of journalists: to tell the truth, as we learn it. ■

David D. Perlmutter is a professor and associate dean for Graduate Studies and Research at the William Allen White School of Journalism & Mass Communications at the University of Kansas and author of “Picturing China in the American Press: The Visual Portrayal of Sino-American Relations in Time Magazine, 1949-1973.”

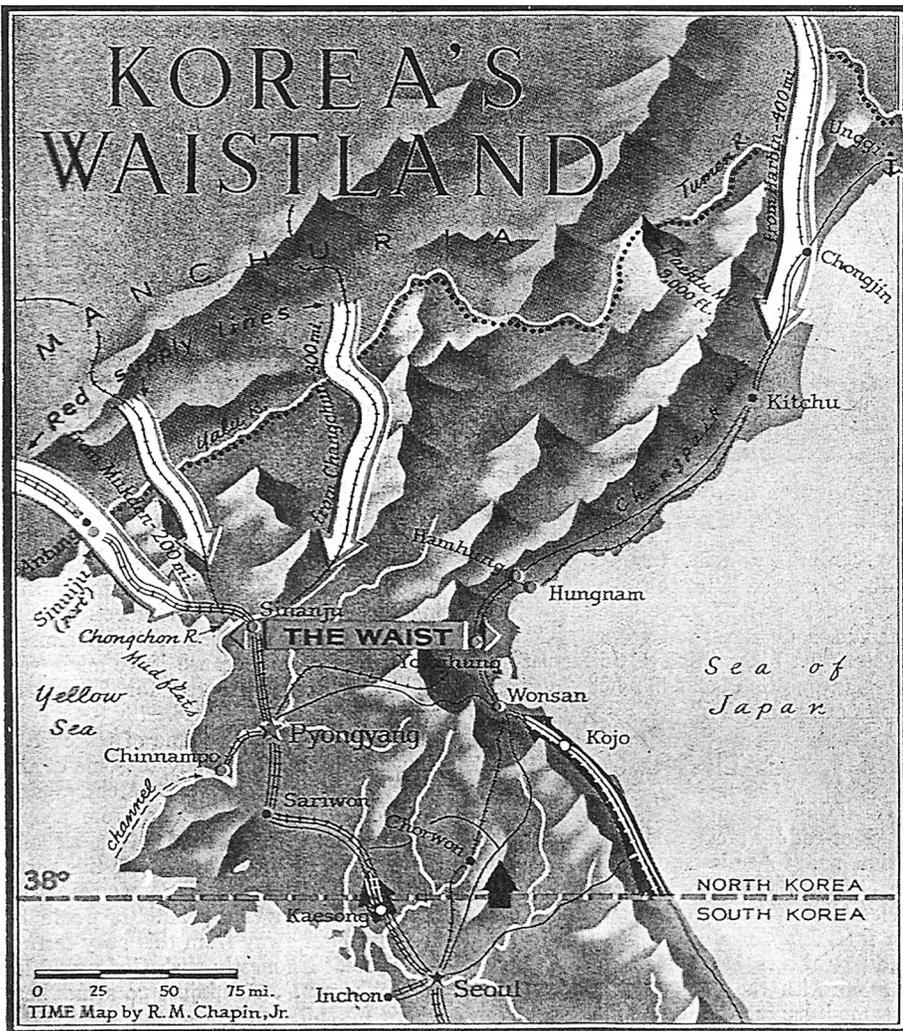
Continued on next page.



Time cover painting by Giro. ©Time, Inc. January 13, 1967.

For years, Time used paintings and cartoons to attack and to ridicule the People’s Republic of China leadership. Typical of the genre was a 1967 cover image that juxtaposes a Chinese personage with a dragon. Chairman Mao, lips pursed, squinting, dyspeptic, scans the horizon but, one senses, he is not looking at anything in particular. His head, like some disembodied bust, is surrounded by a snakelike dragon whose body consists of the instantly recognizable lengths and guard towers of the Great Wall. The dragon is not facing us, as was the case with many of Time’s previous Chinese dragons, but is scuttling away, about to close the gap with its own tail. The metaphor is striking and brilliant: The empty god of Mao has walled off the nation and walled out the world. The China monster is also, by implication, about to—like some serpent from a mythological tale—swallow itself. —DDP

¹ See Merle Goldman, “The Persecution of China’s Intellectuals: Why Didn’t Their Western Colleagues Speak Out?” *Radcliffe Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (1981) and Roberta Cohen, “People’s Republic of China: The Human Rights Exception,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (1987).



Map of "Korea's Waistland" by R.M. Chapin, Jr. ©1950 by Time, Inc. October 16, 1950.

Editorial views shape images. When North Korea invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950 the attack, a manifest act of aggression, was assumed to be a Soviet plot, with Kim Il Sung (hardly known outside the peninsula) as errand boy and China as lurking pawn. After all, the attack came only a few months after China had signed a treaty of alliance with the Soviet Union. Shortly before the onslaught, Secretary of State George Marshall described China as being "literally under the direction of the Soviet Union." This was the press consensus as well: Time, until and even beyond the date of the Chinese intervention in Korea in November, projected in maps and diagrams, illustrated in photos, and described in captions and articles a worldview in which Russia was the controller of North Korea and China a conduit. For example, in Time of October 16, 1950, in the midst of an article "For a Free Korea," a map titled "Korea's Waistland," shows "Red supply lines" entering from Manchuria (not labeled as being in China). Black arrows from the south mark the advance of the victorious American-U.N. armies toward "the Waist" (the narrower section of North Korea).

With such views dominating political and journalistic discourse, the public would be unlikely to hold an opposing view. Indeed, in December 1950, 81 percent of respondents to one poll said that the Soviet Union was responsible for the Korean War while only five percent thought the impetus for North Korea's attack came from China. It followed that American assessments of Chinese behavior would be based on trying to gauge Soviet intentions: a fatal error that ignored Chinese nationalist concerns. —DDP

The Poet's Voice Surfaces in a Time of War

'All of us have notebooks and brains full of narrative poetry.'

By Eliza Griswold

You May Lie: that's the difference between poetry and reportage. Although what matters is telling the truth. In poetry, you may also return to a moment once it has passed and wander back into that fear, doubt, regret to try to make meaningful sense of what happened, or didn't. All of us have notebooks and brains full of narrative poetry. Here are a few from mine.

Monkey

The soldiers are children and the monkey's young.

He clings to my leg, heart against calf—
a throat filling, refilling with blood.

Last week, the children ate his mother—
dashed her head against the breadfruit.

A young girl soldier laughs,
tears the baby from my leg
and hurls him toward the tree.

See, she says, you have to be rough.

When she was taken, the girl's
heart too pulsed in her throat.

This poem comes from an encounter with a young soldier at a Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) camp at the edge of the jungle near San Vicente, Colombia. The visit took place in 2001, when the FARC's 42,000 square kilometer dmz, called Farclandia, still existed. There, the FARC was free to mete out justice and to play beach volleyball. The relatively relaxed atmosphere made it easier for young soldiers to tell their stories. —E.G.

Buying Rations in Kabul

The Uzbek boys on Chicken Street
have never had enough to eat.
They stock from shelf to shining shelf
these GI meals, which boil themselves
in added water (bottled, please).
In twenty minutes, processed cheese
on jambalaya followed by
a peanut butter jamboree.

The boys, polite,
advise on which we might prefer—
Beef Teriyaki, Turkey Blight—
and thank us twice for bringing peace
as, meals in hand, we leave the store.
Of course they know that any peace
that must be kept by force
goes by another name.

This was the bustling city in 2002, swollen with recently returned refugees. Two young ethnic Uzbeks ran their father's shop on Chicken Street. At the time, they stocked mostly MREs they procured from Bagram Air Force Base. The boys were enthusiastic about the MREs and loved to offer advice about which were best but, as I hope is clear, they'd never eaten them.
—E.G.

Bedbugs

In the Bedouin's foam mattress,
a bedbug mother tips back her baby's chin
and pours my blood down his throat. You wrote
in all my wandering I risk my chance
to give birth. That's hardly true. All over
the earth, I've fed my flesh to bugs.
That's some kind of mother for you.

This irritated poem was born of too many scratchy long-distance phone conversations between Medellin, Colombia and Woody Creek, Colorado. It also bears a universal empathy for those of us who've woken with those terrible bites and the spots of blood the bugs leave on sheets when they burrow into exposed flesh.
—E.G.

Arrest

The joins in the highway rise below the tires
 as if we are running over bodies.
 The windows are covered in butcher paper
 and night coming cools the car's frame.
 My head hangs the way cows' do:
 complete submission to being led.
 The last thing I saw was the red cloth coming
 before it was tied around my eyes.
 My spirit thumps in the darkness.
 I've seen the pictures on the internet.
 Sometimes I fake a swoon or cry,
 hoping it might free me.
 Sometimes I refuse to answer
 questions they already know.
 They feed me water from a cup;
 I swallow. How human we are,
 the tender, puncturing skin,
 the illusion we can save ourselves
 if we find the right words
 and try with all our might.

This was written after an arrest
 in North Waziristan. I suffered
 very little in comparison to those
 who were with me at the time.
 —E.G.

Eliza Griswold, a 2007 Nieman Fellow, is a fellow at the New America Foundation. Her poems are from "Wideawake Field," Griswold's first book of poetry, published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. She is working on a nonfiction book, "The Tenth Parallel," which also will be published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

—1967—

Dana Bullen, a foreign editor of *The Washington Star*, died June 25th of cancer in his home in Alexandria, Virginia. He was 75.

Bullen worked at the *Star* for 21 years, only leaving when it folded in 1981. During that time he covered Senate and Supreme Court affairs and the 1968 presidential campaign, served as foreign editor, and wrote columns on constitutional law. In 1981 he became executive director of the World Press Freedom Committee (WPFC) and served as its representative at the United Nations and several intergovernmental conferences. He continued his work for press freedom through

his speeches, the production of several books, organizing international meetings on press freedom issues, and leading studies. After he retired in 1996 he continued to work with WPFC as a senior adviser for another 10 years, guiding the organization through emerging issues of digital freedom.

“Wherever men believe that a free press means a free people, Dana Bullen will be remembered,” said Harold W. Andersen, chairman emeritus of WPFC. “On any list of dedicated, articulate, persistent and effective defenders of freedom of the press across the world for the past several decades, [he] ranks among the very best.”

In 2000, Bullen received the Inter American Press Association’s Chapultepec Grand Prize for his work in press freedom and was twice awarded the American Bar Association’s Silver Gavel Award for his coverage of the judicial system. His wife, **Joyce**, asks that contributions in his honor be made to the WPFC.

Anthony Day died on September 2nd of complications from emphysema at a hospice in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He was 74.

Day was born into a newspaper family. His father, Price Day, was a foreign correspondent for *The (Baltimore) Sun* and won a Pulitzer Prize for international reporting in 1949. His three brothers also became journalists, and Day met his wife, **Lynn**, while both were reporters at *The Evening Bulletin of Philadelphia* in the 1960’s.

From 1971 to 1989 Day was editorial page editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, hired by then Publisher Otis Chandler

to bring the paper into the top tier of newspapers and “to add credibility to an editorial page long viewed as reactionary and protective of local business interests,” according to the obituary by Mike McIntire of *The New York Times*. Before Chandler’s death in 2006, McIntire writes, Chandler said, “I recruited Tony as the right man to remake the *Times*’ editorial page, and I always felt it was one of the best decisions I ever made. The most important thing was that Tony completely shared my vision of what the *Times*’ editorial page had to be—independent and nonpartisan, free of the Republican Party or any party. ... He was brave and erudite and believed, like I did, that the paper had to be a voice for all the people of Los Angeles and California.”

One of the first bold statements Day made was in an editorial he wrote about the Vietnam War. His experience as a reporter in Vietnam convinced him that troops should be pulled from that war but, as Jon Thurber writes in the *Los Angeles Times*, “Such an idea was controversial ... because the paper had supported the war and President Nixon had been a longtime favorite of the Chandler family and the *Times*.” But Day’s editorial, “Get Out of Vietnam NOW,” appeared in the newspaper on June 7, 1970, and began, “The time has come for the United States to leave Vietnam, to leave it swiftly, wholly, and without equivocation.” Over the years, according to Thurber, Day “helped push the paper to adopt new, more balanced editorial stances, an unswerving support for constitutional rights and independent positions on a number of controversial issues, including gun control and capital punishment.”

In 1989, a year after Chandler broke his official ties with the paper, Day was taken off of his position on the editorial page and became senior correspondent, covering ideas and innovation. Although he retired in the mid-1990’s, Day continued to write for the Book Review section of the paper, and his final essay, a review of “*The Far Reaches*” by Homer Hickam, appearing on August 1st.

Day is survived by his wife, Lynn, and a son, John. A daughter, Julie, died in 1989.

South African Niemans Gather in Cape Town



Curator Bob Giles with two recent South African fellows, **Kim Cloete**, NF ’06, left, and **Lizeka Mda**, NF ’04.

South African Nieman Fellows traveled to Cape Town on June 2, the eve of the World Newspaper Congress and World Editors Forum, for their annual gathering. The dozen fellows met to discuss the state of the South African alumni group and to hear a report from Lippmann House by Curator **Bob Giles**, NF ’66. **Pippa Green**, NF ’99, was elected to lead the organization during the coming year. The group then adjourned to attend a dinner honoring **Nat Nakasa**, a 1965 Nieman Fellow who died in exile. The award, given in Nakasa’s name, is sponsored by the Nieman Society of Southern Africa and the South African National Editors’ Forum. ■

Philip Meyer will be honored in March 2008 with a symposium entitled “Raising the Ante: The Internet’s Impact on Journalism Education.” Meyer, Knight Chair in Journalism at the University of North Carolina’s School of Journalism and Mass Communication, has announced plans to retire next year. Meyer’s successor will have a new title, Knight Chair in Journalism and Digital Media Economics, reflecting the program’s adaptation to the digital era. Meyer is author of “The Vanishing Newspaper,” a book that details the weakening of traditional news models in the emerging digital age.

“[Meyer’s book] is must reading for every editor and publisher,” said Jean Folkerts, dean of the school. “We expect our new Knight Chair to achieve a similar impact—to generate and communicate ideas and data that help mass communication professionals understand where the field is headed and how to better serve the public while making a profit.” (See Folkerts’s article on page 73.)

William F. Woo, who died in 2006, was known for writing letters and essays to his students at Stanford University, where he was Lorry I. Lokey Visiting Professor of Professional Journalism. That material has now been compiled into a book, “Letters from the Editor: Lessons on Journalism and Life,” published by the University of Missouri Press. The informal letters and essays express his thoughts and reflections on journalism culled from his 40 years as a newspaperman. Woo’s Nieman classmate, **Philip Meyer**, edited the material and wrote the introduction. Royalties from the book will go towards Asian American Journalists Association internships.

—1968—

Jerome Aumente completed two programs in the spring for journalists visiting the United States from the Middle East and from East Asian countries with significant Islamic populations. They are the latest in a series of eight programs for Arab and Islamic

journalists he has done in cooperation with Meridian International Center, Washington, D.C.

Aumente also published a new book in the spring, “From Ink on Paper to the Internet: Past Challenges and Future Transformations for New Jersey’s Newspapers,” which looks at the history of the newspapers and the challenges they face to reinvent themselves in the digital age of the Internet. The book is a centerpiece timed for the New Jersey Press Association’s (NJPA) 150th anniversary in 2007. NJPA is the oldest continually operating press association in the United States.

In the fall, Aumente will help conduct special panels and a symposium on the future of journalism education and media transformations in the digital age at the Rutgers University School of Communication, Information and Library Studies where he is distinguished professor emeritus and special counselor to the dean. (See his article on page 85.)

—1976—

Yoichi Funabashi is now editor in chief of Asahi Shimbun in Tokyo, Japan. With a circulation of 12 million, it is the largest newspaper in that country. The official announcement of his appointment states that “In Asahi Shimbun’s 130-year history, Dr. Funabashi is the third Editor in Chief.” The first held the position from 1936 to 1943 and the second from 1971 to 1977. Funabashi was a reporter for Asahi Shimbun in Beijing and Washington, D.C. before being named American general bureau chief. Funabashi has also been a visiting fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics and a Distinguished Guest Scholar at the Brookings Institution.

—1981—

Doug Marlette died in a car accident near Holly Springs, Mississippi on July 10th. He was 57. Marlette, an editorial cartoonist and creator of the comic strip Kudzu, worked for the Tulsa World. He received the Pulitzer

Prize in 1988 for his cartoons while working for the Atlanta Constitution and the Charlotte Observer.

The outpouring of grief from those who knew Marlette and his work was quick: “This is just a devastating loss. He could do it all and do it well,” said novelist and friend Pat Conroy. When he worked at Newsday, “most days, by the time we finished our morning meeting, he would have his cartoons done, beautifully drawn, on great big sheets of paper in India ink,” said Carol Richards, former deputy editor of the editorial pages, quoted in an obituary by Michael Amon and Carl MacGowan in Newsday.com. And James Klurfeld, Newsday’s editorial page editor, said, “He gave us a real emotional wallop. Day in and day out, he was always entertaining. He was always acerbic.”

During his career, Marlette’s cartoons drew strong emotional reactions from his readers. The most controversial one was titled, “What Would Mohammed Drive?” that showed a Ryder truck fitted with a bomb and driven by a Muslim man. Marlette made the cartoon in 2002 while with the Tallahassee Democrat. Thousands of e-mails arrived when the cartoon was published, many of them death threats. In an article he wrote for salon.com and reprinted in the Summer 2006 issue of Nieman Reports, Marlette wrote about “the incendiary role of the cartoonist.” He said, “The best political cartoons ... are always created in the spirit of the Prague Spring and the Velvet Revolution. They question authority, challenge the status quo, and are inevitably accused of ‘Disturbing the Peace,’ borrowing the title of Václav Havel’s 1990 book. If the editorial cartoons are doing their job, efforts will be made to suppress them.”

Marlette is the author of a number of volumes of his cartoons and two novels, “The Bridge” (HarperCollins) and “Magic Time” (Sarah Crichton Books/Farrar, Straus and Giroux). His comic strip was adapted into a musical, “Kudzu, A Southern Musical,” produced at Duke University and at Ford’s Theatre in Washington, D.C.

He is survived by his wife, **Melinda**, and son, Jackson.

—1985—

Ed Chen has been elected president of the White House Correspondents Association for 2009-2010. Chen is senior White House correspondent for Bloomberg News and will be covering the 2008 presidential campaign.

—1986—

Geneva Overholser has been chosen to lead the board of directors for The Center for Public Integrity, the center announced in June. Overholser, who has served on the board for the past two years, holds the Curtis B. Hurley Chair in Public Affairs Reporting for the Missouri School of Journalism in its Washington, D.C. bureau.

—1988—

Eileen McNamara is one of five recipients of the 2007 Yankee Quill Award. This annual award, which is a recognition of efforts to improve journalism in New England, is presented by the Academy of New England Journalists through the New England Society of Newspaper Editors. McNamara was cited as “an advocate for the highest standards of ethics in the newsroom, with a passion to correct social injustice and provide a voice to the voiceless.” McNamara, a long-time columnist at The Boston Globe, is now a professor of journalism at Brandeis University. She received the 1997 Pulitzer Prize for Commentary for the columns she wrote for the Globe.

—1989—

Joseph Thloloe has been appointed the new Press Ombudsman for South Africa and will head the Press Council of South Africa, the institution replacing what was known as the Press Founding Bodies Committee. Thloloe is a former editor in chief of SABC TV news and etv news and was recipient of the 1982 Louis Lyons Award for Conscience and Integrity in Journalism. Thloloe was initially banned from reporting in South Africa in January 1981, after 18 years

as a labor reporter. During that time he worked for The World, a Johannesburg newspaper banned in 1977; for The Post, also in Johannesburg, which was closed under threat of banning in 1980, and The Sowetan, which replaced The Post. Thloloe was a founder and first president of the Union of Black Journalists, an organization banned by the government in 1977.

According to an article on *allafrica.com*, the new Press Council of South Africa’s 12-member Appeal Panel includes six public representatives, “something that represents a unique feature in the history of South African media’s administrative affairs.” The full council consists of 24 members. “The key issue for me,” said Thloloe, “is that it’s designed to uphold the highest standards in journalism.”

—1993—

Dori Maynard received \$15,000 in the latest Knight News Challenge for a proposed blog on creating and maintaining diversity in digital media. Maynard was one of several individuals and organizations awarded money by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation for “innovative ideas using digital experiments to transform community news.” Maynard is president and CEO of the Robert C. Maynard Institute for Journalism Education and previously directed the institute’s History project, which continues to preserve and protect the work of journalists of color written in the 1960’s and 1970’s. In her current role, she also works on the Fault Lines Project, which looks at diversity through the prisms of race, class, gender, generation and geography. That project will give an initial structure to her blog as she looks at the ever-evolving world of the new media.

—1995—

Lou Ureneck has a new book out, “Backcast: Fatherhood, Fly-Fishing, and a River Journey through the Heart of Alaska,” published by St. Martin’s Press. The book is an account of a trip Ureneck took with his son Adam, after

Ureneck and his wife divorced. It was to be a way to reconnect with his son, to regain his trust. In an excerpt from “Backcast,” Ureneck writes that the trip was an attempt to “settle some of the trouble between Adam and me. It would be good, I thought, for us to go fishing together one last time. In the woods and on the river, maybe we would regain something of our old selves before he went off to college and on to the rest of his life. Looking back, I have to admit the trip was a little desperate. I had been willing to take the risk. My life was in a ditch: I was broke from lawyers, therapists and alimony payments and fearful that my son’s anger was hardening into life-long permanence. I wanted to pull him back into my life. I feared losing him. Alaska was my answer. What I had failed to appreciate, of course, was Adam’s view of the expedition. For him, the trip meant spending 10 days with his discredited father in a small raft and an even smaller tent. It was not where he had wanted to be, not now, not with me, and not in the rain. The trip would take us through 110 miles of rugged Alaska, some of it dangerous and all of it, to us anyway, uncharted. I had no inkling of what lay ahead: fickle early fall weather, the mystery of the river, and unseen obstacles that already were silently forming themselves in opposition to my plans.”

Ureneck is chairman of the journalism department at Boston University and former deputy managing editor of The Philadelphia Inquirer. (See his article on page 81.)

—1998 and 2001—

David Turnley, ’98, and Peter Turnley, ’01, have a new book of photographs out this fall, “McClellan Street,” published by Indiana University Press. McClellan Street is in Fort Wayne, Indiana, the Turnley’s hometown. They spent one year, 1973, documenting the people and life on the three blocks long street, and the photographs from that year became their first jointly published book. Photographs from the book will be in

Two Nieman Fellows Receive 2007 Casey Medals for Meritorious Journalism

Ken Armstrong, NF '01, was part of The Seattle Times' team that won a Casey Medal for Meritorious Journalism for reporting on the story, "Failures By State, Caregiver Kept Secret in Child-Rape Case," in the category of single story, 200,000-plus circulation. **Ju-Don Marshall Roberts**, NF '04, was part of The Washington Post team that won a medal in the multimedia category for "Being a Black Man."

The contest's judges say they honor work they feel is "masterfully reported," telling "compelling stories that cut through 'compassion

fatigue'" and that demonstrate "enterprise and thorough research, and evidence of story impact."

The awards announcement cited Armstrong's story in this way: "Exhaustive investigation and skilled storytelling combine in a devastating account of systemic problems within Washington's child welfare system. The story goes beyond one terrible anecdote, giving sweep and lasting impact. It's an increasingly rare example of a newspaper investing brawn and real resources in its watchdog role."

Roberts's multimedia site was

described as a one that "makes an important contribution to racial dialogue in our nation's capital, integrating a huge amount of material into an attractive and navigable interface that encourages the visitor to sample, browse and dig deep. The site offers users a panoply of choices including video presentations, audio narratives, and opinion blogs."

This is the 13th year the awards have been presented by the Casey Journalism Center. The recipients will receive a Casey Medal and \$1,000 at a ceremony in October in Washington, D.C. ■

an exhibition at the Agathe Gaillard Gallery in Paris starting on October 25th and at the Leica Gallery in New York City in February 2008.

—2003—

Kevin Cullen is now a metro columnist at The Boston Globe. Cullen started at the Globe in 1985 and has been a police reporter, street reporter, European correspondent covering Ireland and the war in Kosovo, a member of the Globe's Spotlight team and, most recently, a projects reporter. He also was a part of the investigative team that received a Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church. In the Globe's announcement of his appointment, Cullen said, "From the time I began working as a street reporter my dream job was to be a metro columnist for the newspaper I grew up reading."

Susan Smith Richardson is now a senior writer/communications officer for the MacArthur Foundation in Chicago. She had been the public education and urban affairs editor

at the Chicago Tribune. In her new job, Susan works with program staff to develop publications about the foundation's work.

—2005—

Louise Kiernan is in a new position as senior editor overseeing staff writing development at the Chicago Tribune. Kiernan, who has won a Pulitzer Prize as a reporter and been an editor at the newspaper, will serve in a variety of new roles. She will be a writing coach, as well as an occasional projects editor. She will be a journalistic mentor for reporters, whether they cover news or write features, and will work closely with editors in each department to "foster excellent writing in every section of the newspaper," according to a Tribune memo announcing her October 1st appointment. Every so often her byline will still appear as she engages in special reporting projects.

—2006—

Takashi Oshima graduated in September with a master's in Public Ad-

ministration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He will be moving to New York City to work for Fujisankei Communications International, an overseas affiliated company of Japanese Broadcasting Fuji TV.

—2008—

Dean Miller, executive editor of The Post Register in Idaho Falls, has won an award for an article he wrote for Nieman Reports. His article, "A Local Newspaper Endures a Stormy Backlash," appeared in the Summer 2006 issue of the magazine in which journalists wrote "On the Subject of Courage." In June, Miller traveled to New York City to attend the Mirror Awards competition ceremony, and there he received the Mirror Award for Best Coverage of Breaking Industry News presented by the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University. The Mirror Awards competition, which took place for the first time this year, honors excellence in media industry reporting. ■

Letter to the Editor:

Nieman Reports relies on journalists who write for our pages to provide an accurate account of events and experiences they share with our readers. Though we work to verify facts appearing in each article, constraints of staff and time prevent us from rereporting elements of the story in which the author participated directly. In receiving a letter from Liz McLemore—whose work Craig Cox mentioned by name in his article “Finding New People to Tell the Stories”—we learned how her experiences differed from the way in which Cox characterized them in the article we published. We told her that we regret any inaccuracies in the article and offered her the opportunity to have the words she wrote in response published in their entirety.

In an article in the Winter 2006 online edition of *Nieman Reports* magazine entitled “Finding New People to Tell the Stories,” Craig Cox, former editor of the *Twin Cities Daily Planet*, reports his experiences with an unreliable “citizen journalist” who compromised the integrity of his publication by failing to submit writing in a timely fashion. The story is pitched as a cautionary one about the inability of bloggers to “sustain their participation” in the public sphere, a thought piece about the changing role of journalism.

I’d like to introduce another “cautionary tale,” but this one is about journalistic ethics. While Cox rightly points out that voluntary and unpaid journalists (such as bloggers) may not adhere to the standard of timeliness required by professional journalism, the factual inaccuracies of his article raise questions about his own professional integrity. As the blogger who failed to deliver what Cox perceives as “his” goods, I’m uniquely positioned to point out the falsehoods in his article—an article, I might add, that I stumbled across only recently on the Web.

The first falsehood Cox tells is that he wrote to ask me for permission to use my writing. He reports that after reading my account of Day One of the trial of former Minneapolis City Council Member Dean Zimmermann, “I dashed off an e-mail to the blogger, a south Minneapolis political activist named Liz McLemore, and asked her if she would allow me to publish her courtroom chronicles for our *Daily Planet* readers. She was predictably flustered, curious as to why I thought her work was worth publishing, and keen to reveal her own political biases (she had worked on the campaign of the defendant’s opponent in last year’s election). But she eventually agreed to a deal: She would crank out her daily report on the trial, and I would grab it and post it on the *Daily Planet*.”

In fact, Cox was sent my notes by Ken Avidor, a blogger friend who had arranged for me to post them on his Web site, *Minneapolis Confidential*. I discovered that Cox had published these “courtroom chronicles” only after Avidor had sent me a link to the *Daily Planet* the morning of Day Two of the trial. Although I was delighted that Cox wanted to publish my writing, I was also a little surprised: The notes were much longer than I imagined most people reading in an online newspaper (15-20 single-spaced, typed pages each day).

However, Cox and I never had a “deal” that I would send him the notes to publish, because I never dealt with Cox at all. In fact, on August 21, 2006, more than a week after the verdict was announced, I corresponded with Cox for the first time, thanking him for publishing the notes. In that e-mail, I apologized for not getting them out sooner. Although Cox had never contacted me regarding the tardiness of my posts—and has not done so to date—I suspected that he was counting on them. (I had also received e-mails from disappointed friends who were anxiously awaiting each day’s 15-20 page installment.)

In short, I felt a responsibility to my readers, even though I was never paid for my writing nor did I promise anything to Cox.

But my case certainly points out the limits of citizen journalism: Citizen journalists don’t have coworkers who can take on assignments for us when we’re ill or when family emergencies arise. As I explained to Cox in that e-mail, my notes were published a day late because my family had experienced the death of not one but two relatives that week. Rather than attend the out-of-state funerals, however, I continued to arrive at the federal courthouse in Minneapolis each day and post each day’s lengthy notes on Avidor’s blog—albeit a day late from Day Three until the trial’s end. My failures were not the result of a lapse in what Cox calls the “necessary discipline or commitment” of a journalist, but rather due to the conditions of freelance and free labor. Since these were notes from a trial, I believed it was more important to get it right than it was to get it out on time. I was under no obligation to anyone, and I felt free to take my time.

As a blogger and not a journalist under any contract, that was my prerogative.

But what of Cox’s own lapses in the very article in which he reports mine? Cox explains that for many people, “the media remains a monolithic, authoritarian machine that holds little interest or importance in their daily lives.” Perhaps this is one reason that so many have turned to bloggers. To regain a position of importance in our lives, the media must earn it. At the very least, the public has a right to demand that professional journalists adhere to the standards of truth, accuracy, objectivity, impartiality and fairness. I expect nothing less from Craig Cox. Too bad he has failed to deliver it.

Liz McLemore
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Class of 1987 Celebrates Their 20th Reunion at Lippmann House

The Nieman class of 1987, or almost half of it, assembled on the steps of Lippmann House one day this summer, 20 years after the group posed with then Curator **Howard Simons**, NF '59. This time a passing student was enlisted to snap the picture. The nine fellows and an equal number of their spouses and children lined up a few feet from Simons's memorial, a well-anchored sculpted hawk that was recently restored after the original was stolen. One could only imagine the wisecracks Simons would have made about his graying brood and disappearing bird.

With the generous support of Curator **Bob Giles**, NF '66, and the Nieman Foundation staff, the group had the run of the place for a long weekend June 29-July 1. No seminars were staged and self-improvement was discouraged. Instead, it was the moveable feast the group specialized in two decades ago. (This class rented a villa in Jamaica for winter break.)

The '87 class has kept the Nieman spirit, staging reunions every two years on alternating coasts, usually within reach of a beach or golf course. The

peak attendance has been about 25, including family. Organizing the reunions has largely been the work of ringleader **Linda Wilson**, now retired from journalism near Longview, Washington. With attendance slumping slightly in recent reunions, the idea was hatched to go back to Cambridge for the 20th, a nostalgia play that worked.

Giles readily agreed to Wilson's request to borrow Lippmann House when she ran the idea by him at a meeting of Nieman alumni in Portland, Oregon, in January 2006. In July, Wilson polled by e-mail as many in the class as she could reach, which was all but a few. With a critical mass promising to come, she then peppered the class with e-mails for a year. (The class consists of eight international and 12 domestic fellows, with one now deceased.)

With the help of the foundation's events staff, Wilson secured discount rates at two hotels near campus and from Crimson Catering. Early arrivals gathered at a Thai restaurant in Harvard Square Thursday night, followed by a catered dinner Friday evening on Lippmann House's patio. Leftovers supplemented by pizza provided an

encore Saturday evening. Everyone kicked in and costs were reasonable.

During the days, attendees were on their own, which meant small group wanderings to confirm that the Blaschka glass flowers continue to bloom at Harvard's Natural History Museum, Bunker Hill still stands, and the bluefish is as fresh as ever at the Dolphin Seafood Restaurant, where Simons took fellows for lunch.

Besides Wilson and me, the fellows in attendance were **Chuck Alston**, a public affairs executive in Washington, D.C.; **Doug Cumming**, a journalism professor at Washington and Lee University; **Susan Dentzer**, health correspondent for the "NewsHour with Jim Lehrer;" **Valerie Hyman**, a television news consultant in St. Petersburg, Florida; **Martha Matzke**, a Washington writer; **Sabine Rollberg**, a television documentarian in Cologne, Germany, and **Ira Rosen**, a CBS "60 Minutes" producer. Next stop: Cannon Beach, Oregon, 2009. ■

Al May is associate professor of media and public affairs at George Washington University.

Some of the Nieman Fellows, spouses and children who attended the 20th class reunion sit around a picnic table on the patio of Lippmann House in the summer of 2007. From left, clockwise, are Doug Cumming, Ira Rosen and his daughter, Johanna, Martha Matzke, Jocelyn Howard (Valerie Hyman's daughter), Linda Wilson, Rick Carns (Linda's husband), Sabine Rollberg and her daughter Maya, Solomon Howard (Hyman's son), Carol Darr (Al May's wife), Sarah Cumming (Doug and Libby's daughter), Iris Schneider (Ira's wife), and **Libby Cumming** (Doug's wife). *Photo by Valerie Hyman.*



Tracing Photographic Roots Brings Work Into Perspective

‘A good photograph to me is one that combines something of the past, the present, and the possible future.’

By Eli Reed

My photography agency, Magnum Photos, Inc. was born at the Museum of Modern Art in 1947 and has been celebrating its 60th anniversary this year with a healthy enthusiasm. I came into this world one year earlier than Magnum’s entry and have made my own continuing photographic voyage of discovery.

As part of Magnum’s celebration, they published a series of portfolio books, “I Grandi Fotografi Magnum Photos,” by Hachette Press. The individual work of Magnum’s members was presented by each in his or her own book, published in chronological order. My edition was book number 57 out of 58. The Italian edition was published and released in March 2007. The French and Spanish editions will be published in late winter 2007, and the English version will be published in 2008.

The process of going through my archives dating back from the early 1970’s to choose photos for my book was an exhilarating and emotional experience, bringing up all kinds of feelings about what I had been doing in my professional and personal life.

An Arduous Beginning

I graduated from the Newark School of Fine and Industrial Arts in Newark,



Atlanta Pop Music Festival. 1970. Photo by ©Eli Reed/Magnum.

New Jersey in 1969. I studied pictorial illustration while working full time as a hospital orderly at night. After graduation I moved into a full-time job on a cancer ward at St. Vincent’s Medical Center Hospital in New York City as I pursued my dream of becoming a full-time photojournalist. The job turned

into a six-year commitment consisting of 20-hour days. It was also my entry into an intensive study of the humanities that has served me well ever since.

My mother died very quickly from cancer when I was 12 years old. I was the oldest of three brothers and remember helping my father take care of her at home. My experiences at St. Vincent’s brought me full circle, helping me to better understand the effect of those early experiences in my life and in my photography; they also helped me to appreciate the fate and task of being a human being.

The earliest photograph in my book came from the three-day, 1970 Atlanta Pop Music Festival, my first out-of-town assignment. It was the era of the Woodstock Music and Art Fair (which had gone down the previous summer), and it was a time for lighting up, dropping out, and feeling the music. The photo was made on the middle day of the festival (500,000 people showed up that night), and the image of the “relaxed” Vietnam vet reclining among other festival fans remains the only photograph that I can remember from those days.

It was an interesting festival, to say

the least. I processed my film, made contact sheets, and finally selected 8" by 10" black and white prints that I thought captured the feel of the event. My gut instinct at that time kept me looking back to the photo of the Vietnam vet. It brought me back to events from previous years, such as the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, the inner city upheavals and race riots, and the Vietnam War.

A Photographic Philosophy

Each time I approach a subject—no matter what it might be—I go into it thinking that I am required to make images I have not seen before. That makes my work interestingly difficult, and it also pushes me to try to reveal significant truths. A good photograph

to me is one that combines something of the past, the present, and the possible future.

I have made enough pictures to sometimes have a tough time remembering photographs that were important to me at the time I made them. But the ones I do remember are those where this sense of riding through time—combining the past, present and future—is palpable.

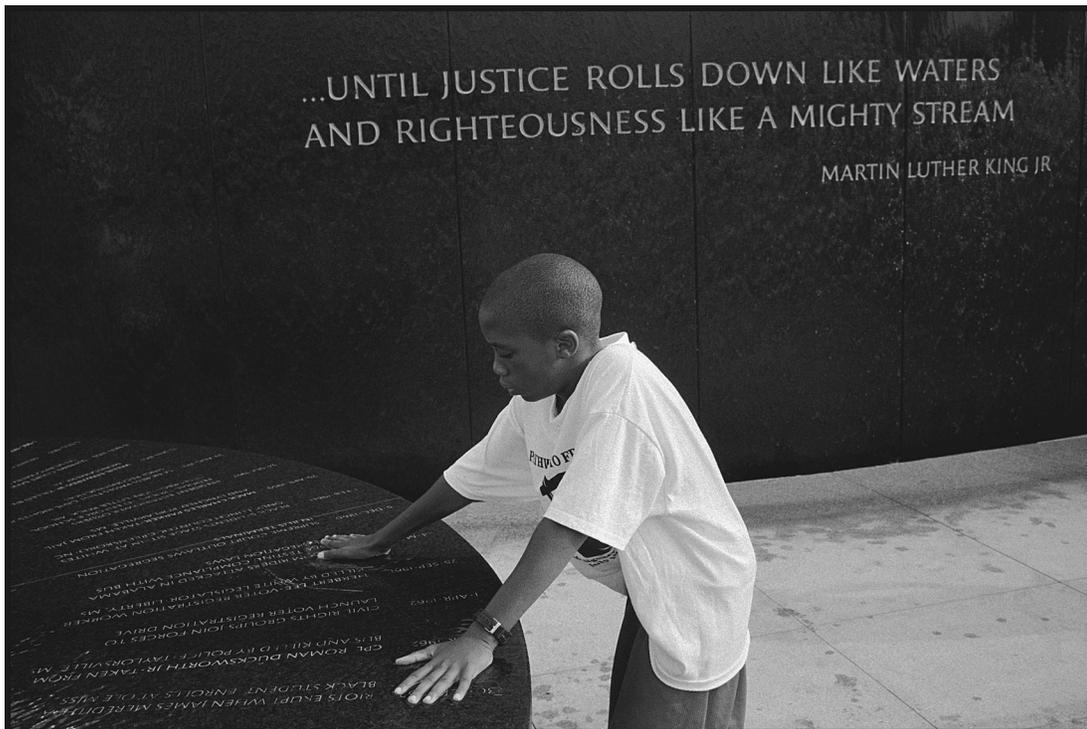
Once I'd chosen the photographs for my book and placed them in order, then and only then came an awareness of my personal photographic history. I am slow to see the darkness as well as the light in my work, but I know that both are present.

The last two photographs in the book reveal points of interest that matter. I photographed musicians in the first moments of their return to

New Orleans and witnessed the joy and the sorrow of their performance. And I walked down 125th street in Harlem, occasionally turning onto side streets, and there I came upon more hard questions and a bit of hope for a better future. [See these images on pages 110 and 111.]

For a photojournalist, his or her collective work has to be placed into perspective at some point. For me, this book is a good start to bringing my work into perspective—work where my straight reporting and personal view come together nicely, emerging out of honest observation and from my heart. ■

Eli Reed, a 1983 Nieman Fellow, is a photojournalist and professor at the University of Texas at Austin.



A young boy at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama. 1995. Photo by ©Eli Reed/Magnum.



Bluefields, Nicaragua. 1982.



New Orleans, Louisiana. October 2005.

Photos by ©Eli Reed/Magnum.



Harlem, New York. 2005.

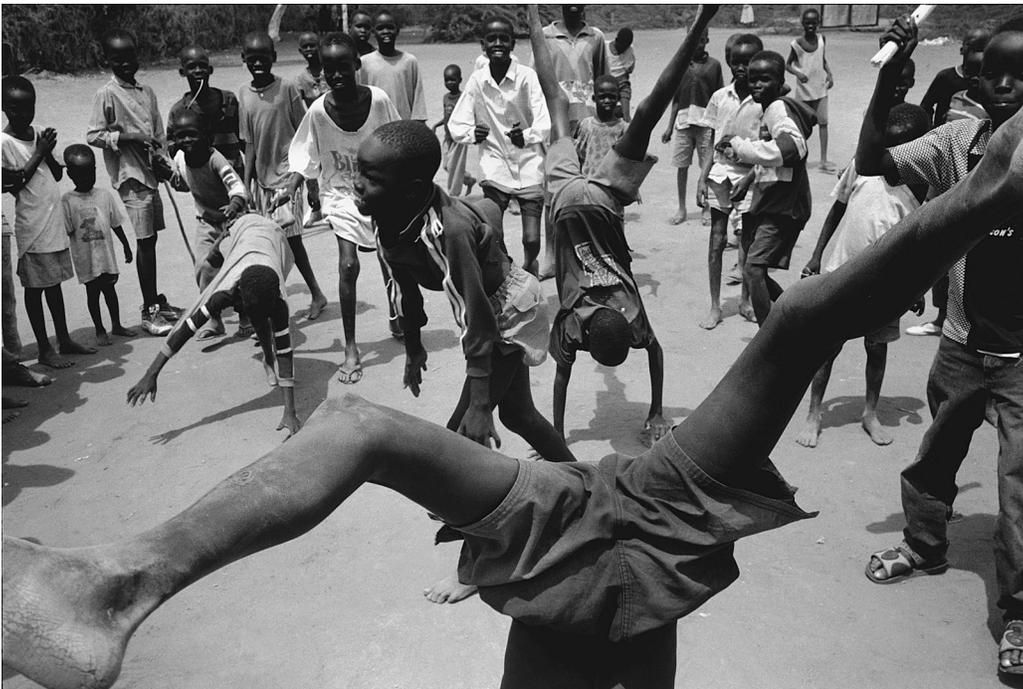


A state school for orphans in Detroit, Michigan. 1988.

Photos by ©Eli Reed/Magnum.



Participants at the second Million Youth March in Harlem, New York City. 1999.



Boys playing in the Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya. August 2001. ■

Photos by ©Eli Reed/Magnum.

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KATRINA'S AFTERMATH: NEWS WITH NO END IN SIGHT

THE NIEMAN FOUNDATION AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY