NIEMAN REPORTS

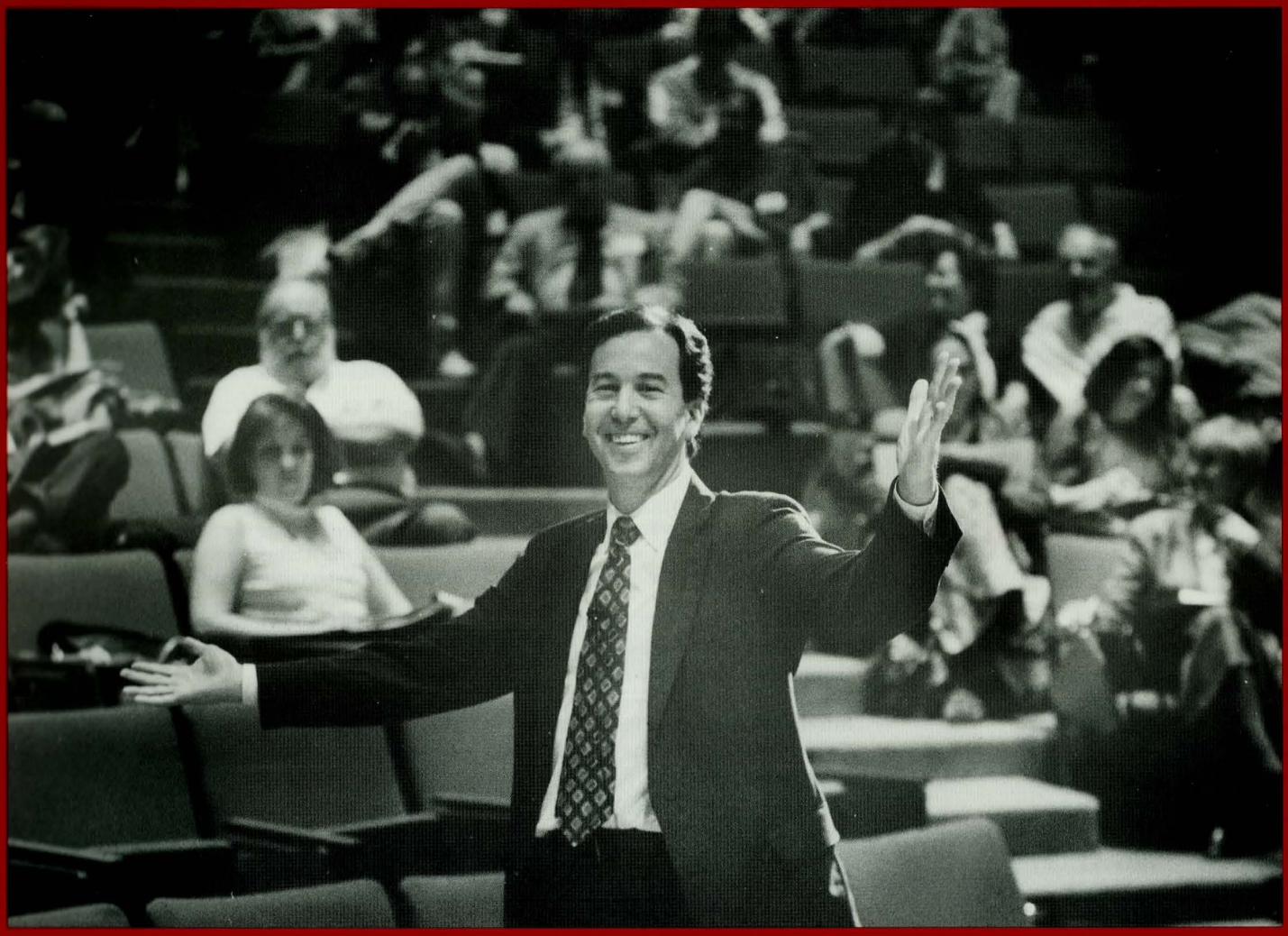
THE NIEMAN FOUNDATION AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Vol. XLIX No. 3 Fall 1995

FIVE DOLLARS

Harvard à la Carte

A Dozen Briefings on World Problems



The Latin American Media

Brazil Colombia Mexico Argentina Ecuador

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

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

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AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Vol. XLIX, No. 3
Fall 1995

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Nieman Reports (USPS #430-650) is published in March, June, September and December by the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University, One Francis Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138-2098.
Telephone: (617) 495 -2237
Internet Address: nreports@fas.harvard.edu

Subcription $20 a year, $35 for two years; add $10 for foreign airmail. Single copies $5. Back copies are available from the Nieman Office.

Please address all subscription correspondence to One Francis Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138-2098 and change of address information to P.O. Box 4951, Manchester, NH 03108. ISSN Number 0028-9817

Second-class postage paid at Boston, Massachusetts, and additional entries.

POSTMASTER:
Send address changes to
Nieman Reports,
P.O. Box 4951,
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Reunion photographs, including cover photo of Ronald Heifetz, by Stan Grossfeld; drawings by Cyn Maurice.

Curator's Corner

Hamburger Helper Is the Watchword

A stunning series of Corporate mergers and bottom-line decisions that have transfigured the face of American journalism fell like the blows of a trip hammer in late July and early August. The nature of the actions raise the question of whether there will be a place in the emerging conglomerates dedicated to the production of the kind of news necessary for a self-governing society.

First there was the radical surgery by The Times-Mirror Corporation, driven by the need to impress stock analysts, which killed New York Newsday. This was followed by the Gannett Corporation announcement it would buy Multimedia, further reducing the diversity of the country's newspaper ownership.

Before the long-term impact on journalism of these deals could be examined Walt Disney-Capital Cities/ABC and CBS-Westinghouse announced two of the biggest media merger deals ever.

One consistent and depressing fact about all these deals was that, with only rare exceptions, neither the journalists within the organizations nor those reporting on the events paid more than passing attention to the impact of the deals on journalistic independence.

Because the media is now corporate first and press second the corporate focus is on economic questions. Working across what were once insurmountable barriers, they experiment with new intermedia products and creative marketing and sales. Hamburger Helper seems to be the watchword.

Among other unheralded results is the New Century Network, an alliance of some 200 of the country's largest and most important daily newspapers. Its goal is a unified national system for advertisement placement, collecting reader demographics and handling financial transactions between readers and advertisers.

In a world enthralled by the market, which says, "We expect our advertisements to be displayed in a friendly atmosphere," how long before unified national advertisers influence unified national editorial space?

At the same time there is in Washington today a fierce political struggle by communications corporations to organize the new world of computerized communications. These political decisions will decide who will be served in the interactive world and how.

A similar process took place when radio came into public use after World War I. The universal expectation was that radio would be a device for cultural and educational enlightenment of the people, universities, churches, civic organizations, labor unions, farm groups, all organized to use the radio for just those purposes.

But as political decisions were made to organize the "public's airwaves" a consortium of economic interests molded them into a system to favor an advertising-driven entertainment medium. Public interests were exiled to the far end of the spectrum. The process today follows the same pattern and is enormously more important both in its economic impact and its potential impact for public-affairs journalism.

And where is our watchdog press as this story with such important social and political implications unfolds? It has become a business-interest press. The social and political implications are secondary to the economic considerations and are seldom addressed, expressed or investigated.

At ABC-TV, for example, one journalist reports the first reaction to the merger announcement in the newsroom was celebration "because their stock holdings had just jumped up." Celebrants were only slightly sobered by the discovery that their boss and Disney's chief had made the decision (later reversed) to appear together on CNN's "Larry King Live" rather than ABC's own award-winning "Nightline."

As these new media corporations grow ever bigger and, because they include divisions that contract directly with the federal government or depend upon it for the right to do certain kinds of business, institutions of the press have themselves become government supplicants and manipulators.

Reed Hundt, Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, is disillusioned by the trend. As he recently told The New Yorker: "It's getting harder and harder to get people to make the argument for the public interest."

There is a basic fact about the free market system. It is governed by the logic of economic self-interest. Public affairs journalism is, by definition, concerned with the broader interests of a civic society. These latest mergers threaten to drive journalists deeper into a world in which their work is more at odds with the corporate economic interests. A passion for public affairs journalism could hardly find a more discouraging atmosphere within which to survive.

The record is clear that the most important factor that can warm or chill the passion for independent journalism is the commitment from the top of the new company.

Pulitzer Prize winning journalist David Halberstam tells the story of the time he returned from a very difficult and dangerous assignment abroad to be told by the publisher of The New York Times "I love the work you do."

"You cannot imagine what great inspiration and motivation—what comfort—I drew from that," Halberstam says. "To know that the person at the very top valued the work I did."

We will have to wait to see if multimedia corporation chiefs will be too busy promoting the interests of their marketing and manufacturing divisions and lobbying the government for favorable laws and regulations to provide that kind of leadership or inspiration. ■

What They're Saying

©Cable News Network

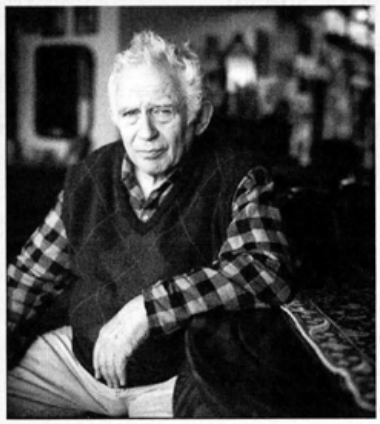
Christiane Amanpour

Two Faces of Algeria

Algeria I call a print reporter's dream and it's a television reporter's nightmare because you are really in danger when you bring out a camera. You are yourself in danger because you don't know who you're going to get whacked by, and the people are in danger, too. It was really hard for me to get interviews. It was really hard for me to take a camera on the street, because people thought that if they appeared on camera, whatever side they took the other side would whack them. Especially on CNN. This is another reason CNN can be a problem, because it's shown inside the country.

For instance, there was a wedding at the hotel, and we decided it would be an ideal color story and we asked permission, the bridegroom, the bride, the family, the hotel, and got it. My cameraman, Mohammed, started to film and within about five minutes he was surrounded by a lot of guests. He had three guns pointed at his stomach, and they were literally trying to yank the camera away and take the tape out, and shouting and screaming about they were going to be killed if they were seen enjoying themselves.

It's much easier for print to get stories in certain circumstances, because people will talk, and you've got a notebook and you can write it down without making it obvious. I'm not talking about deception. But if somebody's talking to me, saying exactly the same thing as they would be saying and then I'd say, "could you just say that on camera?" "No, no, no. Are you kidding? No, no."—*Christiane Amanpour, CNN correspondent, at a Nieman Fellows seminar May 3, 1995.*



Christopher Burlein

Norman Mailer

A Russian Interview

Of course, it did take three times as long to do an interview in Russia as it did in America—one hour for the English, one hour for the Russian, and one hour for arguing with Ludmila [Peresvetova]. We would often pose a question and she'd say, "I simply refuse to ask them that question in that manner. It will offend them too profoundly." The query might have been something on the order of "When was your father arrested?" That's not the way you ask a question in Russia. You say, "Could you name the year that, looking back upon it, was a time that you would call 'the year of our troubles?'"—*Norman Mailer, talking about reporting for his latest book, "Oswald's Tale," in the summer issue of At Random, the magazine of Random House.*

The New York Times

Margo Jefferson

Midwest Non-style

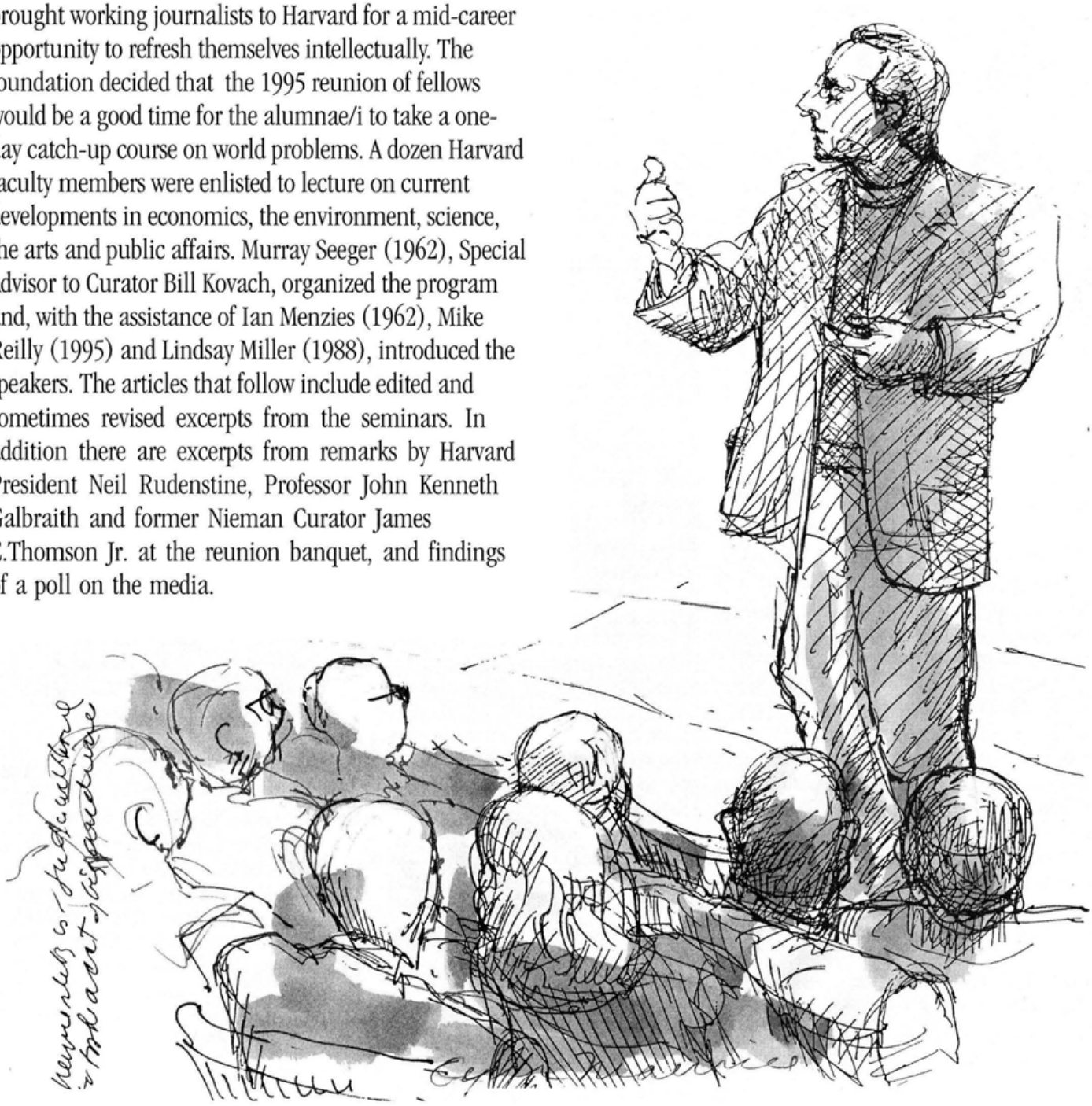
Midwesterners always want to get down to fundamentals, as in, "this is what it is, this is the idea." Being a Midwesterner gives you license to make yourself up as a writer, because the Midwest has an almost non-style. Hemingway played with that one way, Fitzgerald another.

You come out of this flat landscape, and you're always looking east or west for your mythologies and cultural pleasures. There's this little free space. The rest of the country figures you're a blank and so you fill it in from everything you've seen. There's a lot of longing for other worlds when you live in the Midwest.—*Margo Jefferson, Sunday Drama Critic of The New York Times and winner of the 1995 Pulitzer Prize for criticism, when asked about Saul Bellows's description of Midwesterners as "connoisseurs of the near-nothing."*

Harvard à la Carte

A Dozen Briefings on World Problems

Each year since 1938, the Nieman Foundation has brought working journalists to Harvard for a mid-career opportunity to refresh themselves intellectually. The foundation decided that the 1995 reunion of fellows would be a good time for the alumnae/i to take a one-day catch-up course on world problems. A dozen Harvard faculty members were enlisted to lecture on current developments in economics, the environment, science, the arts and public affairs. Murray Seeger (1962), Special Advisor to Curator Bill Kovach, organized the program and, with the assistance of Ian Menzies (1962), Mike Reilly (1995) and Lindsay Miller (1988), introduced the speakers. The articles that follow include edited and sometimes revised excerpts from the seminars. In addition there are excerpts from remarks by Harvard President Neil Rudenstine, Professor John Kenneth Galbraith and former Nieman Curator James C.Thomson Jr. at the reunion banquet, and findings of a poll on the media.



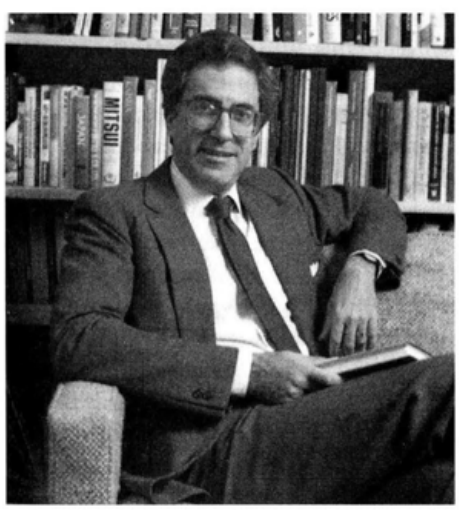
Economic Challenges

Companies Are Renewed, But U.S. Is Still Plagued By Country Management Problems

Joseph L. Bower
Donald K. David Professor of Business Administration, Graduate School Of Business Administration

As most of you know, at Harvard Business School we teach by the case method. My case for this morning is a video made at Opel's new plant in Eisenach, Germany. Opel is GM's second largest group—after Chevrolet. It is bigger than Chrysler. The 3-minute video showed the first cars rolling off the new lines at Eisenach. Helmut Kohl spoke near the close:

> The political developments of the last few months have shown that real change can make dreams come true. Political change has led to the freedom of the people of the former DDR. I am confident that economic change will lead to the success and prosperity of these people. It is symbolic that Adam Opel is coming to Eisenach, signaling the way ahead. This is a product which will last and last on the world market, and a lot of people will be working on it.



Joseph L. Bower

That was within 18 months after the Berlin Wall came down. The first advertisement on East German television was for the Opel. It was the first car from East Germany to be shown at the Berlin Auto show.

If you ask what's going on in U.S. business, one of the biggest themes is that there has been a revolution. It's easy to talk about little details, but there is a big economic story made up of major shifts that are the consequence of the opening up of developing countries and the response of U.S. companies to that change.

The story I want to tell today is one I have discussed with Nieman Fellows for a long, long time. When I first began working with you in the 1970's, the world economy story was that the management of the U.S. macro-economy was not particularly good compared to some very effective competitors, and the management of much U.S. business was not particularly good. That was a big story because it affected the wealth we had to spend on things like health care and the infrastructure of the country. We were cutting back and instead of understanding that we'd run out of money, people thought it was a Republican plot.

Today, many of the U.S.'s competitors continue to run fairly intelligent macro-economic programs and they also occasionally intervene at the industry level in their economies rather effectively. In the United States, our macro-economics are still poor. We don't save enough; we invest too little; we protect our customers without asking whether the standards of living that they are enjoying are being earned, and particularly, whether they're being earned in competition with the talents in the rest of the world.

What's really startling is that there in Eisenach, which was a polluted, awful industrial setting, you just saw in the video a modern, world class car driven out of a spotless facility. The Eisenach plant is one of the top six assembly plants in the world. That's including Japan. And the U.S. So then the question is, what is the competition? What are our companies doing? What is our work force doing? What are the challenges?

The basic challenge to U.S. managers and workers is that the workers at Eisenach do not think they have an entitlement to two cars in their driveway and a Winnebago. That is not their concept of what an adequate standard of living is. They think they're doing brilliantly because they finally can get a new car. They are not trying to preserve work rules that they fought to achieve over two to three decades. They're coming out of a horrible system, and they think they're rather lucky to get out. They are really proud of what they are doing in their plant, which is clean and beautiful. Part of the story of how business is doing in the United States is how companies are responding to the complex meaning of Eisenach.

The contrast between the way the United States and Germany have dealt with this period is another piece of the story. Helmut Kohl saw an opportunity to end the division of Germany and grabbed it. He then did something that was economically extraordinarily expensive. He didn't really know the cost. He just did it. He said, "An ostmark is the same as a deutsche mark." The cost of that has been staggering. On the other hand, it stopped the massive migration from East to West Germany, and began the redevelopment of East Germany on a world class basis. As a political leader, he has fought to, in effect, get his people to understand that if they wanted something they had to pay for it. And Germany, on the whole, has paid for reunification.

At the same time, General Motors exemplifies how much has changed at the company level. Old GM was brain dead. Under Roger Smith and Bob Stemple, GM was still denying things that had happened in the 1960's, not to mention the 1970's. As a worker-based "soft" technology revolutionized manufacturing, GM continued to fight the

United Auto Workers (UAW). And where was GM prospering? It was in Europe. The man now running GM, Jack Smith, was running Europe. The guy running Opel, Lou Hughes, was a graduate of Harvard Business School—a kid who grew up in Cleveland, went to the General Motors Institute for college, got to be president of Opel, learned German in six months after he got to Germany, and was soon a buddy of Helmut Kohl.

The video I showed you was prepared to make it very difficult for the GM Board to turn down the next phase of the expansion at Eisenach. Imagine a board meeting where the guy is asking you for $10-20 million—at GM that isn't that much money—but first he shows you that video and says that the fate of freedom depends upon GM's keeping this plant growing. So Eisenach is growing—they've done a very remarkable job. But the Michigan plants are stagnant.

GM is a prototype of a lot of American big business. It was late to recognize the power of foreign competition, and very late to recognize that competition wasn't based on cheap labor but on very good technology and very good management. One time when he was visiting Harvard, I asked Phil Caldwell, the executive who led the renewal of Ford management, "why did you know to do this?" He said, "well I was running Philco, and we had a plant in Taiwan's duty-free zone. So did our competitors. I went down and looked at each of the plants. They all had Taiwanese workers and the same equipment. They were all making the same things—TV sets. We were getting killed. The only difference had to be us, the managers. And we had to change."

So there have been many changes. Middle management has slowed the response. It's been easiest to lay off workers, harder to lay off managers, but harder still to change the way companies have been managed. You hear all these words like re-engineering and restructuring. They're just managers trying to figure out how to do things more competitively in the face of very stiff competition.

Eisenach, which is a success, uses technology and techniques developed in the GM joint venture in California with Toyota and a Canadian operation. But that technology which involves a revolution in work practices has not yet been successfully brought into the heartland of GM North America. In other words, you can do it with ex-Communist workers in East Germany, but you can't do it in Detroit—not yet. It's a remarkable problem.

For me it is typical of the management problems we face. Harvard is another example. Think of it. We're a multi-billion dollar annual budget enterprise. We have all kinds of activities underway. We have five great teaching hospitals. We have a group of professional schools that have become great research centers in the world. Very powerful, making major contributions. We have no retirement age. We have tenure. We have a federal government that is cutting our funding in a very serious way. In response, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences had completed a study that concludes in effect that age and productivity are not particularly related and that the University central management is really wrong to start asserting its authority in trying to get the economics under control by cutting cost. Like the workers at GM, they think the work rules are underwritten by some special source of funds.

In the universities, in our health care system, and still in many of our corporations, you have the same problem as in GM North America. People not ready to change.

But in one company after another you can see new goals, new ways of organizing, and new compensation systems. Basically, they are much more focused in their activities—more selective about lines of business and markets. They're delegating to much flatter organizations that are much more demanding on the people. They have fewer staff. There are some amazing plants now in the country that really manage themselves. There will be one manager working with teams of workers who organize themselves. They do their own capital budgeting. They buy the new equipment for the factory. We are already in a different era. Empowerment as practiced today can be quite radical. But that is what is involved in changing in order to compete.

I should note that some of the company level shifts we have seen pose important contradictions. The "buyouts" were a problem. Some were very critical to this transformation because they got rid of slack that was in bloated firms. But some were very damaging. They cut so much that they lack the resources or spirit to innovate. The metaphor is: do we have lean or anorexic organizations? You can find examples of the anorexic.

Another contradiction is posed by the very success of some of our high tech winners like Intel and Microsoft. As is usual in our country, when you get really successful, there's a move to use antitrust to break you up. So your management has to spend important parts of its time defending the firm in court. On the other hand, that kind of challenge creates other business. Our consulting firms have done wonderfully. Our law and accounting firms have done very well. Our professional schools have done well. Harvard has done well.

In other fields we have lost position: cement, textiles and commodity chemicals. This slide shows that the share of our *country* of the world's manufacturing exports has declined. But the next slide shows that our *companies* haven't done so badly. Why is that? Because they're in the Eisenachs all over the world. They are doing a good job competing as companies in a global market. It's as a country that we have a problem.

Now this slide shows our market share in high tech—pretty good. When we look at medium tech, the story is not quite as nice because there has been a dramatic decline of our country's share and a slow decline of our multinational companies. Now when we look at low tech, there is a very steep decline by both the companies and the country.

This all relates to the decline of the dollar. Once the dollar started getting trashed in the markets, our exports started to recover. My way of thinking about that is that any company that wants to sell more knows that it can do so if it cuts its prices. But there is always

the question then as to whether they make any money. We are not. The U.S. is cutting its prices in order to sell more, but we are not earning what we need to pay for the imports we are buying. We are borrowing from other countries to pay the difference.

This brings us back to the GM plant at Eisenach because we have cut the value of the dollar dramatically against Germany and Japan, whereas Helmut Kohl and the Japanese held the value of their currency. That means that their companies have to use technology and management in order to get costs down in order to compete. Our *companies* are taking part in that battle. But as a *country* we have a problem. Our politicians from both parties want to cut taxes to make it easier for middle class voters to maintain a lifestyle the country cannot afford—rather than pay for the investments needed for competitiveness.

Looking ahead, we can anticipate dramatic problems with the trading system, with company strategies, with new technologies, and with the human factor. In the time I have I want just to mention the trading system because it is so explosive. China and India are each getting to the point where there will soon be 100 million people in the middle class. That is the basis for a world class domestic market that can support world class competitors. The people are very well educated. (In my doctoral programs we get 500 applications for 20 places. Probably 300 come from India, Pakistan, Taiwan and Korea. A lot of Indians—very, very, well trained.) Both India and China will be formidable competitors.

What can we conclude about this tumultuous canvass? The U.S. has remarkably good companies. Some are technology leaders. Some are just getting very lean and aggressive, and they are changing the face of global industry. Business is very good if you have a high tolerance for rapid change and are willing to work extremely hard against unbelievably good competition from all over the world. You also have to be willing to travel because it's a global business now, and a lot of the best pieces of your organization are overseas.

As it often does, the financial press provides a telling assessment. In Wall Street, General Motors is a "buy." And analysts say, "we continue to recommend the purchase of GM shares because of restructuring, because it sustained low growth and because 63 percent of their earnings *are coming from outside the United States.*" (emphasis added). What are the risks that concern the analysts? A recession, loss of share to competitors (which you ought to read as the Japanese), and the UAW.

That's the story. We have experienced considerable transformation of our companies. A lot of it has to do with the opening up of the global market and the response to that opening. A lot of our best companies are now global organizations, and they are succeeding because of the rest of the world, not because of what is happening here. And the battle will go on for a long time because the forces of change will keep coming as countries like India and China continue to enter the system.■

Economic Trend

More Willing to Give Up Pay For Additional Time Off

Juliet Schor
Senior Lecturer on Economics
And Director of Studies
In the Women's Studies Department

There are a number of indications that workers continue to work longer and longer. The most dramatic evidence of this trend is in manufacturing, which is recording the highest work week since World War II and the highest levels of overtime recorded. Not only in manufacturing and not only with production workers, but also throughout the economy—particularly in companies that are downsizing—employers are minimizing the number of people they hire and increasing the hours those people work. In large part employers adopt this policy because of the significant per-person costs associated with employment through fringe benefits. Medical insurance is the most important, but of course, pensions, paid time off, and a variety of other programs also add to costs.

Juliet Schor

Outside of manufacturing, the impact of downsizing has been to load more work onto the remaining work force. Both the intensity of work and hours of work rise after downsizings. The amount of work that gets reorganized is quite small. Most companies do not reorganize their work to eliminate the least valuable activities. So what we typically have is reduction of staff without a significant reduction of the work load.

Finally, in looking at the uncorrected numbers and making some rough calculations to allow for the fraction of the labor force that is either unemployed or under-employed, it looks as if there is a continuing growth in working hours.

I've also found that we have a higher fraction of the labor force at the peak of every business cycle that is involuntarily un- or under-employed—people who either don't have a job or who are working part-year or part-time, but would prefer full-year or full-time or both. That fraction increased dramatically over the Seventies and Eighties, from about 7 percent of the work force at the peak year of 1969, to about 14.5 percent, in 1989. The number of hours that those people are working has also decreased quite substantially. So we have both a larger pool of under-employed, and they're getting more and more under-employed, in the sense that they are further and further from a full-time schedule or their desired hours.

What has been the impact of the growth of working hours over these last 25 years on people's attitudes toward consuming, toward the money that they're earning and the trade-off between time and money?

Polls taken in the Sixties, Seventies, through the mid-Eighties, asked workers how they felt about their configuration of work time and money. A very large fraction of them said they were basically satisfied with the level of hours and income. They would not opt for either more hours and more income, or fewer hours and less income. Somewhere in the neighborhood of two-thirds would say that their current trade-off was their preferred trade-off. Only about 5 percent said they'd rather work fewer hours and take less money.

In 10 years, however, those numbers have changed dramatically. Now, in response to the standard question (more hours, more money; fewer hours, less money), 15 to 17 percent say they prefer fewer hours and less money. Why don't they just work less? Why do we have people consistently saying they would prefer fewer hours? Both the statistical and the survey research show that it's very difficult for people to change the hours that they work within their jobs. In order to change hours, the vast majority find they need to change their jobs. That's, of course, quite a step, one that many people may not be prepared to take, and why we get people persistently saying they're working more hours than they'd like to.

In a survey I'm now conducting at Bell South in Atlanta, half of the respondents say it's impossible for them to change hours within their current job. An additional 25 percent say it's very difficult. So there's a real issue here about how much flexibility people have within jobs.

Furthermore, the standard question about hours-income trade-offs underestimates the extent of sentiment for reducing work hours. We can see that, in part, by other kinds of questions, which are less abstract or less generic, and which give people particular kinds of options for reduced working hours. We see a lot more popularity there.

For example, a poll asked people their preferences about a four-day work week, with the loss of that day's pay. About 60 percent of all employees said they would like to take that option. Now, I'm sure that's an overestimate of those who would actually do it, but it does indicate, I think, more latent demand for shorter hours than the other form of question.

In a Gallup poll last year people were asked, "Would you or your spouse prefer the option of a 20 percent cut in household income and a reduction in

hours of work?" (the number of hours was unspecified.) One-third of respondents answered affirmatively, but that included both one's own hours and one's spouse's and therefore was not representative.

The survey I'm conducting at Bell South clearly is not representative of the labor force, but I think it's probably fairly representative of employees at large corporations. I'm finding that 20 to 50 percent of respondents are saying they would like to take those time and money trade-offs. So we're seeing some shifting views about time and money.

To some extent, this is also showing up in new kinds of behavior around earning, working, and spending. There has been growing media attention to a phenomenon popularly called down-shifting or personal downsizing. People are living on reduced incomes, simplifying their lives, often changing their jobs and sometimes changing where they live, in order to get more time, balance and less stress in their lives. Often they cut back from being two-earner families or take part-time jobs.

In a February poll conducted by the Merck Family Fund I was able to get the first estimates of what we might colloquially call down-shifting. Of course, we didn't call it that. What we asked people was: "Have you, in the last five years, voluntarily made changes in your lifestyle, such as quitting your job, reducing your work hours, reducing the number of jobs that you hold, etc., which have resulted in a significant decrease in the amount of income that you earn?"

I would have predicted maybe 10 percent of the population would answer affirmatively. In fact, we found that 28.5 percent of the population said that they had made these kinds of changes in their lives, in the last five years—which is not to say that this is a majority trend.

We also asked about up-scaling, basically, the reverse question: "Have you voluntarily made changes in your life in order to increase the amount of income that you have?" A slightly higher percentage did that. I think that's a more normal expectation.

I expected the gender gap among those who downsized to be very, very large. In fact, it was only about 11 percent. To some extent, that's because people often do this as couples. But I think it's also the case that we're seeing more men identifying themselves as less willing to give up so much of their personal lives for careers.

When asked about why they had made these changes, the most commonly cited reasons were to gain more balance, to have less stress in their lives. Parents wanted to spend more time with children. But even those without children expressed the desire for balance and reduction of stress.

An overwhelming fraction of these down-shifters report that they are happy about their change. But you can imagine that many of those who are unhappy might have shifted back.

If we look at the longer-trend polling on attitudes toward material goods—a nice house and car—versus other things—personal activities, children, job satisfaction, contributing to society—what we see, in the United States, Western Europe and Japan, over a very long period of time, is a decline in the fraction of the populations who identify materialistic goals.

So I think younger generations—certainly, we saw this with the so-called baby boom generation, but even those coming afterwards—are more demanding, in what they expect from their jobs and life, in terms of these non-material kinds of values. Generations who were raised in less affluence, or who went through the Depression, either as adults or children, have much more limited aspirations and are less demanding in some sense, in terms of what they're expecting.

I believe that these are important trends. I think they will continue. Of course, the income stagnation of the Eighties and Nineties has been important in changing people's attitudes as have many of the other important kinds of changes that are going on in the economy.

There's a sense in which the costs of achieving the American dream (the two cars and the Winnebago that Professor Bower talked about), are increasing. They are increasing in terms of the time commitments which are required in jobs. They are increasing in terms of the environmental costs of achieving our standard of living.

Many people today are wondering about the relationship between our working and spending patterns and the level of social cohesion, community involvement, and social interaction that we have. One of the things that I'm trying to look at is whether or not there is a relationship between those things, and whether the widely reported-on decline of "associational activity" (community involvement, volunteer efforts, joining-ness and belonging-ness of Americans), which, as we know, has taken a dramatic decline in the Seventies and Eighties, is connected to the rise of working hours, and connected to some important changes in consumer behavior which have been occurring.

So those I see are the key trends in terms of working and consuming. I think we're in for more of the same over the next few years. ■

Time, Yes; Nieman, No!

[Time Managing Editor Roy] Alexander coudn't understand that working on Time might not be a complete education. From time to time employees of all three magazines [Time, Life and Fortune] were tempted by the prospect of a Nieman Fellowship to pursue subjects of their choice at Harvard. Editors throughout the country had come to be a little reluctant to give the required permission for a leave of absence because many of the Nieman scholars went to better jobs elsewhere. A Time writer with a Harvard B.A. asked Alexander for permission to apply.

"The only reasons for a Nieman fellowship," said Alexander, "are to get into the Harvard Club and work for Time, Inc. You already belong to the Harvard Club and have a Time job. No!"—*Edward K. Thompson, former Managing Editor of Life, in "A Love Affair With Life & Smithsonian." University of Missouri Press.*

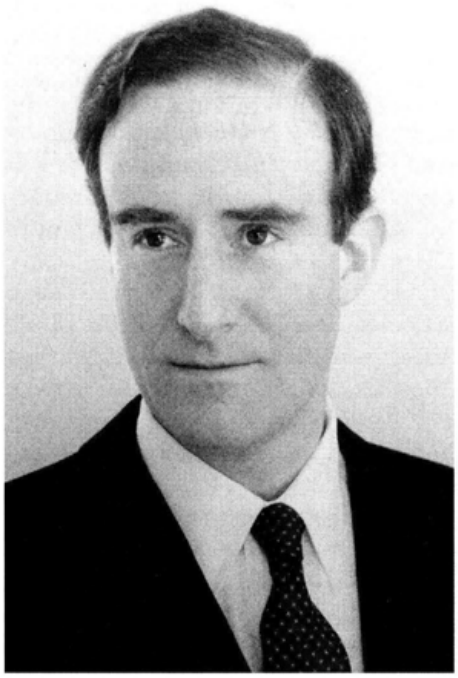
Economic Problem

Incomes Are Stagnant, Even With 2-Earner Families

Benjamin Friedman
William Joseph Maier Professor
Of Political Economy

There are two major difficulties in trying to understand current U.S. economic policy. The first is that so many people with half a mind to talk about the subject go ahead and do so anyway. The second is that such a very large fraction turn out to occupy major positions of public responsibility. Our belief in progress notwithstanding, I think this is as true today as ever.

We do have a serious economic policy problem in the United States. And while our political leaders may not be aware of that problem, it's obvious that the voters, both in 1992 and in 1994, were very much aware. The voters behaved like the man who comes home and says to his wife, "Dear, I've had it. I can't take it any more. I'm leaving." After his wife regains her composure, she asks, "Is there somebody else?" And the husband immediately answers, "There's got to be." American voters have the view that there has got to be something else.



Benjamin Friedman

What, then, is the problem? After all, for the past three years, we've had a very vigorous economic expansion. We've enjoyed very rapid job creation—3.5 million new jobs last year alone. This spring, our reported unemployment was the lowest in two decades. Most of our companies are enjoying strong economic growth and profits. We are forming new businesses at record rate. Moreover, we've been doing all of this with the lowest rate of inflation in a quarter of a century. So what exactly is it that our policy makers are supposed to worry about?

Put simply, the problem is that, for the majority of Americans, economic growth in the United States stopped 20 years ago. In 1973, the weekly wage of the average worker in American private business was $474 a week, stated in terms of today's dollars. Today, that weekly wage is $385 a week. That's a loss of 19 percent over 21 years. Moreover, it's not just as if, within the last year or two, we've suddenly lost all this ground. There has been a steady decline throughout.

As a result, family incomes are absolutely stagnant, despite the fact that we have an increased number of two-earner families. As Juliet Schor has just shown, we have ever more people working ever longer hours. In 1973, the median family income in the United States (in today's dollars) was $36,800; today, it's still only $37,800.

As an exercise in arithmetic, ask what it means to have a stagnant average income, when we also know that black/white differentials are narrowing and male/female differentials are narrowing. If those two differentials are narrowing at the same time that the average income is stagnant, it must be the case that white male workers' incomes are going down. And indeed they have gone down, steadily, over the course of the last 20 years. The income of a full-time employed white male worker in 1973 was $35,000 in today's dollars; in 1979 it was $34,000; in 1989 it was $33,000; and, last year, it dipped under $32,000. Can anybody be surprised that the voters who are angriest, as all the polls show, are, in fact, white males?

If this is the problem, and everybody outside of our government recognizes it, what are we doing? The good news is that the 1993 Clinton budget plan was modestly ambitious, and, moreover, worked. Objections of the critics notwithstanding, federal spending has slowed; the cuts were real. Objections of the critics also notwithstanding, individuals facing higher tax rates are actually paying higher taxes, not simply dodging them; tax revenues are sharply up. Best of all, critics notwithstanding once again, the higher tax rates have not caused the collapse of the American economy. Instead, we've had a very fine economy in the last year or two. Last year in particular, real growth overall was 4 percent. Best of all, in terms of what we need to restore our productivity growth and competitiveness and raise our standard of living, new investment in factories and machinery was up 12 percent last year.

As a result of the strong economy, together with Mr. Clinton's spending cuts and tax increases, the federal deficit, which has been hobbling our ability to invest for the past 15 years, has fallen by more than a third since President Bush's last year in office.

If that's the good news, what is the bad news? On one side, the bad news is that the President's new budget for the coming year (and the next five years) offers no further progress whatever in narrowing our budget gap. If we adopt the President's budget, we will continue to see average deficits of about $200 billion a year, for the next five years. (After the Nieman reunion, President Clinton submitted a revised budget plan, which the Administration indicates will reduce the deficit significantly further, to the point of eliminating it by 2005. The Congressional Budget Office expects this revised budget plan to have a much smaller effect on the deficit.)

If we had a saving rate like Japan's or Germany's, or even Italy's, a $200 billion deficit wouldn't be so bad. But net saving in the United States, including saving by all businesses and individuals combined, is only about $300 to $350 billion per year. If we continue to dissipate $200 billion out of that $300-350 billion of saving in merely funding the government's excess consumption, it's clear that our investment rate will continue to be low. After the initial surge associated with the current recovery back to full employment, our productivity growth will go back to the same slow rate that we had before. And our prospects of restoring our standard of living to a rising trend will be zero.

Now, what are the Republicans offering? Here the good news is that for the first time since Ronald Reagan's arrival in Washington, Republicans are seriously talking about genuinely large cuts in a wide variety of spending programs, leading off with Medicare.

This represents a fundamental change in the tone of the conversation from the Republican side. Throughout the Reagan-Bush period, the theme of Republican discussions of the deficit was that this problem had nothing to do with the balance of what middle-class America paid in and took out. There was discussion of waste, fraud, and abuse. There was discussion of welfare. There was discussion of tax cheats. But the message to middle America was, "It is not your problem." By focusing on Medicare, which, after Social Security, is the largest single middle-America program, there's clearly a change in the tone of the conversation. We may actually see a "cold turkey" budget.

There are still hurdles, though. One is that the Republican enthusiasm for tax cuts is also very great. The Contract With America proposes tax cuts that add up to $140 billion over five years. That's approximately double the Clinton program's proposal. Senator Gramm's proposal adds up to more than $200 billion of tax cutting over five years. And the entire history of tax legislation in the United States suggests that tax cuts get larger as they go through the legislative process, not smaller.

Second, the willingness of the Republicans, much less the Democrats, to make those genuinely large spending cuts, remains to be proven. Everybody agrees that Social Security is off the table. Republicans want to *increase* defense spending. At least to my knowledge, nobody is talking about defaulting on the interest payments due on the national debt. Those three items alone immediately add up to 54 percent of the entire government budget. Throw in Medicare and we're up to 70 percent.

It's no surprise that these things are going to be difficult. It's also no surprise, given their political constituencies, that many Republicans have mixed feelings—to say the least—about some of the other items on the budget, like, for example, farm price supports.

If we don't get a "cold turkey" budget, the opposite is the "cold feet" approach. In that case, we will have small, politically sensitive, highly visible spending cuts, more than offset by large, highly visible, politically sensitive tax cuts and in this case, we will make little, if any, further progress toward narrowing the budget deficit. As a result, we will make little, if any, further progress in increasing our investment rate. And after the current strong recovery slows, we will have, once again, poor productivity growth and a standard of living that will continue to stagnate.

Why is all this so important? It's important because evidence, both from United States history and, I think, from a broad variety of countries, clearly shows that countries that experience sustained increases in standard of living over time, are—and are on that account—more likely to exhibit such features as openness of opportunity, tolerance of diversity, social mobility, commitment to fairness and even commitment to democracy itself. If we think our economic problems in the United States are small compared to some of the other problems we have unfortunately observed recently within our country, that may be correct. But I think it misses the point that there is an important connection.

If the United States had enjoyed a rising standard of living for the majority of our citizens over the last 20 years, as it did in each previous 20 years going back to the founding of the Republic, I wonder whether our population today would be as fractious, as divided, as sharp, as shrill, and as hostile as it is now. I suspect the answer is no. And on that account, I suspect also that if we do not do something, within some reasonably short time, to turn around our economic policy and therefore our economic performance so that the standard of living of the average American once again begins to improve, the trends that we see in our society today that are so very unpleasant will only get worse. ■

The Editor as Friend

When a writer, William Humphrey, protested to Harold Hayes, the legendary editor of Esquire, that his name was not listed in an advertisement featuring the magazine's authors, Hayes responded:

"As any editor, my responsibilities to you or any other writer is to respect your problems and authority as a writer, nothing more. I have no obligation to choose you or anyone else for any list on the basis of our friendship (especially on the basis of our friendship). It is not a question of my loyalty to you as a friend, or as an editor. My loyalty as an editor is reserved for the protection of your interests in publishing you—against advertisers, or management, or newsstand promoters or, as is sometimes the case, against those who disagree with my judgment about publishing you at all. My loyalty to you as a friend rests solely upon my interest in you as an individual I have come to respect and enjoy."—*"It Wasn't Pretty, Folks, But Didn't We Have Fun?" by Carol Posgrove. Norton.*

Environmental Policy

Better Media Coverage Of Risks Is Urged

Robert N. Stavins
Associate Professor of Public Policy, Kennedy School of Government

I was on a plane a few days ago, coming back from Austin, Texas, where I participated in a weekend conference of environmental journalists. The person next to me asked me what I did for a living and I said, "Well, I'm an environmental economist." There was a long, long pause and a blank stare. It began to occur to me that what that blank stare and that pause were really saying was that, in his mind, I had just uttered an oxymoron. So, am I a living, breathing oxymoron?

What does economics have to do with the environment, anyway? My answer to that is really in two parts. The first is that the causes of environmental problems in our society are fundamentally economic. The second is that many of the consequences of environmental problems have important economic dimensions.

PHOTO © MARTHA STEWART

Robert N. Stavins

What is it about our market economy that causes these environmental problems? You already know, as we all know and observe every day (particularly if you're involved in any kind of business yourself), that the forces of the market economy normally force each of us to focus on the proverbial bottom line; to worry about the money that's coming in and the money that's going out; to worry about the benefits and the costs. The result of that competitive process is that if you don't do that, you go out of business, essentially.

And the result of that process—and this is not a simple matter, but we've observed it over and over again—is that firms in the private market tend to use the resources that they have, labor and capital, in a relatively efficient way. On average (there are lots of exceptions), they tend not to systematically use too much or too little of labor or capital.

It also means that firms tend to produce, on average, about the right amount of the various goods and services that we want to buy. We tend not to have very long queues waiting to buy products. We tend not to have exceptionally large surpluses—actually, the one exception is in cases in which government gets involved in offering subsidies, such as in agriculture. But other than that, in the market economy, we tend not to have long queues and huge surpluses, something, of course, [that] characterized, as you know, centrally planned economies, until very, very recently.

Unfortunately, some of the things that firms produce are unintentional byproducts. Those unintentional byproducts may not show up in the bottom line, with the result that the competitive forces of the marketplace, which do such a marvelous job in terms of ensuring that the right amounts of labor and capital and all sorts of inputs and outputs are utilized and produced, don't work. The market fails. Environmental pollution is a primary example of this.

You might be thinking as I'm speaking, "But wait. There are some real costs of this. There are some real costs of pollution, some social costs of pollution. It costs us something, as a society. It hurts us. It reduces our well-being." That's absolutely true. The problem, of course, is that those social costs are not showing up on the bottom line of the firms that have to make the decisions in the first place about what to produce, how to produce it, and how to dispose of their waste. In other words, those impacts are external to the firms (in some cases, the individuals, you and me) that are making the decisions. That's why, if you've ever spoken to an economist about environmental topics, for even one minute, you've heard them utter the word "externality," because that's our perception of this. The problem is that environment is outside, is external to the decision-making framework of the firm.

The textbook example of this is a factory producing a product you and I want to buy, at a reasonable cost. It's using a particularly dirty fuel. The result is that some stuff is going up the stack which we might not like very much.

The more technically oriented call this "total suspended particulates" or TSP. I'll simply refer to it, as an economist, as "gunk." There's some stuff going up there that's problematic. But the firm is not thinking about it. It's not affecting them.

Next door, there's a commercial laundry facility. It finds that it's sucking in this dirty smoke from the factory next door. The cleaned laundry becomes dirty again.

They install expensive filters on the roof of the factory. That's one way we see the cost. But it doesn't show up in the decision-making of the factory next door, unless they share ownership.

That's a simple example of why I said, and why economists perceive that it is failures of the market that are the fundamental cause of environmental problems.

So let me turn next to what that might suggest for public policy. I'd like to begin with an analogy. If you or I were particularly concerned about our personal health, if we were ill, we might, as a result of consulting a physician, be able to identify which part of our body it was that was causing us the problem. Surely, if we identified which part of our system it was that was the cause of the problem, the last thing we would do would be simply to curse it and ignore it, and try to proceed as if it didn't exist. On the other hand, I certainly hope (at least, if it was my doctor) that the diagnosis of the source of the problem would be linked with the eventual treatment.

So if the central cause of environmental degradation in our mixed-market economy is economic, then surely we would not be so foolish, as a society, to ignore the problematic economic system when we devise cures through our public policy. Surely, we wouldn't be so foolish as to do that. Of course, the reason that I have a job teaching about this is that the sorry fact is that for 25 years that's precisely what we have been doing, going back to the first Earth Day and the wave of environmental legislation that characterized the early 1970's: the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, later, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and, later still, the Superfund program and others.

Until very, very recently, the predominant approach of virtually all environmental statutes and regulations by governments around the world, including the United States, has been so-called command-and-control, an approach whereby the government tells individual firms or individuals at large what precise technologies to use, or precise standards that they have to meet; tells private firms how much pollution control they have to carry out. These approaches have sometimes been effective. Indeed, if we look at certain environmental problems, particularly certain local air pollutants and certain local water pollutants, we see remarkable progress over the past 25 years.

It's also true that, because these policies work around the market, not through the market (work around the part of the body that's ill, rather than trying to identify the problem and fix it), they turn out to be exceptionally costly.

That means sacrifice in terms of the other things that you and I care about. It means we are getting our environmental protection, but we're spending too much, and therefore getting less of the other public goods we might care about (generalized health care, education, national defense—take your pick). And those private goods that we want (a reasonably priced food supply, or a VCR), have their price driven up more than is necessary.

Beginning about five years ago political leaders on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean began to recognize that there was an alternative approach to environmental protection that could enable us to achieve our environmental goals, the same goals or stricter ones, but at much lower cost. The phrase that's often used is "harnessing market forces to protect the environment," using so-called market-based environmental policy mechanisms, such as pollution taxes, tradable permits, reducing distorting subsidies, and a host of others.

These work by providing incentives to firms and individuals to do the right thing environmentally. This way, environmental protection is achieved at much lower sacrifice, in terms of all those public goods and private goods at reasonable cost, that you and I also desire. In other words, a highly effective way to protect the environment can be to give firms and individuals a direct, daily, and hourly, self-interest in doing so.

These economically rational policies do not, I want to point out, represent a laissez-faire free-market approach. In fact, remember, the whole point is that we identified the source of the problem as market failures, and so we seek to fix the market. This is not a matter of anyone suggesting that the market will solve the problems. On the contrary, it will not, on its own. At the same time, this new breed of environmental policies—the incentive-based ones—reject the notion that these market failures would suggest that we ought to scrap the market and ignore it as we proceed with our environmental policy.

In fact, these approaches have several potential advantages. The first, as I have emphasized, is that they can enable us to achieve our environmental goals at lower aggregate cost to society at large. The second is that they give continuous, ongoing incentives for firms to adopt new, better pollution control technologies—unlike the current standards, such as in the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act, which actually provide perverse incentives against adopting a new and better pollution control technology. Furthermore, they make the incremental costs of environmental protection much more visible to the general public, which then can focus public debate on the appropriate ways of protecting the environment, rather than simply on fighting back and forth regarding the evils of pollution, per se.

Finally, because some of these market-based approaches can raise substantial revenues (the pollution taxes), they can enable governments to reduce distortionary taxes, taxes that discourage desirable behavior, such as the generation of capital (investment, that is) and labor (work), and instead, substitute for them taxes which discourage fundamentally undesirable behavior, such as environmental pollution—going from so-called distortionary taxes to so-called corrective taxes.

I want to note that new laws and regulations over the last five to six years have, indeed, begun to incorporate some of these approaches. In the United States, the way we phased out leaded gasoline over a five-year period was through a tradable permit system among refineries in the United States. The result was a savings of $250 million per year, as estimated by EPA, compared to what it would have cost us otherwise. More recently, and strikingly, in the Clean Air Act amendments of 1990, the Congress adopted and the President then signed an approach to using a tradable permit system to reduce acid rain, at a savings that's now predicted to be between $1 and $2 billion per year. The same amount of acid rain

control, and an extra $2 billion is injected into the economy. There are also a range of other environmental problems to which these mechanisms could be applied.

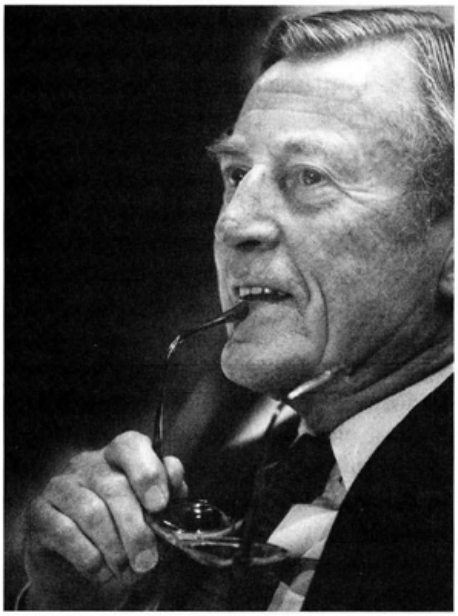
Interest in these approaches has increased for a number of reasons. One is that environmental protection is getting more expensive. After all, we weren't foolish; we cleaned up the cheap sources first. On the margin, it's costing more and more to reduce a given amount of pollution. That has brought more focus among politicians, anyway, to the issue of cost-effectiveness.

Also, there's a very new economic climate, in which the economic burdens of regulation are obviously taken increasingly seriously. There's also a more favorable view, it seems to me, of the role of markets in addressing a variety of social problems. That phrase, "using the market to address a social problem," was the province of the right wing, 20 years ago. That's more or less now mainstream thinking. In fact, that may even be left-of-center rhetoric nowadays.

Eventually, what this is going to mean, I think, is that increasing use of these approaches can enable us to achieve environmental protection, higher levels of environmental protection, without the rancor and the divisiveness that so strongly characterize the adversarial system that dominates today in the United States.

But no single approach is a panacea. Market-based instruments are simply one approach that ought to be in the overall portfolio. The real challenge, of course—indeed, the subject matter, really, for the course I teach each year at Harvard in the spring—is to use the wisdom that we can bring to this question, to identify what's the right policy instrument for each specific problem that we face.

Finally, I want to emphasize that, in my opinion, the role of the press, in terms of enlightened, progressive environmental policy, is absolutely critical. I'll illustrate this by reminding you of the fact that EPA, about six years ago, carried out a study—not an economic study, but a natural science study—called "Unfinished Business," in which they asked their best natural scientists to say what the risks are out there, and try to rank those risks. Now, that's a very difficult task. There's a lot of comparing of apples and oranges. But they were mainly looking at health risks, at least, not ecological risks, as well.



Murray Seeger, right, Special Advisor to Curator Bill Kovach, organized the Harvard à la Carte lectures. Ian Menzies introduced some of the speakers.

So they ranked their risks. And they said, now, let's take a look at our priorities in government. One way to look at government priorities would be, how much are we spending of government money on a particular problem. So they ranked those.

Do you know what they found? There was a very tight correlation, but it was inverse. Precisely the most important problems were the ones that were getting the least attention, and the least important problems, like abandoned hazardous waste sites, the Superfund program, were getting the most attention.

Now there's another ranking that I want to bring to your attention, and that's The New York Times Roper Poll that for quite a few years has asked the American population for their perceptions of relative risk. We find, again, a nice correlation. Do you know who the American population correlates with, in terms of their assumptions of relative risk? Not the scientists at EPA or the outside university people who did a later study. Theirs correlates very well with government spending.

There are two hypotheses about that linkage. The first is that government programs, themselves, create a demand for themselves. They do create awareness of risk. After all, because of the Superfund program, we are all much more aware of and worried about leaking hazardous waste drums at a local facility.

There is also very strong causality in the other direction that suggests that we're getting what we're asking for, in terms of public policy. The democratic process is working in our representative democracy. But that democratic process is working with flawed information.

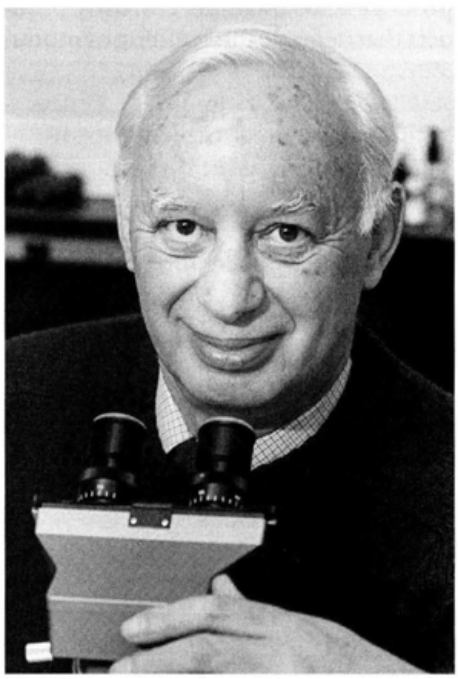
This is the point at which I think the role of the press, on both of those causal links, is absolutely critical. Better environmental coverage is necessary if there is to be more progressive environmental policy in the United States. ■

New Openings in Science

Microbes Are Out There, Ready to Hurt—and Help

Ralph Mitchell
Gordon McKay Professor of Applied Biology

When I turn on the news at night, whether it's CNN or one of the networks, or even if I open The New York Times (except for the Science Times), the amount of information that the public gets on science is very small. The public's perception, in terms of decision-making, is based on either flawed or very small amounts of scientific information. Slowly, we're beginning to get the information across and to educate a generation of Americans to understand that the complexities of decision-making really need a knowledge of science.



Harvard Gazette Photo by Jon Chase

Ralph Mitchell

Medieval philosophers used to discuss—and I guess modern politicians still do—how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. For those of us in the field of microbiology, the fact is that about a million bacteria can sit on the head of a pin. We don't have to discuss it in philosophical terms. You can put the head of the pin under an electron microscope and see millions of organisms. Everywhere we look—whether it's in the air, on the ground, in your hair, it doesn't matter—there are millions of microorganisms.

As a microbial ecologist, I like to think of myself as a descendant of Louis Pasteur. He didn't first discover microorganisms; he publicized them. Today we tend to discriminate between pure and applied science. Pasteur never had that problem. He looked at basic concepts, and lo and behold, wonderful applications fell out, applications like immunology and the germ theory of disease and fermentation technology—the sorts of things that people in industry or in the health sciences would be delighted with today. Louis Pasteur was studying what these little animalcules were running around under his microscope.

We've refined that phenomenon. Microbiology is in an explosive phase. For people in the media, it's extremely important to know what that phase is. E. O. Wilson, Harvard's famed entomologist, tells us that most of the insects in the world have never been identified. I was delighted that Wilson, in his wonderful new book, "The Naturalist," commented that few of all the microbes on earth are known to science, and that the new field of biology, if you're an ecologist, is microbial ecology. That's a fascinating observation—or, for those of us in the field, lack of observation, that we are ignorant about almost all of the microbes on earth. We don't know what they are or what they do.

If you take a handful of soil in your hand, you are holding approximately 10 million microbes. I like to draw the analogy to New York City—millions of organisms living in close proximity, fighting for a small amount of space and a small amount of resources and managing to survive in close cooperation with each other, sometimes antagonistic, sometimes with benevolent interactions. If you disturb that habitat, you get into serious trouble.

We're beginning to understand that these organisms live in the most unlikely places, and that's opened the door to new views of evolution, and to new openings in biotechnology. For example, deep in the ocean we now find there are millions of microbes able to survive at high pressure and very high temperatures.

We used to say that you kill all organisms by boiling the water. From a human-disease point of view, that's still a safe statement. But there are organisms that have evolutionary strategies to live in places like the hot springs in Yellowstone National Park. These bacteria live at temperatures of 100 degrees. In the lab you can't hold the test tube. Microbes are growing in deep vents in the ocean and highly saline environments like the Great Salt Lake in Utah, even in nuclear power plants.

When we think of the very important word "biodiversity"—this word that has crept into our lexicon—and the loss of biodiversity in plants and in animals, especially in tropical rain forests, you must keep the microbes in mind. They are not all out there to kill us. Most microbes are enormously benevolent. If we got rid of the microbes from the world, we'd be in serious trouble. You'd see all those plant residues, all those dead bodies, piling up. When we say, "When you die, you're recycled," it's the microbes that are doing the recycling. If they weren't there, we'd be in very serious trouble. So when we look at the tropical rain forests and the other habitats that are being lost, there are microbes there that we are losing that are tremendously important for food, agriculture and medicine, microbes that we don't know about, that we haven't seen yet.

What happens when you disturb the environment? A study of dolphins found that only those animals with high concentrations of PCB's (polychlorinated phenyl) suffered from viral disease. It's a horrifying synergistic effect of pollu-

tion and disease, which we see with humans, in smokers who come down with lung diseases.

When we disturb our ecosystem, microorganisms, which we used to think antibiotics had tamed, are now transferring diseases from other organisms to us. This phenomenon was first observed during the building of highways through Brazil, where viruses transferred from the native animals to humans. We are beginning to see these viruses transferred around the world. This is a major public health problem, and we're going to see a lot more of it over the coming years, as the global village becomes smaller and we disturb our ecosystems.

Diseases of humans—and of animals and plants—also occur, oddly enough, with materials. When I first saw a picture of a steel pipe with a huge quantity of bacteria growing on it, I immediately thought, since my training was in medical microbiology, of tuberculosis. In fact, the people in the materials field call these growths "tubercles," which I find fascinating.

Microbes corrode metals. Think of thousands of drums of nuclear and other hazardous waste that are leaking. Officials who issue regulations about storage don't really know there are microbes quietly eating their way through these containers. If you ask these officials, "Do you know why?" they say, "Well, it's some sort of corrosion, but we don't why this stuff corrodes." This is a whole new area of microbiology and of material sciences.

There's a field of environmental science called bioremediation. Can you use microbes to degrade hazardous chemicals? The answer is, absolutely. Bioremediation is a very fast-moving area of environmental microbiology. We have microbes that break all kinds of toxic industrial organics. Engineers are making reactors to exploit these organisms.

We used to think of DDT, lindane and other toxic pesticides, and ask, "Is there such a thing as a biorational pesticide?" Again, microbiology and microbial biotechnology are coming to the rescue. As gardeners know, a bacterium called bacillus thuringiensis, known commercially as BT, is now commonly used as an insecticide. More and more, we're beginning to see these organisms being used.

Photographs of angel on Cologne Cathedral show environmental damage. Photo on left was taken in 1880. Photograph on right of same angel was taken a century later.

We have discovered fungi that kill other plant-pathogenic fungi. The genes of the killing fungus are being cloned into plants. You don't even have to put the organism into the soil. You only have to put the gene into the plant. It's a beautiful aggregation of microbiology, molecular biology and plant science. We're beginning to see more and more of that.

Finally, I want to return to environmental deterioration and the subject I'm becoming increasingly involved in. It relates to the world's cultural artifacts. When you go to Italy, Germany, or other industrialized countries, you see that their cultural artifacts are deteriorating rapidly.

The Germans began to study this problem in some detail, about ten years ago. Incidentally, Germany is the only country in the world that has a program to study degradation of cultural artifacts by a combination of microbes and pollution. Think about the buildings around U.S. cities, where air pollution is constantly bombarding buildings and monuments. The buildings act as sponges for pollutants. The microbes go to work on those chemicals, and produce acids and other corrosive products that degrade the building or monument materials.

My favorite example of such degradation is an angel on the top of the cathedral in Cologne. In a picture taken in 1880 you see how beautiful that angel was. Now, in the other picture, taken 100 years later, you see the deterioration. If you were a medical scientist, you'd say, "This angel has got leprosy!" The face has been eaten away. There's very little left. It has to be one of the saddest pairs of pictures I've ever seen. You can see what will happen if we don't control air pollution in our major industrial cities.

It's a major problem that we're only beginning to address now. ■

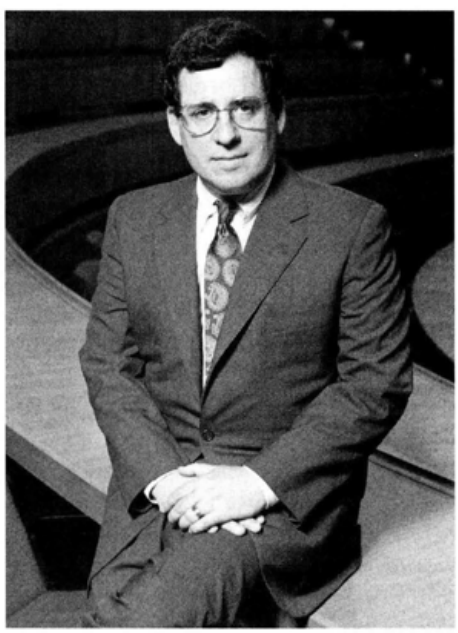
Health-Care Reform

The Press Failed to Inform Public of Alternatives

Robert J. Blendon
Roger Irving Lee Professor of Health Policy and Management in the Faculty of Public Health

I'm a ringer. You're not going to learn a lot about health and medicine from me. I'm here to start the discussion about the poll of Nieman Fellows.

What is the role of the press on big issues? I'm going to use health-care reform as a case study. I have a little bit of evidence about what Americans did and didn't know over the course of the debate. In the Nieman poll, 63 percent of you said that you see your major function as educating the public about the issues. So I'd like to discuss what was, in 1994, one of the big press coverage issues, what your readers and viewers knew before and at the end of this, and whether or not we should care what they knew at the end.



Robert J. Blendon

Along with my colleague Orville Hansen, who is a political scientist and also a former three-term congressman, we did an in-depth interview of the leadership of the House and Senate just prior to the '94 turnover. We asked them about the factors that led to the death of health reform. One of the most striking things we found is that on both sides of the aisle members recognized in the middle of the debate that there had been a change in public opinion. They believe this change influenced their actual decision to get out of the car and quit in the middle of the debate, before any reform happened.

I do health and welfare. I run the only university center that polls and tracks what people know about health and welfare issues. What's very important to know is that, from a reader or listener viewpoint, these issues are totally different. But from a coverage point of view, the press tends to treat them the same.

Let me deal first with welfare. When you interview people about welfare, 75 percent tell you that no one in their family has ever been on the program, and 60 percent say that welfare is totally unimportant to their family. Also, nobody works in the welfare business.

Now let me switch to my principal field, health care. In any given moment, 80 percent of Americans have health insurance. In a year, 60 percent of them see a doctor. When you ask about Medicare, which covers only the elderly, 72 percent of Americans say it's important to their families. Notice the contrast between that and welfare. Lastly, one in five households has someone who earns a living in the health field. This is larger than the defense industry.

What I want to highlight for you is that health-care readers are interested in the specifics. Welfare readers only want to know if the government is ending welfare as we know it and if recipients have to work after two years or not. Beyond that, they don't follow the issue very closely. In our work with The Times-Mirror organization we found that the number of people even attempting to read articles on welfare reform is one-half of those doing the same for health care reform.

Now, even though people are interested in health reform, the problem from your viewpoint is, Americans didn't get what they needed or wanted from press coverage of the debate. When we polled Americans on what they took away we found that people didn't understand the details of the President's plan; they never understood two key facts behind the plan; they didn't have a good understanding of what the Clinton plan would mean for them, and they never understood that there were alternative plans being proposed. We asked people at the beginning of the debate and again six months later, and there was no change in their level of understanding. These are exactly the things people want to know, which affected public opinion on the issue.

So, while the President and Mrs. Clinton are out discussing their national cap on spending to control the deficit problem, two-thirds of Americans don't know that health spending is a major contributor to the deficit. And if you're going to have a debate over whether or not businesses should be required to offer health insurance, it would help in the debate if citizens knew that most people without health insurance work, because it really does affect their answer to the question.

By April 1994 the Clinton plan was dead in the minds of the majority of Americans. But could there have been an alternative reform plan? Well, people were asked in March '94 if they knew of any better alternative to the Clinton plan—because by that time the public clearly didn't like the President's proposal. The majority of people said no, they didn't know any better alternative, and thus thought it was either the Clinton plan or nothing.

What we were able to do in our survey was describe to people, in very plain, simple terms, the plans sponsored by other Republican and Democratic leaders. As each plan was clearly and simply described, we asked the question: did you ever read or hear that this plan was being debated? We didn't ask about the details; just whether

people had heard of or read about that plan. This was the end of June; the debate was almost coming to an end. One-half of Americans said they did not know that the Republicans had any alternative proposals for health reform; one-half said there were no alternatives proposed by Democrats.

Then we described to them Senator Chafee's plan; the tax credit plan, which was Congressman Cooper's, and a version of the Republicans'; the single-payer plan (although we did not use the term "single-payer"); and we gave a simple description of the Medicare program without using the term "Medicare"—we said did you ever read or hear about somebody proposing a national health plan financed by taxes, where government would pay the doctors and hospitals. It's the end of the debate, and 60 percent of America said, "I never read or heard of that. Is there such a plan? I didn't know somebody proposed such a plan." The same was true of Senator Dole's proposal; two-thirds of Americans said they never heard about such a plan.

So we're at the end of the debate. People decided they did not like the Clinton plan. They had no idea there was any other alternative possible for this country, except what the Clintons had proposed, which Americans had already moved away from.

Now, why is it that this really became a double problem? Let me lay out the dilemma. It was the strangest chemistry that I've ever seen in polling. At the very moment that Americans wanted debate over a national health plan, they were the most cynical about government at any time in polling history. This is the oddity of the time frame when this debate occurred.

When the debate began in '92, when health care became an election issue, we were at a 40-year high in public interest in having a national health plan, higher even than in the Truman years. A 10-country survey done around the same time asked people in each country about their level of satisfaction with their national health system. The U.S. tied with Italy, significantly below every other country at the bottom of the scale. Now for those who study politics, when people hate their system that much, there is generally strong interest in change. And at the time of the '92 election voters ranked health care as the third most important issue in their presidential choice, behind the economy and the deficit. So again, looking at that, you assume that Americans wanted the government to do something about the health care system.

But here is what existed at the same time: we were at a 40-year low in Americans' level of trust in the federal government to do things right. When Ira Magaziner brought the Clinton health plan document out, before people even knew anything about what was in it, only 19 percent of them believed that the federal government would do right. I want to contrast that: when Johnson brought Medicare forward, 69 percent of Americans in the same survey believed in federal government's ability to do things right.

So a great deal of cynicism was there. During exactly the same month that the Clinton task force was working on health care reform, Times-Mirror and CNN-USA Today asked Americans these questions: "Does government control too much of your life?" Two-thirds said yes. "If something is run by the government, is it inefficient and wasteful?" Sixty-nine percent said yes. "Should we have smaller government?" Yes. "Do we get much value for our taxes?" No.

So there existed this incredible dichotomy: Americans wanted the government to act. They felt the health system was in terrible shape. They were voting for change. But at the same time, they believed the federal government was basically not going to get it right.

So the question is what press coverage of the health care issue said to the reader. Did it cover how proposals were going to fix the system, and how reform would affect Americans, and whether or not it would make their lives worse? Or did it leave them believing uneasily in their more generic cynicism, that basically whatever the Clintons decided to do they would mess up, and Americans would be better off moving away from this stuff?

What I want to show is that the cynicism won, because with the failure of the Clinton plan, Americans' interest in major health care reform declined. What is unbelievable is that we are not talking about a 10-year period here; we're talking about seven months. We went from a majority of Americans supporting the plan, to the majority opposing it. Even generic support to redo the health system, without discussing a specific proposal, went down.

What happened was that as Americans looked at the Clinton plan (since they knew nothing about the alternatives), they didn't know what it was about the Clinton plan that was really scaring them, but something was scaring them. Americans decided that it was health-care reform, generically, that was frightening. So support to redo the health care system went down simultaneously with support for the Clinton plan.

With all of the country's health-care problems—we have 10 years of news coverage about the uninsured, failing hospitals, rural doctor problems, and so on—in June, after a year of debate, the majority of Americans say that their biggest fear about health reform is that Congress will pass a bill which will hurt their quality of care and might cost them more—57 percent said this was their biggest concern. Only 29 percent were worried about universal coverage and overall health costs. Middle class America got terrified by this debate. Their take-away from the newspaper, media coverage and political advertising was that this was a bad thing for average, middle-class people.

Now you could argue that in a big debate, some people are going to decide that health-care reform isn't good for them. But the President should carry a couple of groups. If they don't know what's in reform, they'll trust the President or the plan. Who would you expect to favor the President's plan?

Well, seniors have a government-run plan. It is the only single-payer program in America. They tell us on polls they like it a lot. Medicare is extraordinarily popular. So you would assume that if seniors didn't know anything about the Clinton plan, they wouldn't oppose some sort of plan for other people that involved the government. But between September and

April, senior support for the Clinton plan dropped from 62 percent to just 37 percent. Likewise, you would think that Democrats, at least, would stick by the President, unless they got scared and were cynical. But here's what happened to Democrats: between September and April, one-quarter of the Democrats dropped their support for the Clinton plan.

What lead to all these people being worried? In April, toward the end of the debate, 63 percent cited too much government involvement in their health care; 54 percent believed that the amount they paid for care would increase; half thought they'd have less choice of doctors, and almost 40 percent said their quality of care might decline. This is why they got off the train. The question is, did this impression reflect the reality of the proposals for reform? Was it correct? Did they have anything to choose from? Did they know that? I do not do the media as my beat. I'm the chairman of a professional school department. I'm a teacher. But this is how it looks from my point of view: if someone comes to me and says, "Look, Bob, your department offered a course. The students said it was important. They did all the reading. However, they didn't learn one single important fact out of the course. They never learned what the alternatives were. They were very interested in how the course would affect their lives, but they didn't learn anything." I would say, "There's some problem in the way we taught this course." ■

Public Journalism Motivated by 'Fear of Declining Profits'

"A supposedly new concept 'public journalism' has emerged on the journalistic scene.

"'Public Journalism' encourages journalists to reach out, become involved in the community, revive public life, and help solve society's most basic problems. The idea is that the media should become actors not mere observers. In doing so, however, it should not impose its assumptions on the public but reflect the desires, somehow ascertained, of its readers.

"This approach may be a sincere attempt to salvage the media's reputation, reconnect with the public, and rekindle their trust and support.

"It is advanced as a new idea.

"Well, it is not new.

"It seems to ignore relevant characteristics under which the media must operate.

"It institutionalizes relationships which will reduce and weaken the independence of the media.

"It reshapes the fundamental role of the media as a solitary voice, right or wrong, to one which reflects either a majority of its particular public or simply the powers that be...."

"The motivation behind public journalism is the fear of declining profits. Newspaper circulations are dropping. Publishers and broadcast executives worry about financial viability, dividends, the stock markets—all legitimate concerns of a business. And that the media are a business must never be forgotten. Do we want a particular industry, a business, to become the core guiding force for determining our political, economic and civic life?"—*Charles L. Klotzer, Editor and Publisher, in The St. Louis Journalism Review.*

Leadership

It Should Not Be Equated With Mere Authority

Ronald Heifetz
Lecturer in Public Policy in the John F. Kennedy School of Government

It took me ten years to write my book on leadership, that just came out in the fall. ["Leadership Without Easy Answers"] And it took ten years because the field is so fuzzy and blurry, and most efforts to analyze leadership are confused and confusing, and even internally inconsistent. Within the same chapter of a book on leadership, even within the same article on leadership, often, people will use words in internally inconsistent ways. So it took an awful lot of time, and hearing many, many hundreds of students from all over the world—practitioners in our executive and mid-career program, and some of you Niemans—it took many years of honing a series of theoretical ideas against the experiences, the successes and failures of many people, before I began to have any confidence that the conceptual framework I had been developing was useful as a sort of generalized way of analyzing leadership and related phenomena.

Well, let me tell you why it took ten years instead of 12 or 14 years. Finally, my wife said to me, "Either that book leaves the house, or you leave the house." And I'm sure some of you writers know that experience: a real deadline.

In my thinking and writing and talking to a lot of people about this subject, it seems to me that there are several basic assumptions or sources of confusion about the subject of leadership. I do a lot of work in the intelligence community, helping people figure out how to analyze foreign officials, to do leadership analysis, as well as a lot of work in my classroom helping prepare people to be more effective in the practice of leadership. In both settings, there are some general sources of confusion. I'd like to share with you three of those common sources of confusion, since many of you are in the business of writing about public figures or business figures.

The first major source of confusion about leadership in our general discourse is the degree to which we equate leadership with authority. This is a big problem, because in our common language, we're always talking about the leader of the organization, or the leader of the gang, or the leadership of the Senate, or the leadership of the House, or the leaders of the country—when we really mean those people in senior positions of authority, because in the very next breath, we will contradict ourselves and say, "Why don't we see some leadership from these people?" So we know intuitively that leadership is not the same as having a top position of authority. Yet, we're constantly confusing and equating these two terms. So let me see if I can share with you at least where I've begun to come down, after, at times, breaking my brain trying to fathom this distinction.

Nearly every human organization has an authority structure, from the family and tribal societies—even gorilla and chimpanzee societies have authority structures. Well, at least in animal societies, they're called dominance hierarchies. Of course, there are enormous variations and kinds of authority structures across society, as we know, and across businesses, as well. But every organization, every human community, to be viable as a community, has to have some set of differential roles in which some people are authorized to do some things and other people are authorized to do other things.

Well, people in top positions of authority generally are authorized and expected to fulfill five basic functions. They're expected to provide clear direction. In a gorilla society, that means, find the water hole. If you don't find the water hole, if you don't meet people's expectations, you risk losing your authority. You are expected to protect the band from predators, from threat. And if you can't protect the organization from a reduction in revenue, or from Japanese competition, people wonder why they hired you.

You're supposed to control conflict, and keep people from breaking apart because of their internal rivalries, competitions, and disputes. You're supposed to maintain norms. And you're supposed to orient people, keep people oriented to their place and their role, their job.

In lots of problem situations, people in authority can do that job really beautifully. In my earlier career, when I was training in surgery, I used to moonlight in emergency rooms. There were lots of times when people would come in from a car crash, and we would have to respond immediately. Everybody in the team had to know what to do: clamp on the electrodes for the cardiogram; hold the neck still for the x-ray; get in the IV; and so forth. And somebody had to coordinate it. That job was basically within my know-how and everybody else's job was within their know-how. In a sense, the car crash was a routine problem, a technical problem. It was a vital problem, critically important. Sometimes, we really saved lives. But it was, by and large, a technical problem. And in technical problem situations, it makes perfect sense to look to authorities for answers.

But there are a whole host of problems facing our society and our businesses that are not technical; where there isn't any authority on the subject who knows the way; where a technocratic mind-set actually gets you in trouble, as former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara described and exemplified in his recent memoir. There are a whole host of problems where progress requires people to be engaged in defining and solving the problem; where the problem actually exists in people, and therefore, the solution exists in people. Lots of problems are like that—drug abuse, crime—where, to make progress on problems requires people to learn new habits, change some of their values, their priorities. The budget deficit is what I would call an adaptive challenge, a challenge re-

quiring adaptation, where there is no simple remedy; there is no authority you can look to, to protect you from that predator, to protect you from that painful change. Somebody's going to have to pay the bills. Somebody's going to lose hisjob.

So many times, we don't see leadership from people in positions of authority, because authorities are generally looked to for clear direction, for decisive knowing where we're supposed to go, where the water hole is going to be. We put huge pressure on people in positions of authority to treat adaptive problems as if they were technical, when in fact, leadership, in the sense of mobilizing people to tackle tough problems, often requires raising the tough questions rather than providing the easy answers. It often requires holding people through a sustained period of disorientation, rather than keeping people oriented. It often requires letting people feel the pinch of reality, rather then protecting them from change.

When the three heads of the American auto companies went to Japan with President Bush, they weren't going there to learn the latest Japanese quality production techniques; they were going there for protection. I mean, it made the President sick because his job was impossible. There was no way that he could protect these guys and their companies from the adaptive challenge posed by the Japanese. But that's what they were looking for. "Don't make us change. Don't make us undergo painful adjustments."

So there's enormous pressure brought to bear on authorities in communities, in businesses. I have found this to be true in countries all over the world (on average, I get 28 countries represented in my courses, year to year), where there is all this pressure put on authority to provide the answers, and where leadership requires something different. So I've worked hard in my teaching and in my writing to develop a prescription for how to walk that razor's edge. How do you challenge people to do adaptive work, and still stay alive? That's a tough problem. So these are the first two major source of confusion, it seems to me: this equation of leadership with authority and the expectation that leaders have the answers, that they can treat adaptive challenges as if they were technical problems.

Another important reason to distinguish between leadership and authority is so that we can begin to identify better all the leadership that *is* taking place, on the part of people who *don't* have any authority. Now, generally, all eyes turn to people in authority. Even in gorilla societies or chimpanzee societies, if you count the number of times an hour that the animals glance in a specific direction, they spend more time glancing over their shoulder at the dominant individual than anyplace else. They're always keeping track of who is socially dominant. We do that, too. We're always keeping track of where authorities are, because they orient us.

The problem, then, often is that we don't spot leadership when we're looking for it, as it takes place, as it's exercised by all those people who don't have any authority, people in families who are mobilizing their families to stay together, even given enormous stresses and pressures in the environment (loss of jobs and so forth). We don't identify all the people exercising leadership by bringing together a neighborhood, by starting a nonprofit, by organizing their low-income housing project. Now, sometimes those people are identified, like Bertha Gilkey, who organizes her housing project in St. Louis. Some of you will know of her. So we need to understand leadership in the context of people who are willing to engage in mobilizing other people to tackle tough problems, to do adaptive work, not simply behave like technical experts—and to do it both with and without authority.

A third major source of confusion is this notion that leaders are born and not made. That's a big fallacy. It's even a dangerous one. I want to explain why I think it's the wrong idea. From a purely scientific point of view, people spent four decades in social science trying to catalogue what are the common characteristics of so-called leaders. Really, they were cataloguing the common characteristics of authorities, because that's who they were looking at to study: the heads of gangs, the heads of companies, and so forth.

Even those studies weren't able to generate a clear list. Different situations draw forth different people. Different people emerge to gain authority in different problem settings. Even in the life span of a single company, different people will emerge to gain authority. So the notion that leaders are born and not made, just doesn't hold much water.

I liken it to violin playing. When I was studying music at Julliard, I saw lots of violinists who were really great people, very talented people, who were just destroyed with poor training. I saw some really quite average people turn into fantastic fiddlers, because of great training. And of course, there are a lot of potentially great violinists who never get exposed to a violin. It's not in their environment, so that talent is never pulled out of them.

The idea that leaders are born and not made is not only, I think, scientifically wrong, but it's also dangerous. It's dangerous for two reasons. The people who think they have the right stuff, they're dangerous, because they don't realize how much there is for them to learn. I've spoken to so many people who are so successful (heads of state, heads of companies, all sorts of people, people who run nonprofits)—very successful in one environment; they think they've captured the right lessons; then move into a new environment and fall on their face—because they weren't able to figure out what made them successful in that first environment.

It's also dangerous for all those people who think they *don't* have the right stuff, because they get to walk around saying, "Not my job. Nobody's calling me. I didn't hear the calling." So they just wait. And I don't think that's a very good thing for our societies, either.

Democracy's adaptive success demands everyday leadership. ■

Photography And Life

Pictures Depend on Attitudes Of Viewer and Maker

Barbara Norfleet
Curator of Still Photography in Carpenter Center for Visual Arts

"We have art in order not to die of the truth." I saw this quotation on the blackboard of a public school in St. Louis in 1969. I had just taken up photography after a long career in the social sciences. I was surprised to find that the going attitude in photography was that the photographic image was self-sufficient; you needed to know nothing else; and one could know the "meaning" of a photograph just by looking at the image. For example, there are two famous books on photojournalism—one by a photojournalist and one put out by a curator at the Museum of Modern Art. They put the titles and captions in the rear of the books, thinking that you could look at the pictures, and the pictures would tell you everything; you needed no captions, no dates, no information of any kind with the images. I think this attitude was pushed to convince people that photographs were art and could stand by themselves.

Barbara Norfleet

I had studied psychology, anthropology and sociology and in these disciplines meaning exists only in context; everything is affected by the attitudes of the viewer or the maker. The writing on the blackboard in that St. Louis school was a connection between my background in the social sciences and my then current interest in being a photographic curator, and I'm going to tell you why.

"We have art in order not to die of the truth." Well, what is the "truth" in photography? A photograph is so enmeshed in life that you must know a lot to know the answer, which can change over time. I'll give a few examples.

This first image is a daguerreotype of a mother and a daughter taken around 1839. These people look strong, proud, full of moral character. (Figure 1.)

Figure 1

Much has been said about the American character of the 19th Century. The most influential book on the subject was "The Lonely Crowd" (1950) by David Riesman. He contrasts the 19th Century inner-directed person, the person who believes in productivity and achievement, with the other-directed person of our time who believes in consumption and adjustment. Riesman thought life was not a popularity contest for the inner-directed person. Certainly this portrait and almost all daguerreotypes would confirm Riesman's assessment. But let's think about what these women had to go through in order to make this portrait. They had to sit totally still for about three minutes. They had to have their heads in a vice (from the back so it wouldn't be seen). It might be hard to come across as anything but inner-directed people in these images, and these are the images we have of our 19th Century ancestors. Of course, when you examine the lives of the people alive then, from Abraham Lincoln to Dorothea Dix, they do appear to have been inner-directed—committed to achievement.

But this story should remind us that part of the meaning of a photograph has to do with the technology of the time the photograph was taken. Sitters had to sit still for a long time in the mid-19th Century and this does affect expressions, postures and other indications of character.

An interesting point, as an aside, about the daguerreotype was its popularity. They were more popular in America than elsewhere because we needed portraits. We were a people who had left relatives and friends behind in Europe. We were willing to leave them behind again in the United States as we moved westward. But we needed a record of loved ones. Daguerreotypes were also democratic; everybody could afford them, unlike a painted portrait.

The meaning of an image is also affected by the time and place in which it was taken. Jacob Riis was the first person to photograph the poor in America. His photographs made from 1888 on did bring about change. He has the reputation of being a social reformer, but in fact, if you read the original version of his book, "How the Other Half Lives," (1890) you will find that he wanted to limit immigration. He saw the poor as a source of contamination and exposed their terrible housing partly because he wanted it torn down. Now, what he did inadvertently affected housing and the poor did get better housing. But nevertheless, he photographed at the time of Social Darwinism when the prevailing thoughts were

that being poor was a defect in character—the poor were lazy, the poor were drunkards. Riis's photographs typically show the poor as depressed, their homes as a mess and filled with trash. It looks as if these people do not care nor are they able to make their lives better.

Another photographer, Lewis Hine, began to photograph the poor shortly after the turn of the century after the social reform movement was well under way. The social reform movement was based on the premise that being poor was not a defect in character—it was due to a lack of resources, to a bad environment, to insufficient wages to feed your family. It was also due to a seven-day work week of 12-hour days and to crowded and derelict housing without water, heat or space. This movement believed that the poor, given the right circumstances, would rise out of poverty and be productive citizens. So in Lewis Hine's photographs of cellar dwellings, in Pittsburgh, an area more industrialized and worse than New York, everything from people to floors to belongings was neat and clean. The people looked directly into the camera with assurance and pride. These people could change. All they needed was a chance.

When Riis took pictures of newsboys, he showed them in their spare time, lying around as though they were lazy, with no ambition and not much ability to do anything. (Figure 2)

Figure 2

Riis was also known to pose some of his subjects as he wanted to portray them. When Hine took a picture of newsboys, they were filled with courage, spirit, and verve. Hine's newsboys look as if they might become captains of industry or at least captains of organized crime. You have a feeling that they are going to make it. (Figure 3)

Figure 3

It is understanding something about the time and place and the attitudes, then, that allows you to understand these photographs. Are they both the truth? Yes, part of it.

Another example. To us this photograph from the late 1920's appears chilling. (Figure 4)

Figure 4

This man is not a good father. He is treating his baby like a cow turd, or something like that. Now, look at this picture taken in the 1950's and lo and behold, you have a loving, wonderful father, playing with the child in his bedroom. (Figure 5)

Figure 5

We bring to these two photographs our present-day attitudes. But the fact is, these are both done by hired studio photographers, and both pictures were chosen by the family to keep. If one reads the most popular baby books from the time the two images were made you can see what is going on. In the late 1920's the major baby book was called "Psychological Care of the Infant and Child" by J.C. Watson, a behaviorist. Here is a typical quotation from that book: "Treat them as though they were young adults. Never hug or kiss them. Never let them sit in your lap. If you must, kiss them once on the forehead when they say good-night. Shake hands with them in the morning." This was the way people—at least the middle class and upper-middle class, who read books—were told how to bring up their children.

Now, let's go to the late 1940's and Benjamin Spock's book "Baby and Child Care" (the book has sold over 28,000,000 copies). Spock says, "For his spirit to grow normally, he needs someone to dote on him, to think he's the most wonderful baby in the world, to make noises and babytalk at him, to hug and smile at him, to keep him company during wakeful periods."

So you can see that the pictures people would want to buy would be very different in the 1920's than in the late 1940's and 1950's. And it's our attitudes today that make us judge these photographs differently. So your own changing attitudes and values are also terribly important.

In the late 1940's Gordon Allport, a professor of psychology at Harvard, conducted a wonderful experiment to prove that our attitudes influenced how and what we saw. He showed a scene in a trolley with two men standing facing one another—one a white man and one an Afro-American. The white man had a knife and was about to stab the Afro-American. Allport showed this picture very quickly to white Harvard male students. All experiments were done on white male college students at that time. Close to 100 percent of the people he showed it to saw the knife in the black man's hand. This experiment led to many more experiments done by

Jerome Bruner showing how attitudes and values affect what we see and what we remember. What is seen in an image depends on the attitudes of who is looking at it.

With some pictures it is critical to know the context—the time and place it was taken. For example, an image by Russell Lee taken in the 1930's Depression in Arkansas. (Figure 6)

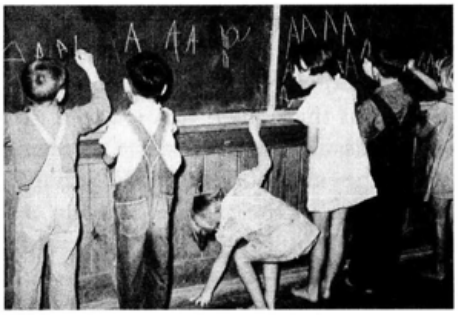


Figure 6

Given that amount of information, we know that this is a farming community—people only wore dungarees in the 1930's if they were farmers. We can also look at it, and know (if we know about that period in farming communities), that these children's families probably did not have running water, and at most, these children had two sets of clothes, one for Sunday and one for school. The bare feet tell us the families are very poor. Yet, we can see their clothes have all been washed and ironed, their hair is clean and shiny. The families must have had a tremendous respect for education, teachers and school.

One more thing—there is a little girl who's having so much trouble with her A's and seems to be behind the rest of the class. She is reaching down with her left hand to pick up something she dropped. Here her teachers are making her write with her right hand. We know that turning lefties into righties was being done at that time. Is she dyslexic because of it? By bringing our knowledge of its context to the image it becomes loaded with meaning.

Now, we get to what role the photographer plays. And for this, I'm going to refer you to the work of two photographers, Helen Levitt and William Klein, both of whom photographed in New York City just 10 years apart. Helen Levitt managed to capture, in a very poetic and lyrical way, the sense of community, the sense of peace, the sense of people, particularly children, living a good life in the city. On the other hand, William Klein, who photographed the same city a decade later, gives you a feeling of instability, of a city out of whack, of aggression, of violence, of terror, of children who have a high anxiety level.

Both of these photographers are getting part of the truth. Both views of the city are true. Interestingly, at the time we weren't ready to accept William Klein's work, but he became famous in Europe. Only now is he beginning to become famous in the United States. Our own attitudes about the city have changed.

Other things that determine how you see a photograph are the context in which you see it (Is it on a museum wall? Is it in an album? Is it something that is in an ad?) and the photograph's relationship to the text that accompanies it. Images are changed by captions. I remember a picture of Christa McAuliffe's family watching the shuttle take off. The caption said that the shuttle had just exploded, so we read the expression on her parents faces as fear when in fact the picture was taken right after the shuttle's launch, before the explosion. Now the expressions mean something different—awe? Pride?

So the social sciences taught me that determining the meaning of an image was a complex business that required knowing a great deal of information not present in the image. At the time of modernism this was a radical idea. I could not accept the idea that it was all in the image.

But in the Eighties post-modernism came in and acknowledged all the complexities that the social scientists had long known about photographs. Their ideas came from philosophers, psychoanalysts and semioticians from Europe. Because they saw that the meaning of the photograph was hard to understand and depended on many things they determined that all photographs lie and that there is no "truth" to be found in photographs. They also said that everything has already been seen; there is no such thing as originality. Many advocates of post-modernism claim that photographs just confirm the power relationships in a society. It is impossible to make a photograph that isn't really supporting the existing power relationships in a society, regardless of the photographer's intentions.

Post-modernists decided there was no reason to photograph the real world—all documentaries were lies. Post-modern photographers like Nick Nicosia and Carrie Mae Weems staged scenarios with models imitating documentary photography. They did not venture out into the real world. The real world is dangerous. We know that from what happens to photojournalists. Other post-modernists did fabrications. They made up things, in order to get their point across, and then photographed them. Barbie dolls became women (Laurie Simmons) or whole rooms were created with clay figures of babies, animals, people (Sandy Skoglund).

Another approach was to appropriate from the media or another's work. Barbara Kruger took pictures mostly from advertisements for her work. She also added a text that was juxtaposed with the pictures in order to "deconstruct" them. The words of the post-modernists were more complex than the words of the social scientists. They were words like "simulacrum," "deconstruction," "structuralism," and so forth—much harder to understand. But they threw the baby out with the bath, because they stopped photographing real life.

Since the idea behind post-modernism was that power was in images, and the viewer was a passive person—a person without power—a lot of feminists and minority groups took up this kind of photography. They wanted to show how they had been mistreated.

Another strategy used by post-modernists was the self-portrait. Cindy Sherman, for example, portrays stereotypes of the woman's role in society: as object, woman as passive. Until recently she was the model in all her pictures. Even though she did hundreds of pic-

tures of herself, the images address issues of gender, not issues of individuality.

Post-modernism has had very important repercussions—particularly for documentary photography. Photojournalists and documentary photographers are still working, still showing their work at the International Center of Photography and on college campuses, and some still publish books, but we are seeing almost none of their work in the art world. The critics, the galleries, the museums, the supporters are all paying attention to the post-modern work. Documentary photographers are not getting the encouragement and financial backing to photograph what's out there in the real world.

I think this retreat into fantasy, by the photographers who are making money, who are being shown, who are getting books published, who are getting grants, is sad for photography in general. This great invention, the camera, which, like nothing else, could capture the real world and what is out there, is now being used simply to capture people's fantasies and ideologies.

What I have tried to show is that images of the real world may capture many different truths. It may be difficult to unravel these truths but that does not mean that we should not try. ■

Newspapers As Personalities

Next to its reputation for accuracy and fairness, a publication's greatest asset is its personality. Every publication has a personality—the complex of a thousand qualities that make that publication seem like an old friend to its regular readers. You show me a successful publication and I'll show you one with a clear, distinct, consistent personality....Show me a newspaper in trouble and I'll show you one with an indistinct personality, or a personality that's become outmoded or has been changed rapidly.—*William G. Connolly, New York Times Senior Editor, at Writer's Workshop in Hartford, Connecticut, April, 1995.*

Criminal Trial Reform

Simpson Case Foreshadows Changes in Court Procedures

Charles Nesson
William F. Weld Professor of Law

I teach at Harvard Law School and have been urging the school toward technology, both conceptually and practically. Last fall we brought our entire first-year class up electronically; 540 entering students, in a series of classes, studied the O.J. Simpson case, using E-mail, conferencing and electronic data bases to identify interesting issues, and then research and write about them.

Attracted by the novelty of a Harvard Law School class studying the O.J. Simpson case, The New Yorker featured us in a "Talk of the Town" piece—just a little blurb about students in the class writing memos on whether Judge Ito should permit television cameras in the courtroom. Next I knew, I received a telephone call from a young woman, Tasia Skolinos, who identified herself as Judge Ito's law clerk. She said that Judge Ito wanted to look at the memos. This was a few weeks before the issue was to be argued. I said I would consider the request, and after calling back to the Superior Court in Los Angeles to check that the request was real, I agreed to do it. The result was that my students spent the next week madly polishing memos in the library. We sent the 12 best to Judge Ito.

Charles Nesson

In our classroom there is a projection screen behind the podium. To set the tone for the class, as students entered, we often projected up a feed from Court TV of whatever was happening at the moment in the O.J. Simpson trial. A few weeks after we sent off our memos to Judge Ito, the beginning of class fortuitously coincided with Judge Ito beginning the argument on camera coverage of the trial, and there, by happenstance, was Judge Ito up on the screen, graciously thanking the students at Harvard Law School for their memos. We stood transfixed, struck by the post-modern convergence of television, reality, technology and teaching. We were both in class and in the event, as was Judge Ito.

The Supreme Court of the United States, back in 1966, came within a hair of banning television cameras from criminal trials. Billy Sol Estes, known as the salad-oil king, was prosecuted in Texas in a trial intensely covered by cameras for television news. He appealed his conviction to the Supreme Court on the ground that the cameras in the courtroom turned trials into entertainment and were unconstitutional.

Chief Justice Earl Warren completely agreed. He was a great sports fan and watched a lot of sports on TV. He feared that television would turn criminal trials into something very like sports events. He wrote an opinion that was wonderfully prescient about a number of features that would come about with the advent of cameras in trials, even to the point of describing a celebrity trial very like the O.J. Simpson case. The most important factor that would draw television to the courtroom, he said, would be the nature of the case, "the alleged perpetrator of the sensational murder, the fallen idol." He said broadcasters would "develop the personalities of the trial participants, so as to give the proceedings more of an element of drama" and would "hire persons with legal backgrounds to provide expert commentary on the proceedings...to

anticipate possible trial strategy, as the football expert anticipates plays for his audience."

Led by Warren, a majority of the Supreme Court declared Estes's trial unconstitutional, but Warren could not quite muster a majority to ban cameras for the future in all criminal trials across the board. Justice John Marshall Harlan, usually among the most conservative of justices, qualified his vote to leave a small opening for television cameras in future criminal trials, based on their potential to educate the public. It is through that small opening that later courts allowed the practice of televising criminal trials to expand. We now have gavel-to-gavel coverage complete with the commentary and analysis Chief Justice Warren predicted. Public interest in the Simpson trial has been so great that, according to The New York Times, of the 100 highest-rated basic cable programs for the first quarter of 1995, Simpson-related programs accounted for either 98 or 99 (the ambiguity arising because the figures for broadcast of Michael Jordan's first home game after returning to the Chicago Bulls were not yet in).

We are all now familiar with the obvious distortions that television cameras threaten to introduce into criminal trials. Cameras magnify celebrity, and everyone wants to be a star. Observers in the broad public audience may lose faith in the process because they see (or believe they see) the trial participants motivated by the lure of celebrity rather than the quest for truth.

Television, particularly gavel-to-gavel coverage, also poses a more subtle threat to criminal trials. We like to think that trials determine truth, but in truth we never really know. We do know that trials, when effective, resolve disputes. At the conclusion of a successful trial we go about our business based on its result.

A key element of the dispute-resolving power of trials is something you might think of as deference. Let me illustrate by creating a disputed event and then resolving the dispute about the event through trial. I hold a quarter in my left hand so that all can see. I pass my right hand over it, pulling my hands away in two fists. The quarter is now in one hand or the other, but which? Let's have a trial. Consider how the trial process works.

First we gather a jury comprised of people who know nothing about the controversy and have no idea which hand ultimately held the quarter. Then we take testimony from eye witnesses to the disputed event, following the dramatic script of examination and cross-examination.

The right-hand lawyer calls a witness and asks: "In which hand did Nesson put the quarter?"

The witness answers, "He put it in the right hand."

"Your witness," says the lawyer, offering the left hand lawyer the opportunity to cross examine.

"Isn't it a fact that at the time of the demonstration you were drowsy and nodding off?"

"Uh."

And so forth, with some witnesses saying "right," some "left," and with various doubts cast on their testimony by the opposing advocate.

With testimony complete, the disputed issue is put to the jury, which deliberates in secret, and then emerges to speak its verdict: "The quarter was in the right hand"—like an oracle.

The amazing thing is that this process works to produce a conclusion that most everyone who was not a direct participant in the event will accept as true. If a verdict is within the bounds of credibility and has been produced by a process understood to be fair, then people will defer to it. Credibility, not accuracy, is what actually counts. Having no direct knowledge of the event, people will accept the jury's verdict because the jurors heard the evidence, observed the witnesses being tested, and concentrated hard on the question in their deliberations, thus putting them in much better position to decide than the mass of people who make up the public audience, who typically have nowhere near as good a basis for making a judgment. Deference to the jury's verdict follows naturally from the jury's privileged position in relation to the evidence. That is the design.

But now consider how gavel-to-gavel television coverage of trials, widely broadcast to an attentive audience, affects this design. Instead of a structure in which the jurors are better informed than the broader public audience, the gavel-to-gavel television coverage creates a situation in which the television audience is in a better position to judge than the jurors. The TV audience sees the witnesses "up close and personal," and has the benefit of expert commentary and endless analysis.

When the audience of the system comes to feel it is better able to judge outcome than the jury, then the jury's verdict is much more likely to be widely second-guessed. The process of trial, unless it is genuinely excellent, may lose credibility and legitimacy. This prospect is frightening to judges. In combination, the lure of celebrity on trial participants and the evaporation of the jury's privileged position in relation to the evidence may produce a powerful challenge to what used to be seen as the awesome majesty of the law.

In the face of this challenge, many judges wish we could return to the days of Estes v. Texas and give Chief Justice Warren one more vote. The federal judges at the national judicial conference, which took place just before the opening of the O.J. Simpson trial, almost en masse, urged an end to the "experiment" that is opening federal courts to cameras. I believe they could see a circus coming in the Simpson case and were trying to send a message to Judge Ito to ban the television cameras.

This was, we know, a message Judge Ito did not heed, and for understandable reasons. The march of cameras into courtrooms simply has too much weight behind it to be easily turned back. Law benefits when its message is well projected. The public wants to know. The media wants to know. Some defendants will feel they get a fairer trial (i.e., they are more likely to win) with a large audience watching, and so will not object to television coverage of their trials. Elected prosecutors and judges benefit politically from exposure to their electorates. Defense lawyers benefit from notoriety, both financially and through reputation.

Lawmakers who have learned to live with television in their legislative chambers cannot see why judges and courtrooms should be different: let the sun shine in.

Though many may regret it, I believe we are past the point of no return. Even the fears expressed by the federal judges at their judicial conference were soon swept aside, and the gradual opening of the federal courts continued. Television in courtrooms, for all its threat and challenge, is here to stay. In its hesitancy, law is experiencing the same sort of fear of media that we saw from the military in relation to television coverage of war. The military's first reaction was that it could not do its business with the camera watching. Some even attributed our defeat in Vietnam to television. But once the generals recognized the inevitability of having to deal with television, they figured out how to make it work for them, as we saw in the Persian Gulf War.

Will judges be able to do the same? Take Judge Ito. Imagine the challenge he is facing. Tasia Skolinos comes back to mind. She applied for admission to the Harvard Law School, and is now on the waiting list. You say, "wait a minute. You said she was Judge Ito's law clerk. You mean she hasn't even gone to law school?" Right. She hasn't even gone to law school. We are talking about a judge trying to run one of the biggest television events in American broadcast history, who has never been trained in media and media management, who has very little staff, and who would have his hands full to overflowing even without the added pressures and complications the television cameras introduce. Yet, notwithstanding some missteps at the beginning, he is clearly learning how to run a televised trial. And other judges are watching.

Because judges are watching, I expect to see reforms in trial process, stimulated by the O.J. Simpson trial. Appellate judges actually don't see very many trials, and typically do not confront informed public reaction to trial process. The Simpson case has changed that, raising questions that judges cannot afford to ignore.

How is it possible, in the age of television, that trial judges do not follow the rule that shorter is better? It is often said with an air of resignation that watching a trial is like watching grass grow. The Simpson case may stimulate judges to become better directors. I expect judges to develop their powers to impose limits—on the length of examinations and arguments, on the number of lawyers who are allowed to speak, on the overall length of case presentation.

How can our present method of selecting jurors for notorious cases be defended? In quest of the appearance of an unbiased jury, we now spend inordinate time searching through a large number of prospective jurors to select and sequester a jury of people who know little or nothing about the case. Then, as if to punish them for being so disinterested in current events that they are uninformed about the case, we force them to sit and endlessly watch the unfolding of the trial, making them concentrate on it for months, depriving them of their normal distractions and telling them not to talk about the case even among themselves. This is a prescription for psychosis. Judges taking a lesson from the Simpson case will look for ways to alleviate the pressures on juries. I expect to see a shift in jury selection and management practices in the direction of greater willingness to accept well-informed jurors. If jurors understand and accept their responsibilities to base judgment on the evidence presented to them in court, then it begins to make sense to allow jurors to live at home and lead more or less normal lives.

Should exclusionary rules of evidence be reconsidered? Much of the judicial tension created by cameras in courtrooms stems from the different rules of evidence applied in court and out. If courts are losing the power to create an artificial reality inside the courtroom different from that experienced by the public at large, then it makes sense to reconsider the occasions for trying to do so. There would be less pressure to insulate jurors from press coverage of trials and less likelihood that television audiences would wind up feeling they knew more than jurors if some of the exclusionary rules applied in court were eliminated. Rules excluding character evidence are already full of holes and quickly falling. Rules excluding hearsay are being riven by exceptions. Even the search and seizure exclusionary rules are not above reconsideration, though perhaps the public has come to value their constraint upon police misconduct, even at the cost they exact in reaching accurate verdicts.

The biggest change I expect we will see is in the attitude of judges. At present the attitude of many is that concerns for the way trials come across on television are somehow corrupt, judicially illegitimate and beneath judicial dignity. Media are a threat and a distraction. Rhetorical concerns are for manipulators of image, not for those whose concern is to reach the truth. But just as Colin Powell came to realize that communication with multiple audiences is part of modern war, with opportunities to be exploited as well as pitfalls to be avoided, so judges, I expect, will come to see that communication with multiple audiences is part of modern trials. Judges can legitimately concern themselves with the way trials play on television without compromising the substantive integrity of their judicial mission. "Waste of time" is a legitimate judicial as well as rhetorical concern. The audience wants to see a process well designed and smoothly functioning to reach the most credible approach to truth. This is respectable both as judicial and rhetorical concern.

My conclusion is that trials and judges must evolve to retain credibility in an electronic environment. New technology produces convergence in many different ways. Gavel-to-gavel coverage of trials, coupled with multi-channel distribution to a wide viewing public, merges the courtroom audience with the television audience. It breaks down structures of deference, which depend on distance and differences in information. It challenges trial process to produce credible results with everyone watching. The challenge will not be met by fending off the cameras, but rather by adjusting to them, frankly addressing the problems they pose. ■

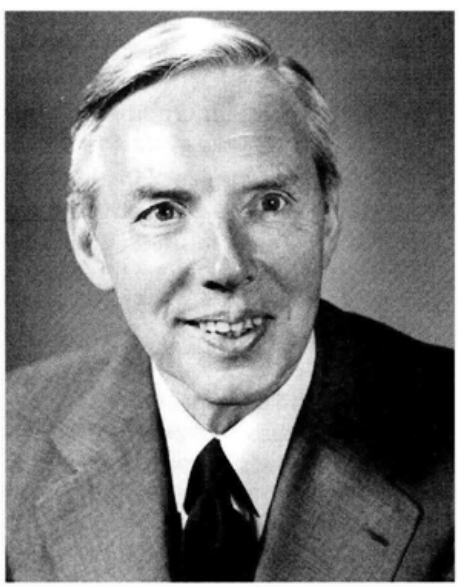
Foreign Affairs

Paradigm Lost To Press and Historians

Ernest May
Director of the Charles Warren Center For Study of American History

My theme is paradigm loss. The basic way in which we interpret events has changed. By "we," I mean journalists like you, who interpret events of the day, and historians like me who build on what you tell us and keep on interpreting after the actors are dead.

We had a comfortable paradigm. We were able to sort events, both in the short term and in longer perspective, with the paradigm of a Cold War between two superpowers. It enormously simplified our lives, both in your business and in my business, because it enabled us to treat international affairs as a kind of long-running World Series. We could apply the same criteria as to a sporting event. We could look at something that happened in the world, or some trend, and our first question could be: how did it affect the score? Was it one up for the East or one up for the West? Did it affect the balance between the two sides? This provided a way of deciding the significance of events first in Europe and East Asia and then increasingly in less well-known places. It became a way of reading meaning into what happened in Ethiopia or Guatemala or Grenada.



Ernest May

If that didn't quite suffice to shape our stories, we could write in terms of players. How did an event affect the makeup of one side or the other? About French presidential elections, for example, we could ask: did the outcome make France more inclined to line up with the United States or more inclined to play an independent role in the Cold War? Our problems in interpreting the significance of Jacques Chirac's election in 1995 illustrate what we have lost.

At worst, we could ask how an event or trend affected team equipment. That served as our key for dealing with subjects such as INF and SDI—the Intermediate Nuclear Forces negotiations and President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative.

This simplified our lives. It enabled us to sort what we saw or read. In our mental filing cabinets, we had clearly marked drawers and folders for what was important. We could discard or stuff into back drawers all the miscellany that didn't have to do with the big game between the superpowers. Once Indian neutralism became a fact of life, we could pay little attention to the Indian subcontinent. Though the Iran-Iraq war was one of the bloodiest in all of human history, we could treat it as a minor occurrence since neither party was a proxy for a superpower. We had our paradigm. We clung to it.

The phrase "after the Cold War" is usually misapplied. If you look back closely, the Cold War seems to have ended a long time ago. During the real Cold War—from roughly the Berlin blockade of 1948 through the Cuban missile crisis of 1962—we took seriously the possibility of the Northern Hemisphere's becoming one big Hiroshima. Our official source of safety in the mid-1960's was a doctrine of "mutual assured destruction," which said that the superpowers would not blow up the world because they saw the score at the end of the great series as 100 million lost on each side, with the survivors envying the dead.

The missile crisis marked the beginning of the end of this real Cold War. The late 1960's brought détente. There were a few flare-ups afterward. At the time of the Yom Kippur war, tension rose. Briefly in 1983, some paranoids in the KGB interpreted Reagan's SDI and some coincidental changes in NATO as preparations for a preemptive strike on the part of the West. They put their listening stations on a hair trigger. It was probably a very dangerous period. For practical purposes, however, détente continued—"Cold War" was not an accurate term for international relations after the mid-1960's.

We can now recognize in retrospect that the term "superpower" was also out of place. There had never been but one superpower except in the rather narrow sense that the Soviet Union's having military and nuclear forces equal or superior to those of the United States. In other respects, the term didn't apply. We should have all have seen this a long time ago.

Jokes should have made us see the truth. In politics and even in economics, jokes are often more revealing than statistics. One common in Moscow in the late Khrushchev years ran as follows. A young Communist says, "Of course, there was no Adam and Eve. But if there had been an Adam and Eve, what country would they have been in?" Answer: "the Soviet Union." Why? "Because they had nothing to wear, they had only an apple to eat, and they were told they were in Paradise." In another of the same period, a Russian cosmonaut goes to Mars and returns. People ask him: "Is there life on Mars?" He replies, "No, there isn't life on Mars either."

Another is a Polish joke of the 1970's, before the triumph of Solidarity. An émigré returns. He says, "Things look the same." His escort tells him, "No, no. They are completely transformed." The émigré says, "But this square looks just

the way it used to." "No, no," says the other. "See, over there, that sign. It used to say 'Butcher' and there was meat inside. Now it says 'Meat' and there's a butcher inside."

Such jokes should have told us something. So should the evidence before our eyes. In Moscow in the early 1980's I met at the embassy a lawyer from Houston. He told me that he was and had been a strong supporter of Mr. Reagan. He had backed him for President from the early 1970's. But, as a visitor to Moscow, he said, he had to spend more and more of every day down in the subway. It was the only thing in the country that seemed to work. It was the only thing that made the Soviet Union seem the enemy supposed in Mr. Reagan's defense budgets. The notion that the Soviet Union was a superpower was an illusion.

We know now that there is no longer a Cold War. We know that there are not two superpowers. But we don't have a paradigm to substitute for the paradigm of a Cold War between superpowers. We don't have a filing system to help us decide what is significant and what isn't. We are desperately in search of a substitute. This accounts for some of the excitement aroused by Sam Huntington's argument that the future will see clashes of civilizations. Maybe he has found the formula. Maybe we can just change the labels on the uniforms and call the contestants Western civilization and Islamic civilization or something of the sort. We are groping. We are prepared to seize on any framework that has a familiar feel.

I think back to other periods when reigning paradigms of international politics changed and ask if they give guidance, but the answer is: not much. Most earlier periods were ones of quick transition from one conflict to another. There was a brief period, the 50th anniversary of which we have been celebrating, when uncertainty prevailed. The Second World War was over. It was clear that there would be a triumphant peace for the Allies of World War II. What kind of world would succeed? No one knew. But the Cold War, looking a lot like the earlier war between the Allies and Axis, came along within a year or two. There was only a brief period of disorientation.

The middle of the 19th Century saw a longer period of uncertainty. A sort of two-superpower system had grown out of the Congress of Vienna, which made peace after the Napoleonic Wars. Britain and Russia had emerged as the two foremost powers. There followed 40 years of maneuvering between the two and lesser powers in between. That system broke down when the Crimean War showed both Britain and Russia to be more weak and inept than almost anyone had imagined. Between the mid-1850's and the mid-1870's came a long period in which it was hard to identify dominant powers. Journalists and historians nevertheless saw a lot of two-sided conflicts that seemed easy to catalogue under familiar headings. They just happened to be localized in civil wars or wars of national unification such as the Italians', the Germans' and our own. It was possible to keep score in the old conventional ways.

Robert Manning, Nieman Fellow 1946

The only period that looks to me like the present is the last decade of the 1920's. Reparations agreements and the Locarno Pact of 1925 had created apparent understanding between the Western powers and the Germans. Naval treaties and other agreements had created cooperation between the Western powers and Japan. Until the early 1930's, no strong rivalries divided major powers. Aristide Briand, the French foreign minister, captured the peculiarity of the period when he said that, earlier, when a treaty was signed, one asked, "Against whom?" Now, one had to ask instead, "For what?"

That period did not last. It was broken by the Great Depression and the emergence of the contest that eventuated in World War II. The fact that absence of conflict was so short-lived and that change came because of wholly unforeseen events like the Wall Street crash and the rise of Hitler warns us against trusting too much that the future will continue to be like the present.

The late 1920's is nevertheless worth remembering because it was the one period when people like us had really been trying to adjust themselves to a world not torn by rivalry between two powers or two armed camps. And it is possible that this is the kind of world for which we will have constructed an enduring paradigm. We may not be able to interpret the significance of events in terms of their effects on the scores or outcomes of great contests. We may have to relabel all our file drawers.

I can contemplate such a future without alarm. As a historian, I can always talk about conflicts of the past. For journalists, however, this may pose a terrible challenge. You will have to figure out how to headline a morning paper or an evening news program without the equivalent of a war story. You will somehow have to find ways of wrenching the attention of a reader or viewer with a story that says: yesterday, humankind made a little progress against hunger or disease or pollution or something similar. I hope that is your future. If it is, we historians will follow happily along—eventually. ■

Bias and Public Safety

Society Should Deal With Non-Racist Racial Discrimination

Randall Kennedy
Professor of Law

W.E.B. Du Bois said the problem of the 20th Century would be the problem of the color line. I'd like to focus our attention on one problem that exists along that line: the use of race as a proxy for suspiciousness. Though most of my comments are going to be focused on domestic policy, this issue also has an international aspect. The single biggest episode in American history of the use of race as a proxy for suspiciousness occurred during World War II when *all* people of Japanese ancestry were detained, moved off the West Coast, and put in detention camps in the interior part of the United States. The fact that they were of Japanese ancestry was used as a proxy for suspiciousness, a signal of an increased likelihood that they would engage in sabotage against the United States government. Right now, in Southern California, the United States Border Patrol acknowledges that in combating illegal immigration, it focuses its attention on people who are of apparent Mexican ancestry. Just recently, with respect to the Oklahoma City bombings, apparent Middle Eastern ancestry initially triggered heightened levels of suspicion.

Harvard Law Art Collection

Randall Kennedy

I supposed that everyone in this room has some experience with this phenomenon. Police routinely make use of race in making determinations of suspicion. Entrepreneurs do as well. An example is the taxicab driver who, using skin color as a signal, declines to offer service to young black men at night on the grounds that doing so marginally decreases his vulnerability to crime. Or consider the lone pedestrian. Those of us who live in urban areas are often in the position of having to make a determination as to how to get home safely. Imagine that you're walking down the street and see someone ahead of you. It's dark and you can't see the person well. All you can tell is that the person is young, male and black. Is it proper to take this stranger's race into account in making your calculations regarding how to proceed—in determining whether you disregard him, cross the street, or duck into a store?

One response is to say that taking race into account displays pure bigotry. Sometimes that's the case. Sometimes, the police officer is using race as a strategy of harassment, a tool to put down a given group. Often, however, racial discrimination of the sort we are discussing arises without racial animus and is perfectly rational. Consider the police officer who says "I use skin color to make determinations of suspicion in some contexts because experience and the demographics of criminal activity makes this use of skin color a useful tool which increases my efficiency in nabbing crooks." Or consider the cab driver who says "Yes, using skin color as a partial guide, I often decline to offer service to young black men. I do this not because I'm a bigot, not because I'm prejudiced against that person or that person's group, but rather because I am engaging in a rational calculation of self-protection. Given what I know from talking with my fellow taxicab drivers, and from reading the newspapers, it seems clear that dealing with a young black person marginally raises the likelihood that I will suffer a robbery or some other mishap. When I decline to serve the young black man, I'm simply playing the odds."

There's a lot of truth to what these rational discriminators are saying. This is so in two ways. First, a lot of the people who make such claims are being authentic. They're not just covering up simple bigotry. They are honestly articulating non-racist reasons why they engage in racial discrimination. Second, their calculations are often correct. In terms of statistical probabilities, they have a point. Viewing the issue strictly from their perspective and in the short run, they may be acting rationally.

That, however, should not be the end of the discussion. What we should go on further to ask is whether our society should permit rational racial discrimination. My answer is no. Our society should demand more than mere rationality as a justification for racial discrimination.

First, it is already difficult to combat racial discrimination animated by bigotry. If we were to allow rational discrimination the difficulties involved in identifying and deterring bigoted discrimination would become wholly insuperable.

Second, there's the problem of racial selectivity in exaggerating negative traits. In the United States, because of the effects of racist folklore and other influences, many people unknowingly exaggerate the extent to which members of certain historically stigmatized groups engage in improper conduct. We should not permit a rational discrimination defense to our general prohibitions against racial discrimination because stubborn subtle biases often subvert our capacity for rational calculations having to do with racial differences.

Third, we need to do everything in our power to drain the deep reservoir of resentment that exists within communities that have long been discriminated against in American life. I think particularly of African-American communities. Even if it's the case that police officers or others are engaging in rational discrimination, a lot of black people are going to believe that they're being subjected to racist treatment. This perception has, albeit erroneous, a huge cost. We can see in the unfolding of the O.J. Simpson case the cost of such feelings of resentment and alienation. The O.J. Simpson trial may well result in a hung jury in large part because of these feelings.

Fourth, one of our aspirations as a society is that people be judged on an individualized basis and not on the basis of ascribed characteristics. To support that aspiration we should prohibit taxicab drivers and police officers from placing question marks on individuals simply because of calculations having to do with general trends within groups with which we associate individuals.

Individual assessment imposes real costs. But these are costs we should be willing to bear and to spread more equitably over the entire population. As things currently stand, police, taxi drivers, and others impose what is essentially a special racial tax on a part of the citizenry in order to underwrite law enforcement or other protection against criminality. We must create a different way of responding to the crime problem. For instance, instead of allowing the Border Patrol to tax people of apparent Mexican ancestry, we should make the Border Patrol hire more officers or stop all motorists at checkpoints. By openly, candidly, and sympathetically dealing with the problem of rational, non-racist racial discrimination, particularly in the context of avoiding or deterring crime, we can nudge our society a bit closer to its egalitarian ideals. ■

Reporting Cataclysms

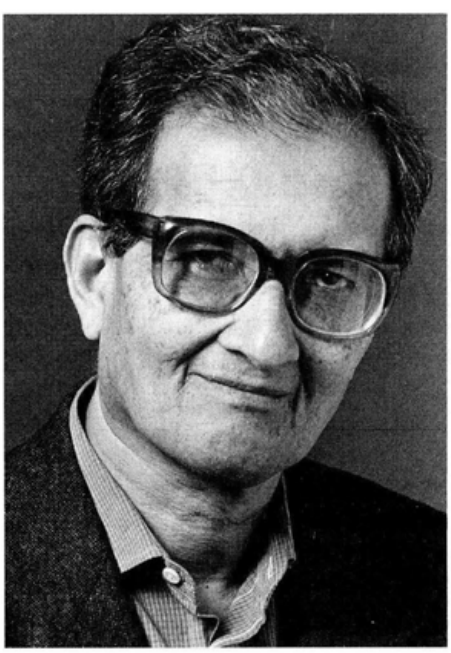
Reporting is like a religion, and our god is reality. What reporters are preoccupied with is reproducing, recreating reality for our listeners, our viewers and our readers with as precise and deep a communication of the essence of the reality that we are seeing. And when that reality goes beyond the bounds of convention, when that reality is on such a scale that it dwarfs our experience, it's hard not simply to resort to hyperbole. That sort of makes the story like a Guinness Book of World Records event rather than like a real, human event.—*Dave Marash, correspondent for ABC's Nightline, explaining, in an interview with Alex Jones on the WNYC On the Media show on January 22, 1995, why "personal, microcosmic" stories are probably the best way to report cataclysmic events.*

World Economy

Good Policies Demand More Than Economics

Amartya Sen
Lamont University Professor

For the last two or three days, I have had a terrible backache. The condition has some similarity with the nature of the world economy at this time: the body is in large measure quite sound, but there are parts of that structure that have a lot of problems. A backache also makes you aware how interdependent different parts of the body happen to be. When you're trying to tie your shoelaces, you discover that it is not an easy thing to do, even though your shoelaces don't seem to have much to do with your back. Interconnections may be far from obvious, and there is some analogy here, too, with the world economy and polity.



Amartya Sen

The growth of the world economy over the recent decades has not been, by any means, negligible. But we must also take note of the asymmetries and inequalities that have tended to go with an overall expansion. This cannot but seriously qualify the rather upbeat view of the world economy that may be legitimately taken at a more aggregative level.

Over-simple Generalizations

In paying attention to unequal progress, we must avoid falling for some grand simplifications that are often repeated, and which have come to sound plausible precisely because they are so often repeated. Generalizations like: "While the rich countries are getting richer, the poorer ones are getting poorer." Or: "we are producing more and more industrial goods, but food supply is falling behind population growth, especially in poor countries." The truth is very much more complex than what these generalizations would indicate.

Consider the growth of Gross National Product per person. If you classify the world into high-income, upper middle-income, lower middle-income, and low-income economies, as they do in the World Development Report of the World Bank, the observed pattern, as given by the 1994 report, is something like this. The low-income economies—with the *least* GNP per head—are having the *highest* average per-capita rate of growth (close to 3 percent per year). Next highest is the group high-income economies. And then come the upper middle-income countries with very little growth per capita GNP, and then, the lower middle-income actually slipping a bit.

In fact, this breakdown in terms of per-capita GNP is rather unhelpful and hides the regional aspect of the growth pattern, where interdependencies are important. If we look at growth rates country by country, the highest growth rates in the high-income economies are observed largely in East Asia—Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore. In the upper middle-income group, we observe a similar role for South Korea. In the low income economies, the elevated group average is dominated by the high rate of growth of China, helped also by relatively fast expansion in India and Indonesia.

A better understanding of the world pattern of unequal economic growth is obtained by noticing the high economic growth in Asia in general, and East and Southeast Asia in particular. In contrast, the lower-middle income group, which has a large proportion of sub-Saharan African economies, suffers from the low growth in that specific region. The often-repeated story that "the poor countries are getting poorer" is not generally true. And insofar as there is some limited truth in this, that is largely a *regional* truth, in particular that low-income and lower-middle-income African countries are largely falling behind.

Food and Population

What about the generalization about food supply and population growth? The production of food in the world is definitely not falling behind population growth. For example, if we look at the average production of food per person, between 1979 and 1992, it went up by about 4 percent. And this isn't because the rich countries are producing a lot more food, with—to pick another common supposition—American wheat feeding the world's poor. Over the period, Europe had a slightly less-than-average rise. North America actually had a fall in food production per head—rather more in the USA than in Canada. Other developed economies slipped quite a bit more. Africa is the one generally poor region where there was a substantial decline in food output per head. The Latin American average went up a little. And Asian food output per capita jumped up over this period by as much as 21 percent on the average. China had a 36 percent increase, and India a 22 percent rise in food production per person.

When panic-making figures of big increase in world population are quoted with unnerving effectiveness, the absolute increases in the Chinese and the Indian population contribute a lot to those frightening numbers of millions

being added each year. It is, thus, interesting to find that food output per person is growing fastest precisely in those countries which are also having the biggest absolute increases in population.

It is, of course, true that the fertility rate has fallen sharply in China and quite a bit even in India. China's total fertility rate is now around 2 (rather lower than USA's 2.1), and even though India's is still around 3.7, there are parts of the country where it has rapidly fallen, to 2.2 in Tamil Nadu and 1.8 in Kerala, much the same as in Britain and France. The percentage rates of population growth are much less in Asia rather in sub-Saharan Africa, where fertility rates above 5 are quite common.

It might appear that Africa's general predicament is due to its high percentage rate of growth of population. But sub-Saharan Africa's problems really lie in the crises of production and economic performance, and they are in turn associated with political instability, persistent civil wars and military dictatorships. The failure to make demographic progress in reducing fertility rates relates to these social and economic crises. It is not easy to expect well-functioning family planning programs in countries devastated by wars, strife and ruthless dictatorships, rather than the opposite story that is often told (that the economic and social crises are the result of demographic crunch). High fertility rates do not make the economic tasks easier, but that is not the main source of the economic or political crises in Africa. Certainly, the African fertility rates need to be brought rapidly down, but even if sub-Saharan Africa had the same percentage growth rate of population as China, it would still remain at the bottom position in interregional contrasts.

Trade, Stability, the Cold War

If one wanted to get some kind of a general understanding of what is happening, on the basis of international experience in comparative terms there are three important influences that clearly emerge as crucial. First, the tremendous importance of trade and global interconnection as a factor that boosts the economy. One thing to look at is how persistently world trade has been expanding much faster than world output, serving as a lever, giving a helping hand to world output to expand with it. The Asian successes derive a lot from this trade-dependent expansion. This is a big lesson, which has been only slowly learned in the third world, and the recent opening up of the economies such as India's derives from this understanding.

The second factor is the importance of political stability and ultimately of democracy as well. The problems of Africa relate greatly to political disorder and to the suppression of opposition parties, which sharply reduce the political incentives that operate on the governments, inducing them to cater to the critical needs of the people. The nature of sub-Saharan African problems relate much to political turmoil, the lack of stable government and the inability of the government to do any of the things that a responsible government can be expected to do.

Africa had the misfortune of being the field on which a lot of the Cold War was fought. This is where implicit interconnections come in rather viciously, like the backache and the shoelaces. The fight was between the West and the Soviet blocs, but each side was effectively ready to support any military ruler in Africa who would be on the "right" side, from the respective perceptions. From the 1960's, the newly independent African countries, one after another, lost their democratic initiatives and were taken over by authoritarian regimes of the right or of the left—often by military dictatorships. Dictatorships often produced chaotic forms of military governance, with a lot of warfare. Some dictatorial countries became lands of war lords, as happened to Somalia.

Democracy and Famines

The loss of democracy also extracted a heavy price. The political incentive that democracy provides can be extremely effective in making governments prevent economic disasters. For example, famines seem to occur exclusively in dictatorial regimes. They have occurred in colonial territories run by imperial rulers (pre-independent India, or Ireland), in military dictatorships controlled by authoritarian potentates such as Ethiopia or Sudan, or in one-party states intolerant of opposition such as the Soviet Union in the 1930's or China at the time of the Great Leap Forward. But a substantial famine has never occurred in a country that is independent, that has systematic multiparty elections, that permits criticism of the government and that allows press freedoms. This applies not only to the affluent countries of Europe and America, but also to countries that happen to be very poor, such as India, Botswana, or Zimbabwe.

It is sometimes claimed that economic growth relates negatively to democratic and civil rights. This generalization is based on casual empiricism. True, some authoritarian countries have grown fast, including South Korea or Singapore or post-reform China, but then again the highest growth performance in Africa belongs to the oasis of democracy there, Botswana. Nothing much can be deduced from such isolated facts. And systematic studies of inter-country patterns relating economic growth, on the one hand, and political and civil rights, on the other, have shown no clear connection in either direction. Since political and civil rights are valuable in themselves and also valuable in protecting the population from disasters, the case for them stands. China's high economic growth relates to economic causes, including the use of international markets and the opening up of the economy, which do not require dictatorial politics for their survival. And if things were to go badly wrong, democracy can provide a corrective through opposition, political criticism, and media pressures. The absence of such democratic pressure had allowed the Chinese famines to continue for three full years (1959-61) through the failed experiment of the Great Leap Forward, when between 23 to 30 million died. Democracy is most

sorely missed when things go wrong and when a dogmatic government fails to respond.

Social Services

The third factor is the positive role of social services in making lives better and also in providing support for economic programs. This includes health and education, and social security. The constructive role of social services is less widely acknowledged than I believe is justified. The social side of development is important for two distinct reasons. The first reason concerns the direct importance of social support in improving the quality of life. Even though the climate of political opinion has become rather negative on public programs of social services, especially in America today, there is little doubt that big increases in the quality of life have been brought about that way in the past. The second reason is an indirect one, namely, that social development can be an important contributor to economic growth. I think one of the things that has certainly emerged very clearly, on the basis particularly of the economic experience of Japan and East Asia, is the importance of widespread elementary education, extensive health care and early land reform.

To give some concreteness to this discussion, let me present some factual aspects of the role of social services in directly raising the quality of life. I focus on this since it is so neglected right now, especially in this country. The pattern of growth of Gross National Product or Gross Domestic Product can be very different from that of quality of life, even of life expectancy. To illustrate, consider the experiences of a developed country like Britain over the first six decades of this century. In Britain, life expectancy at birth went up over all these decades by about one to four years, excepting for two decades, 1911-21 and 1941-51, when life expectancy rose by nearly seven years. If you think that these were not such good decades, you would be right. These were the decades of the world wars. What we are observing is the enormous expansion of social services that the war produced. That is, it brought in a culture of sharing, both through public services, such as rationing of cheaply available food, expansion of basic health care, and also through public attitudes of social responsibility and mutual help. During the Second World War, while average food availability per head in Britain considerably declined, the extent of undernourishment also radically went down, and severe malnourishment almost disappeared. The rationing of inexpensive food for all helped, as did the expansion of health care. The National Health Service was born in the 1940's. A similar social change had occurred in the decade of the First World War, as the study of Prof. Jay Winter, at Cambridge University, has brought out.

The kind of lives people succeed in leading depends not merely on how much output is produced, but how people—especially the worst-off people—are able to establish command over the basic means of survival. This illustration dealt specifically with Britain, but a very similar pattern is seen in the history of life expectancy increase in Japan—another beleaguered economy that took to dramatically more social support over the war years. The contribution of social support can be seen in more regular situations as well. Economies like China, Sri Lanka, Jamaica and the Indian state of Kerala all have very much higher life expectancy achievements than do many countries that are much richer in terms of GNP per head, such as South Africa, Brazil, or Gabon. The contrast has much to do with the use of social services in the former economies.

African-American Mortality

This relationship applies not merely in the poorer economies. You see it even in the rich countries. The penalty of bad social services is a problem that I believe we face here in America very sharply. If we judge survival changes by the proportion of population that live to different ages, the residents of Harlem are overtaken by people from China or Kerala quite early in life. Indeed, the male Harlem residents are overtaken even by men of famished Bangladesh by the late 30's. More generally, the average African American in this country—women as well as men—manage to reach the higher ages in significantly smaller proportions than do the residents of China or Kerala. And this despite the fact that in terms of real income per head, the African American in the USA is a great many times richer than the Chinese or the Keralite. In explaining the differences many factors come in, but the respective arrangements of social services—health care, education, crime prevention—have a big role to play.

The point is sometimes made that the high mortality of Africa Americans is all connected with violence, and it is a special problem of young black men. It is important to note that African American women too fall behind the Chinese and the Keralite. In fact the black-white differential is, in some ways, sharper among women than men. If we look at the mortality rate ratios between blacks and whites in the age group 35 to 54, a sample survey found the blacks have 2.3 times the mortality rate of whites. Strikingly, for men the differential, while considerable, is far less than that for women. While black men are 80 percent more prone to die than white men, black women have nearly three times the mortality rate of white women. And even adjusted for income, black women have 2.2 times the mortality rate of white women—so it is not just that black women are poorer than their white counterpart.

To conclude, the lessons that emerge from comparative experiences in different countries are rather diverse. Some give support to the kind of things on which economists standardly concentrate, such as trade and international connections. Others give the pride of place to political factors, particularly stability and democracy and their impact on economic policies and performance. And there are also other lessons that call for a clearer recognition of the role of society—including that of social services—in shaping human lives. Economic policies demand much more than economics. ■

Epistle to the Troglodytes

Harold M. Schmeck, Jr.

The 1995 Nieman Reunion was a wonderful occasion for renewing valued old friendships—and valued old prejudices.

My prejudice is the conviction that many news people are myopic to the point of total blindness in the delusion that they can shun science and still have any grasp of what is really going on in the world.

The issue is ancient. It surfaced at the reunion in the revelation that the program organizers had considered dividing part of the schedule into multiple sessions so that the Flat Earth troglodytes could avoid any frightening brush with science by attending a more illuminating political session. I assume they would have liked something really vital and new, like another debate on abolishing the Electoral College.

Fortunately, Murray Seeger had the wisdom to veto multiple sessions. He evidently feared multiplicity would leave the science and health session virtually empty except for a few strange people like Frank Carey and me.

From the "ohs" and "ahs" that erupted during this session, it seemed most of the audience was fascinated and found it all new.

Why the anti-science ostriches should be surprised to find science interesting is one of the great primordial mysteries. Its enigma quotient must rank somewhere between the origin of life and the question of what existed before the Big Bang. Sorry, Flat Earthers, those were references to science. I'll try not to do it again.

Nevertheless, we do live in the twilight of the 20th Century, a time in which science has shaped human destiny and has really been humanity's most vibrant art form. In its sheer imaginative exuberance modern science has eclipsed the cathedral building of the Middle Ages and the artistic revolution of the Renaissance.

Grotesque on Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris

At this point the few Flat Earthers who have read this far will make the sign against evil and dismiss these words as the ravings of a heretic. Please keep going, ladies and gentlemen. It may turn out to be about Political Science after all.

To reassure you, we will resort to the time-hallowed political reporting gambit of listing the great accomplishments of the century.

The obvious first item is the End of the Cold War. That's certainly familiar political ground. But, in fact, the Cold War would have been only a tepid replay of what happened after the Congress of Vienna in 1815 were it not for two crucial items—atomic weapons and inter-continental ballistic missiles. Gee, science again.

But of course that's old science. What have you done for us lately?

The applications of science to technology, engineering and health are the subjects most science writers spend most of their time writing about. These applications have transformed all human life in this incredibly scientific century. They have put men on the moon (I should say persons), have revolutionized transport and communications, have cured incurable diseases and doubled life span in many countries. Thus, in spite of the gibberish spouted by anti-science "activists," most of the impact has been for the good. The "bad" has resulted mostly from ignorance and human avarice, both of which have put science to use for selfish goals with no appreciation of the huge powers with which the tinkerers were trifling.

But back to our list.

Smallpox, one of the great scourges of humanity throughout recorded history, has been eradicated from the planet. Virologists have even debated at least twice in recent years the question of whether or not to preserve the last specimens of smallpox virus. Should they be destroyed, or should they be kept imprisoned in the deep freezers like some captured deadly monsters in a zoo?

It is hard to conceive of the total impact the eradication of smallpox is having on human life. To get a glimmer of appreciation, one need only read the histories—and news stories—of smallpox epidemics. Some of them occurred in this country in this century.

On a related front, Jonas Salk, creator of the first effective polio vaccine, died recently. His vaccine brought an abrupt halt to the polio terror that was afflicting most of the United States and

many other countries well into the 1950's.

But those examples are just vaccines and vaccines are old hat.

Today's news stories gush with every minuscule advance in developing drugs against AIDS. Yet people who know anything at all about the subject—and that doesn't include many editors or reporters—are aware that only a minuscule number of virus diseases has ever been cured by drugs. The hope, if any exists, lies in vaccines.

An effective AIDS vaccine would save many lives and huge amounts of money. That point is a reminder that in all the interminable political blather about health care reform, there is seldom a mention of the life-saving and dollar-saving effects of good medical research. Prevention is better and usually cheaper than cure.

Probably the worst anathemas to the Flat Earthers are the two forbidden labels "genetics" and "DNA." For practical purposes, they are the same thing. DNA is the biological basis of genetics. This field is having a profound and explosive effect on the human condition. To take a single example safely outside the realm of science, DNA testing is already having a major impact on the American judicial system. That was true even before the O.J. Simpson trial, of which some of you may have heard.

Yet, even in that case, a casual glance at news stories in print and on the tube imparts the idea that the really important scientific question was whether the defendant could fit his hands comfortably inside a pair of black leather gloves.

Overall, the strangest feature of the non-science media's view of science is illustrated by a national "news" item aired on a major TV outlet recently. It was a short piece in which the "reporter," i.e., the person who was reading the TelePrompTer, told his viewers that the Food and Drug Administration was concerned about the possibility that a fatal brain disease might be transmitted through blood donations. End of item.

To my amazement, the "reporter" then went on to more congenial territory without ever identifying this "fatal brain disease." A glance at a reputable newspaper supplied the identity and probably the explanation for the omission. The subject of worry was a slow virus infection called Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. It is indeed a rare, fatal, incurable brain disorder. But of course, one couldn't use the actual name on a TV broadcast. It might be unfamiliar to the viewers.

That breathtaking example of news judgment was the moral equivalent of announcing that the GOP has chosen a dark horse presidential candidate for 1996, but without naming the candidate. After all, it would take another 15 seconds to identify Richard Lugar and the public might be discomfited in having to absorb this unfamiliar new name.

The bottom line is that science is a factor in almost every major subject of news today and science keeps generating major news. It will do so increasingly in the future. Yet many purveyors of news persist in the delusion that this is an arcane subject of no real importance.

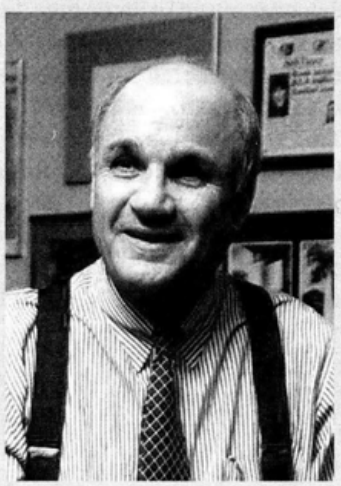
One good example of the flaws in that perception is a process all science reporters wrote about in Olden Times. Now we don't write about the process any more, just its applications. And there many—including smart bomb guidance, surgical instruments, surveying equipment and even your household CD player. The process is called light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation. Could this possibly be of any interest to the Flat Earthers? Don't answer without bearing in mind its acronym—LASER. ■

Harold M. Schmeck, Jr., a 1954 Nieman Fellow, was a New York Times science reporter. Retired, he lives in Chathamport, Mass., on Cape Cod.

Gregory Favre

Basic Values First

So as we buy those e-tickets in technoworld, let us always strive to preserve the power and elegance of our words, the beauty and grace of our images, the clarity and forcefulness of our headlines, the values and judgment that we have always brought to bear on the flow of information. Let us always remember that we are more than just the remnants of yesterday's news.



I know that change is here and is washing over us and we must embrace it. But I also know that we cannot stray from our basic values even as we look at them through the prism of new media, that things such as balance and accuracy and fairness and our role in creating social cohesion will continue to grow in importance as delivery systems increase. I also know that if we lose our commitment to content, we will be lost.—*Gregory Favre, Executive Editor, The Sacrameto Bee, at the convention of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, in Dallas, April 5, 1995.*

Rudenstine, Galbraith and Thomson Talks

Following are excerpts from the remarks by Neil Rudenstine, President of Harvard; John Kenneth Galbraith, retired S. G. Warburg Professor of Economics, and James C. Thomson, Jr., former Nieman Curator, to the 1995 Nieman Fellows reunion banquet May 6, 1995

Neil Rudenstine

Harvard is proud and is enormously enriched by its long association with you. You have been heroes, not simply those of you who served abroad but [you] in this country as well under very difficult circumstances. So, Harvard thanks you for what you have done partly in its name.

For many of us the media is harder and harder to define. There are voices now on all sides, not all of them by any means intelligent, responsible voices, not all of them institutional voices. With Internet, with thousands of expanding stations, channels and so on, we're faced with a kind of media that depends more and more on the individual point of view, the individual speaker, the free agent, the person who finds whatever technology lies at hand and can communicate with whomever he or she wishes across space and time, formally or informally.

If there's a challenge from my point of view for all of you, it's the challenge you've been already carrying out but that will be more and more difficult in the midst of the enormous sea of voices we now hear. That is the challenge to do something that is consistently intelligent, complicated and thoughtful. I believe, in spite of what we may think and see, that there are more people—not fewer—who want to hear intelligent voices say something meaningful from the media. Images are powerful, images are important, images can be important messages. But, without context, without more complexity than the image alone can deliver, the viewer, the listener is really unable to interpret because of that world out there and its complexity.

Let's accept the challenge to assume that our readers and watchers are, in fact, intelligent, that they want to know a great deal. That they're actually not frightened of information, that they're actually willing, if it's presented in the right way, to think, to listen and with your help, to interpret, rather than accept [as] fact that sound bites are inevitable and that people are so unintelligent that they cannot do with anything more.

You can lead that, even as you have been leading that effort. It's desperately needed. There is too much unintelligence abroad, unleashed, unharnessed, and needing you somehow to counter it, to guide everyone else into ways of thinking that are more complicated than many of the ways we are now presented with. So, thank you for what you've done. Thank you for what you will do. If there's anything a university can do, it's to associate itself with people such as yourselves. And if there's anything that we can do to help you, it is simply to continue to urge you to find ways to talk that will force people to think.

John Kenneth Galbraith

It is now 61 years since I began teaching at Harvard. And in that time I have learned that there is no idea, however fragile, that cannot be extended to 55 minutes. And, of course, no concept, however deep, that cannot be condensed to that time. So, you see the great danger that you face on this otherwise lovely evening.

My association with the Nieman Fellows began at the beginning in 1938. The early discussion at Harvard was of a school of journalism. You have no idea of the disgust with which that idea was greeted. The university was outraged.

And so came the next idea, which would be a group of fellows coming in a rather anonymous way to be a part of this community, hopefully, not too visible. I was one of the younger faculty members invited to meet with this group of fellows, because, I regret to tell you, no really reputable Harvard professor of that generation would wish to do so.

The first curator—after some discussion it was decided to have the word "curator" rather than the word "custodian"—was Archibald MacLeish. Archie and I were graduates of that great school of journalism, Time Inc., where we'd been on the editorial staff of Fortune magazine, and both had been associated with Henry Robinson Luce, who was, in some ways in his relation to journalism, the saddest man I have ever known. He had a choice, and he made no secret of this choice, between liberals who could write, whose politics he deplored, and conservatives, whose politics he applauded who were sub-literate. And so he had to come around to the liberals, MacLeish, Dwight McDonald, Eric Hodgins, Galbraith, others.

In those early days we met at the Signet Society with the younger faculty members who were not conscious of their reputation. And I remember with joy some of those evenings. One was with Erwin "Spike" Canham, one of the great figures in your profession, long-time editor of The Christian Science Monitor. And I remember particularly his discussion of one of the great crises of The Monitor. That lovely paper could not use the word "dead." That was forbidden by Christian Science doctrine. There came the terrible day in World War I when a cavalry charge occurred over the western front and the paper reported the battlefield was covered with the bodies of "passed-on horses." This produced an enormous discussion, according to Canham, and the religious bar was slightly modified.

Archie was a wonderful person, but very soon returned to a pure form

of poetry. Through his life, long life, he remained one of our closest friends.

For the next quarter century there was Louie Lyons, whom some of you here warmly remember. Louie was rewarded by fame, by one of the more accidental exercises in journalism. In a casual discussion at the Ritz [Ambassador] Joseph Kennedy, who was back from London, told him in 1940 that the British were finished. They would have to make the best of their defeat [by Hitler] and we would have to do likewise.

I think Louie reported that without realizing quite what a story he had. But it was one of the major stories of the time. Many years later, when I was the go-between for John F. Kennedy and Eleanor Roosevelt in the 1960 campaign, I was still reminded forcibly of that era of the Kennedy family.

Every evening Louie broadcast on public television, and next day you always—I don't exaggerate—encountered somebody who said, "Did you hear what Louie said last night?" If you happened not to have heard, you said you had anyway because you could not afford to confess that you had missed it.

For eight years came the distinguished time of Dwight Sergeant. Perhaps Dwight was a little in Louie's shadow, not an easy act to follow. If you want to have a really good time, better to succeed, say, George Bush, or better still J. Danforth Quayle. I promise to keep all politics out of this discussion tonight. There was nothing, of course, being implied in any way by the use of that parable.

Jim Thomson, who led for the next 12 years, was a very distinguished leader, a close friend of mine. And so he remains. No curator—that extraordinary term again—had better and closer friends or deserved them more.

In all of these years the program was changing. Once recruiting was parochially concerned with the American press, with a few Canadians added now and then. In these years, the Nieman program became international, multi-national in character. And so it has extended that influence in a wonderful fashion ever since.

I don't want to omit the brief five years of Howard Simons, who was a wonderful figure, loved by all of us, a good leader, a good member of the community, and also a very accomplished writer. The last time I saw Howard he was terminally ill and he said, "As I face the future, I don't like it. But at least I do not have to floss my teeth."

Again, this was a time of program innovation, and I hope, Bill [Kovach], that you are listening. There is nothing about this program that can be considered finished. Nothing that can be considered normal. To the Niemans there is no stationary state.

I end on a solemn note. In your years at Harvard you undoubtedly heard much as to what the university was doing for you and for journalism. I've made many speeches of that sort myself, and such expressions, needless to say, I applaud. But, in these last many years, my university loyalty, though it has been fully developed, requires me to say that much as Harvard may have done for you, there is as much, or more, that you have done for Harvard. Other universities are self-centered, looking in on themselves. President Rudenstine came from Princeton to Harvard because he wanted to escape that situation. He came here to a university which has brought people in a whole range of programs, of which the Nieman program is one of the brilliant examples, from all over the country and all over the world. And have prevented us from developing that internal, self-regarding sense which so often characterizes the university world.

Your debt to us is great, and I hope you acknowledge it. But our debt to you is even greater. That I acknowledge on this otherwise lovely evening.

James C. Thomson, Jr.

When President Conant learned about the Agnes Nieman bequest, he was dumfounded, calling it a "dubious experiment," which is how we used to title our brochure. Conant was desperate about what title to give to the person who ran it, and he shied away desperately from the word chairman, lest that it be a department; from the word director, lest it become an institute; the word dean, lest it become a faculty.

At that happy moment, the Widener Library suggested that their newspaper holding might be given selectively to the Nieman Foundation, which gave Conant the idea of curator of a collection of newspapers. So those of us who have served in this job have been for these many years curator of the only animate being in the world outside of zookeepers. And some of us have thought of this occasionally as a zoo.

Archie MacLeish, a furthering architect, thought up the idea with Walter Lippmann and some others. Louis Lyons put this whole place on the map, unbelievably, nationally and internationally, for 25 years. Dwight Sargent went to work in the way Louis didn't by habit and raised vast sums of money. I came on and began to spend the money. And I also tried to change the programs to reflect our changing society and the profession.

What Howard Simons did was build marvelously, but all too briefly, on what we had done and also got more money. And what Bill Kovach has done, as you know, is to build even further, and to expand even more broadly, and to get more money, and [more] diversity and intellectual content. [The] broad-gauged quality of this program and its relationship with the Harvard faculty have never been better than under Howard and under Bill.

Every Nieman I've run into, except those who never come back, keep saying, "It was the best year of my life." Well, I would like to one up you. They were the best 12 years of my life. These days have brought back to us such a sense of the vitality, the intelligence, the wisdom, the wit, and especially the affection of our Nieman Fellows and the fellowship. ■

Nieman Poll Finds Decline In Media Quality

The Nieman Foundation, as part of the program for its 1995 reunion, contracted with the George H. Gallup International Institute to conduct a survey of the 500 United States Nieman Fellows to explore the state of the public media today. It was an opportunity to survey Nieman Fellows from the first class (1939) to the current group. No such survey had been done before. With the help of Professor Robert J. Blendon of the School of Public Health; Bill Kovach, the curator; Murray Seeger, Special Advisor, and Watson Sims (Nieman Fellow 1953), General Executive of the Gallup Institute, the Gallup staff prepared a six-page questionnaire. A total of 509 forms were mailed and 304 were returned, an extraordinary 60 percent response rate.

The costs of the poll and for printing the results in Nieman Reports were covered by a grant from the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.

In analyzing the findings of the survey, the Gallup staff found these implications:

- The overall quality of the media is declining and basic principles of the journalism profession are being eroded.
- Distinction between news and entertainment is increasingly obscured.
- Television and radio are gaining in influence but declining in journalistic quality, while newspapers struggle to maintain quality and are losing influence.
- Media proprietors are more concerned with profits than product quality.
- The public is losing confidence in the media.

The sum of these findings suggest that Nieman Fellows find cause for deep concern over the standards of journalism in the changing public media.

A discussion of the survey at the reunion was opened with remarks by George Gallup, Jr., head of the institute; Sims; Robert Manning (Nieman Fellow 1946), former Editor of The Atlantic Monthly, and Louis Ureneck, 1995 Nieman Editor-in-Residence. Seeger was moderator. Following are excerpts from the discussion:

George Gallup

The survey findings could be viewed as providing a basis for discussion leading to action. But, before deciding on how to put the findings to practical use, there must be agreement that the situation is a serious one. The survey findings would certainly seem to support the conclusion that the situation is viewed as serious, and that steps need to be taken to maintain the high standards of journalism in our nation.

Many of you are already actively engaged in activities that will help restore public confidence in newspapers and the media in general. Much attention is focused on the schools of journalism, but I would like to focus our attention on younger persons—teens and preteens. The status of journalism at the turn of the century and in the first decades is being determined right now—in the elementary and high schools across the nation.

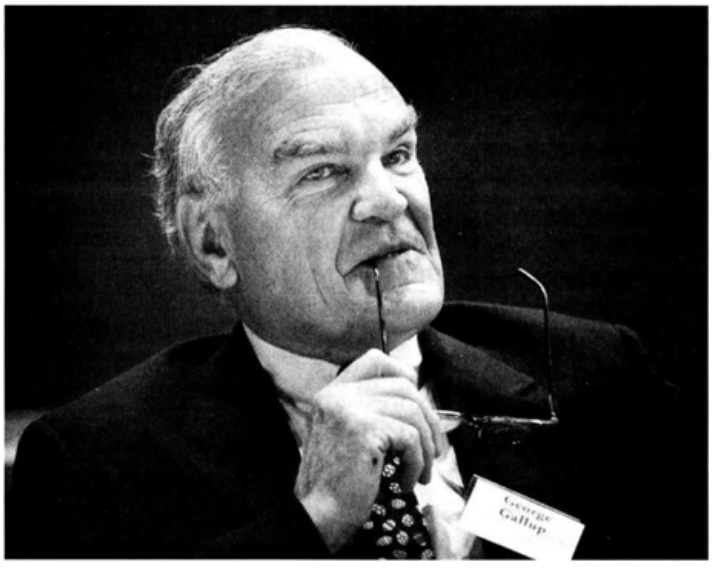
Would it make sense for the Nieman Fellows, highly qualified professionals, living in hundreds of communities across the nation, to take it upon themselves to find out what projects in journalism and in the media in general are being carried out in the elementary and high schools of their communities?

The survey revealed the widespread belief that while newspapers have improved in the quality of writing, they have declined in thoroughness, fairness and accuracy—factors that lead to public disillusionment. Nieman Fellows could perhaps be organized with the mission of discovering in their own communities whether or not young people are being exposed to the excitement of a career in journalism, and if so, to be sure that standards are high.

A large majority of Nieman Fellows, the survey revealed, say they would recommend journalism as a career. One could argue then that it behooves Nieman Fellows to do all they can to increase the awareness of this career among young people and to enhance its stature.

Watson Sims

A point to bear in mind when weighing the results of this survey is that, however prestigious the Nieman Fellows may be, they cannot be called representative of all journalists. We are too old, too male-dominated and too oriented toward print media. Four of every five respondents in this survey are males. More than half entered journalism more than 30 years ago and more than one in five is retired. Nearly half of those who still work are



George Gallup

in newspapers or magazines, while only six percent are in broadcast news.

Nonetheless, one question is clearly answered by this survey: the majority of Nieman Fellows believe the credibility of the public media is fading, and for very specific reasons.

I wonder if the time has come for us to recognize that the very word "newspaper" has become an oxymoron. News, by definition, is something new and by tradition it is often sensational. That pretty well defines what we find on the tube, but this is no longer a race we can win or in which we should be running. Perhaps we should find a new word or go back to "journals," which is how journalism got its name.

That might persuade people who run them to stop pretending that papers can still be first with the news and more sensational—and entertaining—than television. It could also bring an entirely new approach to the craft of writing headlines and the types of stories over which they appear.

If we stop pretending that we are still the prime bringers of news—stop running on a track where we cannot keep up with the opposition—we might not only promote and elevate the standards of journalism, but also provide a useful model for the still wild and woolly frontier of television infotainment. One day they will surely need standards, too.

Robert Manning

First, I must confess that I'm one of the scattering of samplees who made a critical comment about the use of polling by newspapers, and I said that because I think there are plenty of reasons for deducing that newspapers haven't—well, the media —haven't yet figured out how well to make use of polls. I'm not saying that polls themselves are bad, but the use of them. One cliché is, of course, to say that they have militated against old-fashioned reporting. My main complaint is the way in which they're used as a way of producing self-fulfilling prophecies, or perhaps discouraging voter turnout, because we get the results before anybody goes to vote.

This poll I found very interesting and very useful. I found two surprises in it, and I would wager that most of you here found two surprises. I'd like to zero in on one thing about it that struck me. It brings out a feeling in a good-sized majority of us that there's been a decline in thoroughness, fairness, and accuracy. But there's a seeming contradiction here, because when it comes to some of the positive things, there's a feeling that there has been better training of journalists, and I think those things don't necessarily fit together.

If there's been a decline in thoroughness, fairness, and accuracy and it's not due to training, what is it due to? I think we have to think a little bit about that. That does get us into the question Mr. Gallup brought up on the matter of schools of journalism. I happen to be one of those who feel, with two very important exceptions, schools of journalism are not really particularly good for producing journalists.

If so many of us feel that there's been a decline in these things, we certainly, if we're concerned about the future, ought to get interested in finding out some explanation as to why that's the case. If it's better training and you think this is still happening, then there's really almost an insidious problem here that we ought to start getting to the root of.

Louis Ureneck

The American Society of Newspaper Editors earlier this year went out to talk to readers of newspapers about new media, and how they saw journalistic values playing out in the new media context, and found that people didn't want to talk about new media; they wanted to talk about journalism values, and really what they wanted to talk about was their disappointment. There was a gap between what we expressed as our values as journalists and how we practiced our journalism. And I see some of that reflected here in the Nieman results.

The other study was done in the fall of last year by The Times Mirror Center for the People & the Press, which looked at the political landscape in general and a bit on newspapers, television and radio, and it found that while people largely have a favorable view of the role of media in society, that shockingly they felt that the media represented an obstacle to solving the problems of society, which perhaps is the most serious criticism of all that could be leveled at us.

Some other impressions that I had as I read the survey was what seemed to me to be the irresistible nature of the change, of the decline, which is very troubling. The decline seems to be happening despite two facts: despite the fact that a number of things are improving—better training, more diversity, and so forth—I think five improvements were listed—but despite those improvements, the declines continue. And also, the decline continues despite the recognition on the part of those of us who are in the business that things are getting worse.

Reading between the lines of this study it seemed to me that a number of the responses were getting at what seemed to be the issue, or a conflict, between chasing an audience, which we need to do in order to stay in business and be profitable and so forth, and on the other hand, pursuing the goals of a complete and quality news report. And there were some responses in the survey that indicated that it would be quest for profit, the quest for audience share, and so forth, that's making this decline more rapid.

It seems to me, as an editor, that it's balancing these two things that we have to live with, one, chasing audience and serving readers on one hand; and on the other hand, producing quality news. We need to find ways to blend and balance those two sometimes conflicting demands. Traditionally we have worked within a frame that has allowed us to balance these two competing demands. It's been a kind of partnership between the various forces in news organizations, between the editorial side, the advertising side, circulation. We created this delicate partnership

that's allowed us both to be successful businesses and to do our work well, but something seems to be happening within that frame that's off these days, and we need to think about what that is and how we might solve it.

One of the ironies, it seems to me, of the current environment in newspapers is the degree to which we use the rhetoric of market research to try to solve our problems. And we have never had a period probably in our industry when we've used more market research to understand what it is people want from our product.

But at the same time, we seem to be falling further and further behind in satisfying this audience, at least in terms of earning their respect. And I'm reminded of the plight of politicians who these days frequently use research, survey data, and so forth, to figure out how they ought to vote to please their constituencies, and so forth, but the more they do that, the more they seem to be falling further behind in terms of respect among voters. So maybe there's a lesson for those of us in this business.

Q. & A.

Comment From Audience—I think that the poll was most misleading and hasn't helped journalism one bit! I thought it was a very bad poll, which taught us nothing.

Sims—We asked two questions. One was about the overall journalistic quality of newspapers, which is quite clear, 49 and 49, and the other was with regard to specific aspects of newspapers, including accuracy, and fairness, and quality of writing. We didn't write those numbers. You people out there required those numbers.

Comment From Audience—There's fault in the methodology.

Sims—There is not a fault in the methodology or the response. I suggest, sir, that you and your companions don't want to know what other people in this room think.

Gallup—Obviously, if you have an overall evaluation of something, and if you come out one way, in this case half and half, and then many different specific items would have a strong figure, a big figure on the negative and a big on the positive. But the question is, how does it all come out? It all came out 50/50. I mean, that happens a million times in surveys, and that's perfectly understandable. There's nothing in conflict.

Sims—Our first commentator, or critic, said that he went around the country asking: "Do you believe newspeople?" He said: "No." It's very important to find out why not. Now, we didn't know what questions to ask when we started this survey. I suggested some, as I said, Bill and Murray looked at them, other people looked at them, we asked you to suggest them.

But you've got to ask some questions that say: "Why don't you believe in news?" I can tell you what the Nieman fellows said. "Because it's too sensational. You can't really trust them to tell you the truth when it's happening out there. There's too much showmanship, too much erosion of basic principle and reporting." That was what you said. And these are the reasons why people are losing confidence in media. There's too much concern with infotainment and dumbing down the news and superficiality. Those were the answers that we got.

Gallup—I think of wonderful examples of beautiful reporting in depth, careful, accurate, countless examples. I mean, I'm not making these statements, you are. This is a survey of Nieman Fellows. This is not a survey of what's going on in newspapers. You told us this. It's not my opinion. But since you told us this, it seems to me that rather than being reactive, I sense a lot of reaction here, rather than being proactive. What do you do? Clearly, there is a perceived problem in these areas. And there's no contrast between training and accuracy and so forth, because, again, those are aspects within that overall finding. I mean, you could explain in accuracy and other things an erosion of values is pervading our society in every profession. But the point is, to answer your question, this is what you said. It's not what I'm saying. You told us this. You told us these problems. The Nieman Fellows, 60 percent of them.

Sims—One complaint was that the questions were too global, they cover too big a territory, for example in the quality of radio talk shows, some people said, "Yes, NPR, National Public Radio is doing very good work." But, on the other hand, they could find some talk shows they despised. It's obviously true that one statement won't cover all cases, but you still have to produce some kind of snapshot as to whether your overall quality is getting better or worse. MacNeil/Lehrer was praised, Brokaw was denounced. You still make an overall judgment. We have to recognize that we are not the prime bringers of news, but newspapers are the absolutely essential bringers of serious information and opinion and public service, and many other things, but they're not going to be first on the block with the latest headlines, because it isn't possible any more.

Manning—I think that how the public feels about it is much less important than how we feel about ourselves, because we can do something about how we feel about ourselves. That's why I perceive some further talks here among Niemans and our colleagues who didn't have the luck to be Niemans. I think we are in a lot of trouble, but it's still a wonderful business, and as was just pointed out, some wonderful things are being done. We're having some problems, but we're not terminally ill.

Seeger—[A member of the audience] wants to know what you're suggesting individually or collectively, how you follow up on the findings of this poll. What can the Nieman Foundation do in response to these observations that are in the survey?

Sims—Well, the Nieman Foundation can't do this. The industry's got to do it. Whether you can help point the way for the industry to make the changes they have to to restore credibility and principles is another matter. I think we have to begin with the idea that we're no longer the hot bulletin type people, the

newspapers are not. Maybe they're not even newspapers. They have to be more serious. And they have to be more concerned with principles, with completeness, with accuracy, with some of the things that we went into in the beginning about journalistic principles, which are being ignored in infotainment.

Gallup—Yes, I'm being hopelessly utopian, but I go back to the theme I struck in my talk. You are a very powerful group, whether active or retired, and you can play a big role in your schools, elementary and high schools, in the area of journalism. I mean, I think this is a concrete way to raise the standards of journalism, to ensure that certain standards are maintained, and to energize young people in your community to go into journalism.

Ureneck—Well, the only thing that occurred to me is to go out and do work, fight the good fight, try to give these issues visibility in your organizations, or wherever you can, and for those of us who have access to columns, who can speak to readers through the newspaper that way, you can talk about journalism, why we do things, and to explain some of our conventions and attitudes.

Manning—I think it's useful to remember one thing, again, about the print media. True, the function of providing the first news has been taken away from us by television, as it started to be taken away by radio. What it means and the information that you need to make sense out of the news is still absolutely essential and only print media is providing that. You can't do it with an electronic medium because it doesn't stay with you and you can't return to it. You can read it in print. I'm still concerned about the matter of fairness and accuracy, because I believe that they have declined. There must be a way we very much can tackle that, if only by talking about it with other journalists and those who are in editing positions to read more about it, and making it apparent in the rest of the trade that this important group thinks it's important. We've been talking about television in an extremely derogatory way, and I must say I think CNN is doing one hell of a lot of good journalism. ■

Comments by Nieman Fellows On the Poll

Many Fellows added personal comments in answering the poll. Among the observations:

"Television tends to dictate the flow of public discourse and newspapers follow the flow at their peril. There's no doubt that there has been a cheapening of our journalistic currency." Frank Van Riper ('79).

"Television network news is a joke. The blandness and shallowness of journalism turns away young people who once found it positive work." Melvin Mencher ('53).

"It's journalism with attitude," according to Margaret Engel ('79). "Millions are spent for dreadful stories in which minor facts such as the color of Clinton's tie are invested with unrealistic importance and there are too few stories telling things of substance."

James McCartney ('64) complained of "the total corruption and triviality of television." Ellen Goodman ('74) suggested that too often television chooses "the daily superficial story over the important one."

"Electronic tabloid journalism disgraces us all and erodes our own confidence as well as the public's," according to John N. Maclean ('75).

William Lederer ('51) said: "U.S. culture demands entertainment, not news. To make a profit, media owners give the public what it wants."

"Too many papers look alike," Steve Oney ('82) said. "They've lost their local flavor and indigenous voices."

On the issue of "public" or "civic" journalism, Philip Meyer ('67) called it the most positive development in the last 10 years. On the other hand, Whitney Gould ('74) warned that "civic boosterism in place of independent journalism" is one of the important threats against press freedom.

Asked to list three positive developments in journalism, Hodding Carter III ('66) commented: "I have an impossible task trying to find three positive changes."

Jack Foisie ('47) said he would repeat his journalistic career if offered the chance. "I would do it again, but alas, since I worked in print journalism, I would now choose reporting and writing in a television news format. This is the media field with greatest opportunity." ■

DETAILED FINDINGS OF NIEMAN POLL

(Based on 304 responses, 60 per cent of 509 U.S. alumni)

Q1:

What are the three most important issues facing news organizations today?

Erosion of basic principles in favor of tabloid-style journalism	76%
Maintaining balance in reporting, representing all sides	36
Breaking up "pack journalism"	35
Adopting new technology while maintaining basic journalism values	42
Declining public confidence in the media	66
Educating and training journalists	28
Drive for profits	10
"Infotainment" trend	7

Q2:

Other volunteered comments 6

Summary (net) :Quality: 90%; Bias versus balance 67%; Public confidence 67%; Personnel issues 31%; Financial issues 14 %.

Q3:

What are three most positive changes in journalism in past 10 years?

Diversification of workforce	65%
More diverse sources of news	52
Experimenting in new journalistic forms	26
Better writing, deeper reporting	40
Better educated journalists	34
Investment in research and technology	49

Q4:

Other comments 5

Summary (net): Diversification 88%; Education/training 59%; Technology 50%.

Q5:

During past 10 years, what if any changes have you noted in journalistic quality of various media?

	Newspapers	Television	Magazines	Radio Talk Shows
Improved	49%	18	43	16
Declined	49	78	52	76

Q6:

During past 10 years, what if any changes have you noted in specific aspects of newspapers you normally read?

	Writing	Accuracy	Fairness	Thoroughness
Improved	72	45	41	34
Declined	26	50	54	63

Q7:

On the issue of influencing public opinion, has media importance changed?

	Newspapers	Television	Magazines	Radio Talk Shows
Increased	8	86	20	92
Decreased	89	12	75	5

Q8:

Which *one* of following most closely describes your own view?

Newspapers have a responsibility to educate readers on issues	63%
Newspapers should report the news and leave consequences to others	15
Editors should improve their communities as well as inform them	14
Newspapers are responsible for consequences of the news they report	5

Q9:

For each of these topics, indicate your view on amount of media attention they receive:

	Crime\Violence	White House	Political Parties	Think tanks/lobbies
Too much	67	49	30	24
Too little	4	1	8	36
	Congress	**Religion**	**Community Affairs**	**Labor/work**
Too much	18	6	1	1
Too Little	17	44	61	63

Q10

What impact have following had on overall quality of media?

	Newsroom Diversity	Economic Pressure	Management Quality	Staff Quality
Positive	86	5	32	68
Negative	10	89	60	25
	Political Pressures	**External Criticism**	**Internal Criticism**	**Community Groups**
Positive	13	61	75	68
Negative	74	33	16	22

Q11

What are three most important threats to press freedom?

Governmental restrictions and official secrecy	32%
Economic pressures, excessive libel judgement	55
Political pressures	15
Low ethical standards	38
Decline of journalistic values	61
Lack of strong press leaders	34
Public apathy and lack of support for press	50

Q12

Others 10

Summary (net): Lower standards 72%; Economic pressures 58%; Public's interest 51%; Political pressure 41%.

Q13

Would you recommend a journalism career to young people? Yes 78% No 18%

Q14-17

Demographic profile of respondents: Male 80% Female 19%. Entered journalism: less than 20 years ago 17%; 20-30 years 25%; over 30 years, 58%. Current careers: Print 44%; TV/radio 6; Advertising/pr 2; Academic/government 10; Self employed 16; Retired 21. Regions: NYC/Northeast 27%; Washington 19; South/Midwest 32; Mountain/West Coast 19. Class: 1939-59 24%; 1960-79 31; 1980 or later 26; not reported 20.

The Latin American Media

Brazil's Vibrant Media

Newsmagazine Veja and Daily Folha de São Paulo Set Trend—Globo Dominates Television

By Philip Querido

June 14 was a rather slow news day for Brazilian editors. Then Argentine President Carlos Menem exploded. Angered by Brazil's announcement that it would limit imports of Argentine cars, he threatened to cancel a visit to São Paulo the following Monday. The front-page banner of the Estado de São Paulo the next day said flatly: "Decree Makes Menem Cancel Visit to Brazil." No ifs, buts or maybes.

On June 20 Menem arrived quietly in São Paulo as planned. O Estado de São Paulo reported Menem's arrival and meetings without mentioning its June 15 headline. It did note that Brazil's President, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, had telephoned Menem to calm him.

Thus even Brazil's most prestigious daily is infected from time to time with the national journalistic illness: an itch to shoot from the hip. This proclivity to rush into print without sufficient checking mars the great progress that the Brazilian media have made in the decade since the military regime ended and censorship was abolished. That progress has made Brazil's print press superior, in most respects, to the rest of Latin American newspapers and magazines and close to the best in democratic countries throughout the world. It is also exciting, especially innovations by the the Folha de São Paulo (The Journal of São Paulo).

Like their counterparts elsewhere, most Brazilian publishers are willing to risk their newspapers' reputations to cut costs. A few years ago many newspapers eliminated copyeditors and rewrite staff on the basis that reporters should be able to prepare print-ready copy. As a result, numerous errors in grammar, spelling and, more importantly, facts slip into print. Writing quality is uneven and articles are frequently underreported. Each section editor has two or three assistants who read copy, but they do not perform the copyeditors' complete task or question reporters thoroughly. In fact, Brazilian editors are reluctant to alter copy as submitted. More experienced reporters become angry when stories are changed and have managed to intimidate editors.

Nonetheless, Brazilian publishers' willingness to unleash reporters for investigations into civic corruption make their counterparts in the United States look timid. True, professional standards are too often compromised and little effort is made to be objective. Yet the print press, led by the weekly newsmagazine Veja (See), which was the principal player in deposing President Fernando Collor, fires away regularly at corruption and wrong-doing. Every major daily carries exposés, protected by the Constitution, which guarantees freedom of the press. An exposé is hardly over before another begins.

Generally, the results are disappointing. The government is not concerned about what the newspapers publish, knowing full well that only the élite read papers and the vast majority of people depend exclusively on television for news. Thus, if they want to alter public opinion, politicians cozy up to television networks, principally Globo TV. While government has the technical right to cancel television licenses—and the gun is permanently at the networks' heads—no network has ever lost its permit.

However, Globo TV has suffered from its self-imposed subservience to the government, a bias evident from its slanting the news, and from the ties of its 92-year-old owner, Roberto Marinho, to Japan's NEC Corporation. The risk in such alliances became embarrassing when Collor, whom it raised from obscurity to become President, was impeached and driven from office.

Philip Querido is an American journalist resident in Brazil since 1958. Currently he owns and operates a medical magazine publishing company that circulates 14 editions directed at specialists on audio cassettes. Prior to arriving in Brazil Querido lived in Mexico, where he was a correspondent for The Wall Street Journal, Newsweek and United Press International.

In short, the print press generally serves well the less than 20 percent of the people who regularly read newspapers or magazines, but television doesn't quite make the grade for the 70 percent who depend primarily on TV (radio is not a significant factor) for their information on what is going on in their community, the country and the world. Although accurate information is not available, it is believed that about 47 percent of the population is either illiterate or functionally illiterate.

While the Jornal do Brasil of Rio de Janeiro is still highly regarded, prolonged financial difficulties have inhibited its efforts to improve. The action is in Sao Paulo, the country's commercial center and largest city. The leaders are two conglomerates, Editora Abril, S.A., publisher of Veja, and Rede Globo, owner of Globo TV, plus the Folha, which has overtaken in circulation, but not in prestige, the somewhat dull the Estado de São Paulo.

Veja was launched 27 years ago. Its first print run was 750,000 copies, but after six weeks only 75,000 copies were being sold weekly on the newsstands. Veja's sire, Victor Civita, was an Italian-American who began his career in Brazil in 1950 with a Walt Disney comic book. Soon he expanded to several comic books and then into women's publications. Today the Abril group publishes some 200 titles, of which 25 are major magazines (including the Brazilian versions of Playboy and Cosmopolitan), operates a UHF television station and a pay TV enterprise with 350,000 subscribers, prints some 100 telephone directories and is involved in many other activities that enable the company to take in more than $1.1 billion in revenues yearly.

Civita took his biggest step when he started Veja, introducing a Time-Newsweek reporting and writing style coupled with independence from government control or interference, something rare in Latin America. In spite of the slow beginning, Civita, who died in 1990, kept investing in the publication and it grew steadily. Today it is the country's largest and most influential publication. So much so that in 1989 it was the catalyst behind the toppling of then President Fernando Collor de Mello. The handsome, arrogant Collor at first brushed off Veja's accusations that his assistants were blackmailing companies to raise campaign funds (often used for personal expenses) while his wife was channeling federal government social welfare money to her family. Veja showed him living in splendor at government expense and added to the charges weekly, fed mostly by Pedro Collor, the president's disaffected brother. What had been widely considered impossible happened—Congress impeached the once-popular President. Veja's publisher, Roberto Civita, the younger of Victor's two sons, naturally gives the magazine major credit for overthrowing Collor. While the exposés were vital, the President's lack of major party backing in Congress, where he had stepped on a lot of toes, coupled with a popular movement to moralize the government, were just as important.

Collor's fall made Veja not only the country's most influential, but also its most feared publication. Today it is the world's fifth largest weekly newsmagazine and Brazil's largest circulation magazine, with a print run of 1.2 million copies. In most countries women's magazines are circulation leaders; in the United States it's TV Guide.

Civita credits Veja's success to its fearless editorial content. Its editors love to run exposés, even though few of them result in action. "People believe in it," he says. "The magazine doesn't kowtow to anyone, nor offers concessions to anyone, be it government officials, advertisers or friends."

Roberto Civita was born in Italy in 1936, moving to Brazil as a boy, where he studied at the American school in São Paulo. Later he attended Rice University in Texas for a year and then took a degree in economics from the Wharton School, with a major in publishing. After working as a trainee at Time, Inc., Civita returned to Brazil and entered the family business. He became president of the Abril group in 1982 and chief executive officer in 1990.

The younger Civita became Veja's first publisher and today considers the magazine his life's "passion." The editors of other Abril publications report to a vice president, but Veja editors report directly to Civita. Working with this group of what he calls "ferociously independent" editors challenge Civita. "Sometimes I feel like a tamer in a cage filled with lions, with only a wooden chair and a tiny whip," he says. The editors are vested with so much authority that he finds it difficult to impose his will on them, frequently ceding to their views.

Veja's editorial staff consists of 129 journalists, plus 54 assistants. Salaries range from $1,100 to $3,600 a month for reporters and writers. Mid-level editors earn $3,800 to $7,700 a month, senior editors considerably more.

The magazine's revenues total about $250 million in advertising and subscription income. Some 8.5 percent of this ($21 million) is allocated to the editorial board, possibly the highest of any Latin American magazine and a respectable sum for a weekly publication anywhere. Veja maintains five news bureaus abroad, including one in Washington and one in New York.

Civita feels strongly that the magazine's task is not only to inform Brazilians but also to defend principles of democracy and free enterprise. Thus the magazine runs many interpretive stories that place Brazil's reality into perspective. It frequently tries to scoop newspapers with its investigations, even though the editors realize that government officials are leery about correcting situations it brings to light. "Too many people are accustomed to accept institutionalized corruption and the impunity of the powerful as a norm," Civita asserts.

An important factor in Civita's success is the speed with which Veja reaches its readers. Officially the deadline is Friday night but frequently the publication closes at dawn Saturday. The first copies hit the country's 18,000 newsstands Saturday afternoon. In some cities Abril operates its own distribution system and many subscribers receive their copies by Sunday afternoon.

Among those who analyze Brazil's power structure Civita is generally considered the country's third most powerful person, trailing only President Cardoso and Globo network's Roberto Marinho to influence public opinion. Of Brazil's five major television networks, Globo TV is by far the largest, most influential and most widely viewed. Its nightly 8 o'clock news is seen by nearly half the prime-time audience.

Its format is traditional. Two anchors read the news and call on field reporters to present their stories. Globo spares no expense and employs the country's finest reporters, who travel throughout the country and overseas. Globo maintains a large staff in the capital, Brasilia, formerly headed by Alexandre Garcia, a former presidential spokesman who didn't hesitate to blend opinion into news items.

When Fernando Collor was a little-known governor of a small northeastern state, Globo gave him wide coverage and brought him into the public light. When he ran for president, Collor and his opponent, leftist labor leader Luis Ignacio da Silva, known as Lula, held a late-night televised debate just days before the election. Lula was excessively tired, but Collor was sprite. Because of the late hour, most people watched Globo's edited version the next day during prime time. But Globo's editors had edited the tape to accent Collor's best moments and Lula's worst. While Collor had done slightly better, the editing made him look far better and Lula far inferior. Many observers felt that the biased editing was one of the reasons Collor managed to beat Lula in the very close election.

After Collor was in office, Globo TV again came to Collor's aid. Even though most newspapers had joined Veja's bandwagon to report Collor's shenanigans, Globo TV failed to air many of the accusations or gave them only fleeting mention. As a result, Globo TV suffered a loss in prestige, mostly among the élite, who pay attention to such matters. Nonetheless, in recent months the ratings of its major evening news program dropped from an all-time high of 52 percent to 43 percent of all sets turned on. Nevertheless, because of its superior presentation, Globo has managed to retain its audience leadership.

Obviously concerned over the slide, Globo's directors in July ousted Alberico Sousa Cruz, the head of news operations and the man responsible for editing the Collor-Lula debate tape. He was replaced by Evandro Carlos de Andrade, the Managing Editor of the group's flagship newspaper, O Globo, in Rio de Janeiro. The paper has a good reputation and generally enjoys more credibility than Globo's television operation. Instead of reporting to the head of programming, Andrade reports directly to Roberto Irineu Marinho, the group's Executive Vice President. Andrade immediately began reorganizing the news program, indicated he would end its subservience to the government.

The Brazilian press devoted considerable space to Sousa Cruz's departure. Unconfirmed reports said that he was earning $600,000 to $1 million a year, depending on the network's annual billings, estimated at $1.2 billion in 1994. Sousa Cruz was also said to have received a $1 million cash settlement.

Globo's main challenger, the Sistema Brasileiro de Televisão, has gained from Globo's loss in viewers. Its rating have grown to 20 percent. SBT is owned by Senor Abravanel, popularly known as Silvio Santos, a charming television host who started life in Rio de Janeiro as a street peddler. SBT's main evening news program is anchored by Boris Casoy, a former newspaper editor, well known for his opinionated style of presenting the news. When critical, he frowns, stares straight into the camera and solemnly declares, "This is shameful." This simplistic style is designed to please the masses. A third network, Manchete, uses an attractive anchorwoman, who presents domestic and international news nightly for an hour. She is aided by three commentators, one each for international, domestic and financial affairs.

Globo's Marinho is widely criticized for being a major stockholder of the Brazilian subsidiary of NEC of Japan. NEC has won the majority of the most lucrative cellular telephone operations in Brazil's major cities and has installed systems with unsatisfactory technology. NEC's rival, Sweden's L.M. Ericsson, has taken NEC to court to challenge the contracts, but without success. Cellular service is notoriously deficient in many cities; callers are frequently unable to complete their calls, and it is not uncommon to have the line go dead in mid-conversation.

Marinho, always referred to on his network as "The Journalist Roberto Marinho" (no other journalist is bestowed that title), began his career as Chief Editor of the Rio de Janeiro newspaper O Globo at age 26. Generally the newspaper is considered high quality, much more independent and unbiased than his television operation. O Globo currently has a circulation of 288,000 daily and 700,000 on Sundays.

Marinho began Globo TV in 1965 and it soon overtook all other networks, mainly because of its popular soap operas, as many as three every evening. Globo TV is Latin America's largest network, with 86 affiliated stations reaching some 30 million homes. More than 75 percent of its programming is produced in-house, adding up to 4,420 hours of viewing time a year. Some 500 journalists are employed by its news operation, working out of a home base in Rio de Janeiro and elsewhere in Brazil, Europe and the United States.

Other than its main evening news program, Globo puts three and a half hours of news on the air every day. TV Globo also airs a version of the American program 60 Minutes, called Globo Reporter. While its daily news programs are often accused of being partisan to the government, Globo Reporter shows much more independence and has attacked government actions repeatedly, doing vigorous exposés. It has shown scenes of poor public-health services and pot-holed and dangerous highways, and generally has joined Brazil's newspapers in reporting corruption. The other major networks usually don't mention these touchy subjects in their programming.

Globo also is active in pay TV, operates a radio network with 20 stations, produces CD's and video cassettes and publishes women's, business, agricultural and children's magazines. The

Globo empire includes some 100 companies and employs 24,000 persons in Brazil and abroad. All are led by The Journalist Roberto Marinho, although he is turning over direction of many firms to his sons, Roberto Irineu and José Roberto.

In July Globo announced its latest association—this time with Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, to be the Latin American representative for a new parabolic antenna pay TV organization called Direct Home TV. The potential market is seen as 30 million homes, but the Brazilian government has not yet authorized this service.

Of Brazil's top-level newspapers, the Folha de São Paulo stands out as the most innovative. Its editorial director, Otavio Frias Filho, the 38-year-old youngest son of the paper's owner, mans the editorial machine guns. Since he took over 11 years ago he has not stopped introducing changes. As a result, daily circulation has climbed from 205,000 to 488,000 and Sunday circulation has quadrupled, from 309,000 to 1,250,000, the highest of any daily in Brazil. One Sunday earlier this year circulation reached 1,550,00.

Frias, trained as an anthropologist, completed a course in law, but never took the bar examination. In 1975 his father, today the newspaper's sole owner, named him an editorial assistant and his brother, Luis, Business Manager. Otavio became Editor-in-Chief in 1984. The slight, tight-lipped and somewhat dour young Frias displays an impish smile when discussing his innovations, emphasizing that he is still displeased with the result. "Our quality is still poor. We are too haughty and must still improve a lot." He wants reporters to be more responsible, double-check their information and give more space to "the other side." Asked how he plans to achieve that goal, Frias smiles.

One of the first and most important changes Frias made was to eliminate moonlighting by its staff. All reporters must derive their pay exclusively from the newspaper and work there full time. "We strictly enforce this policy to maintain editorial independence," Frias says, "and when we discover an infringement, we fire summarily." To compensate for the loss of income, salaries have risen. Editorial staff wages now range from a minimum of $1,400 to an average of $3,300 a month.

Another step toward a more ethical operation was the requirement that reporters who participate in press junkets must cite the fact at the end of their stories "to be fair to the reader," in Frias's words. The editorial director is considering prohibiting his staff from participating in any free junket, paying the reporter's expenses if the trip is warranted.

Frias also appointed Latin America's first ombudsman. There have been four, each named to a two-year term with a guarantee of a position with the paper for a year after finishing the stint. Every Sunday the ombudsman has three columns to deal with reader complaints and talk of other media matters.

Here are other changes Frias has made since he took over:

- Op-ed balance. When polemic questions arise, the editor selects prominent personalities to present three points of view, one to favor the question, one to oppose and one to take a middle-of-the-road view.
- Independent polling. Frias established a polling company, Data Folha, which finances itself by doing research on almost any topic for any client. But political polls are exclusive for the newspaper. A recent poll, published in a 16-page special section with no advertising, reported that 87 percent of Brazilian whites admitted to some degree of discrimination against Negroes and only 39 percent of the population consider themselves to be white (the rest consider themselves to be mulattos or dark-skinned). While the majority of blacks work, half of them are paid $200 or less a month. The study also showed that many Negroes discriminate against fellow Negroes.
- On Sundays, a 10-to-16-page section filled with tiny classified ads in which employers, who are not charged, tell of job openings.
- A Consumer Reports type of production evaluation. Asked if advertisers don't complain, Frias shot back, "In my 11 years as head of the paper I have never received a single advertiser complaint....I believe advertisers are becoming more sophisticated."
- An improved action-line forum. Until recently the paper sent complaints about products and services to the manufacturer or the government agency responsible, then printed the reply without questioning it. Targets of complaints became adept at avoiding the specific complaints. Now specific replies are demanded.
- 900 numbers. Readers can obtain specific information by telephone or facsimile on more than sports scores. For the equivalent of $1.50 a minute it will provide currency exchange rates, average salaries paid to maids, plumbers pay rates, automobile prices and many other facts.
- Introduced a daily half-page weather map that apes USA Today's but is not as complete or well done. Sometimes it runs in full color, sometimes in black and white.

Not all of Frias's changes have worked well. For instance, a Sunday magazine, touted as similar to The New York Times Sunday Magazine, resembles a where-to-go section more than a magazine, although it does publish an in-depth interview every issue. It is printed on newsprint and is filled with restaurant, bar, movie and related reviews. One page offers news and tips for gays.

Not all rules have been followed. The 331-page style book, the first of its kind in Brazil, is in its third edition. While it has helped to unify writing styles and has had a positive impact on ethics, some of its points are ignored. It suggests, for example, that male reporters always dress in suit and tie. Most wear jeans and open sports shirts and some even go to work without shaving. Frias recognizes that this sloppy appearance limits the reporter's ability to deal with sources as an equal, but feels somewhat powerless to change the situation. Moreover, the journalists' union has strenuously objected to

a dress code as an infringment on personal liberty. The style book insists that the age of every person be mentioned in a story, no matter its relevance. Of late that rule often isn't obeyed.

Some changes seem designed more to attract subscribers than to improve content. A weekly four-page section listing restaurants, video stores and other commercial establishments offers a 10-to-20 percent discount to Folha subscribers showing an identification card. The Folha pays the first two years of a Visa card annual fee.

Begun a few years ago, distribution of books in installments free of charge has proved highly successful. The first was a dictionary, followed by a cook book, The New York Times Atlas of the World (in four colors on glossy paper), The Times of London Atlas of World History and others. Once the reader gathers all the installments, included in the Sunday edition, he can go to a nearby supermarket and pay the equivalent of $5 to have the book bound. Recently the Folha distributed three books at the same time. What will happen to circulation when the promotions end? "That is anybody's guess," Frias concedes.

Frias heads a rather large staff, especially for Latin American newspapers, which are usually more devoted to profits than servicing readers. The Folha has 416 full-time editorial employees, 244 in São Paulo and 35 in Brasilia. New employees are chosen by boards of three editors. The only exception to this procedure is hiring of persons with unquestioned superior qualifications.

Some correspondents are sent overseas on a "scholarship" program. Chosen by a consensus of top editors, they are given a $2,000 a month stipend plus travel expenses for a nine-month tour. About 30 Folha staffers have gone abroad under this program, giving the paper some expertise on foreign affairs that it would not have had. There are three senior foreign correspondents, one each assigned to Washington, New York and Beijing. Recently Paulo Francis, an irascible and controversial commentator, quit to go to the Folha's main competitor, the Estado de São Paulo for a reputed $15,000 a month—if true, the highest remuneration paid to a Brazilian newspaper reporter. Francis is also an occasional commentator on Globo TV's midnight news program.

While the Folha leads in innovations, the Estado, São Paulo's oldest newspaper, is still its most respected. Until a few years ago it was the absolute leader in circulation and in advertising, especially the lucrative classifieds. It is generally considered more élite than the upstart Folha. But it has had a difficult time combating the Folha's aggressive promotions and snappier writing.

Once a trend-setter, the Jornal do Brasil of Rio de Janeiro, is struggling through a difficult phase. The paper owes more than $200 million and is behind in its payment to banks. As a result, the Nascimento Brito family, owners of the paper, announced recently that it is planning to sell up to 50 percent of the company's stock and of its pension fund. Most professional newsmen speak highly of the Jornal do Brasil, for years held as a model of excellence. A decade ago it pioneered a front-page format now used throughout the country. The page consists only of summaries, with headlines, of major articles inside. Readers apparently like the page. In recent years the Jornal do Brasil has not been able to finance the improvements needed to keep up with other Brazilian papers.

Brazil also has a major financial newspaper, the Gazeta Mercantil, published in São Paulo. Like The Wall Street Journal, it carries line drawings but no photographs. The Gazeta is highly regarded by the financial community. A smaller paper that is doing well is Zero Hora of Porto Alegre in southern Brazil, which hired away Augusto Nunes, the Editor of the Estado de São Paulo. He has been modernizing the tabloid.

One aspect of Brazilian publishing is common to all operations. Brazilian publishers, while enjoying several tax breaks under the Constitution—such as importing newsprint duty-free—commonly take a few extra-legal privileges. For example, many papers owe millions of dollars in Social Security payments, amounts they deduct from employees' salaries but do not pass on to the government. The publishers are only indulging in a Brazilian sport, taking advantage of clawless laws and competent defense attorneys.

In general Brazil's vigorous written press offers the public a full package of news, features and editorial content that rivals that of first world nations in quality and excellence. As a result, circulation is growing rather than dropping as in many other countries. It exercises so fully its role as the Fourth Estate that President Cardoso recently commented that his administration needed no opposition political party, the press filled this role more than adequately. Television's presentation of the news has long been competent technically and visually extremely well executed, but it has been short on censure, though it has of late been freeing itself of its voluntary restrictions to win the ratings race.

Fortunately Brazil's press barons are not concerned with only earning a buck, but generally recognize the need to spend generously on editorial content as the only means to achieve superior quality and gain market leadership. The Brazilian public no longer accepts the media as vehicles for the personal aggrandizement of its owners' personal ambitions, and the public is the winner. ■


O ESTADO DE S. PAULO

Reforma começa depois da Páscoa

Bancos e lojas cortam financiamento

Palmeiras põe titulares em campo

Colombia's Press Losing Its Edge

Dedicated, Courageous Reporters Frustrated By Mounting Pressures

BY DAVID L. MARCUS

Strange things have happened to Colombia's media over the years, but few are stranger than what went on at the leading newsmagazine, Semana, several months ago. The story behind one Semana story says a lot about difficulties of investigative reporting in Colombia these days.

In March, the magazine dispatched a reporter to an airport in the United States to meet Maria, an informant for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. In a long interview, Maria told her story: she was present in late 1989 when Cali drug bosses gave a Liberal politician named Ernesto Samper suitcases containing hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash. In exchange for the money, Maria said, Samper agreed to fight against extraditions of traffickers.

On the surface, Maria's claim seemed absurd: the Liberal party's leading presidential candidate had been assassinated by drug barons earlier in 1989. And Samper himself had been seriously injured when another politician was shot. In other words, hardly anyone in Colombia was inclined to make deals with traffickers back then. Still, Maria stood by her story. A DEA agent said she had proved a reliable informant on other matters.

Now Samper was president, and Semana's editors decided to run a cover story on the controversy. The Miami Herald and The Dallas Morning News had already run Maria's story, along with the Colombian government's strong denials. The Colombian media had barely touched the story, which was considered too explosive and too hard to verify.

The troubles started as soon as word leaked out about the magazine's interview. As Semana staffers tell it, Samper and his closest advisers pressured the publisher's family to suppress the story. The government says that's a lie.

But what happened next is not in dispute: plainclothes government security agents went to Semana's office and printing plant and demanded to see the galleys over the weekend, when the issue was being closed. Publication was pushed back, Editor Mauricio Vargas said. On Monday morning, a "very agitated" presidential guard appeared and demanded information, including the name of the reporters who wrote the story, Vargas said. (Semana does not publish bylines.)

Semana appeared on newsstands a day late—with a story, sidebar and headlines noticeably toned down from the originals. The revised story took pains to discredit Maria. She was furious; reporters at Semana and other publications quietly grumbled that the magazine had gotten spooked.

President Samper dismissed the guard and his supervisor, saying they had acted on their own. Vargas said the magazine has been subjected to "a lot of pressure and lobbying from the presidency over other stories, but not this one."

Perhaps no one will know how much behind-the-scenes pressure, if any, was exerted on Semana's publishers. And so far no one can tell whether Maria was telling the truth. But the incident is a reminder that muckraking is an excruciating task in Colombia, where there is plenty of muck to rake. Colombia's media are famous for being among the bravest and most aggressive in Latin America. But the untold story is that Colombia's press—with some exceptions—has lost its edge.

That's not to criticize Colombian reporters, who remain gutsy and dedicated. Indeed, the best journalists grumble that they are stymied these days. Digging for bad news about Colombia's corruption and "narco-corruption" can be hazardous to one's health and one's career. Sometimes the threats come from drug traffickers, of course. Increasingly, though, lawyers, advertisers and even producers and publishers thwart tough reporting.

"Colombia had a robust investigative press in the 1980's but is now left with almost none," said Ana Arana, who worked as a freelance journalist in Bogota and now serves as Latin America program coordinator for the Committee to Protect Journalists.

I have to admit a bias. Touring Colombia as a student in the mid-1980's,

David L. Marcus opened The Dallas Morning News South America bureau in Bogota in 1990. He moved it to Rio de Janeiro earlier this year. He is coming to Cambridge, Mass., to be a 1996 Nieman Fellow. Portions of this story appeared in The Dallas Morning News series "Colombia: The Politics of Drugs."

I was dazzled by the first-rate investigative reporting. After I moved to the country in 1990, my friend Julio Daniel Chaparro of the daily El Espectador was killed on a reporting trip (for a series about violence, ironically). Other journalists I knew were kidnapped and threatened. Increasingly, I watched the media shy away from chasing the tips we all heard about "hot money" in politics, construction, real estate, banking, soccer.

In 1994 and 1995, I wrote stories about "narco-corruption" that prompted the government to denounce me. A columnist in the leading newspaper, El Tiempo, ridiculed me. Also, someone fired a bullet through my living room window—although the police said it might have been a random shot. I didn't want to know any more. I'd had enough of the hassles of reporting in Colombia.

Pablo Escobar and others of the so-called "Medellin cartel" killed journalists who challenged them. The Medellin gang was especially harsh against El Espectador, assassinating the newspaper's publisher, then his lawyer and finally the judge overseeing the homicide case. They later bombed the paper's offices. All of us hoped the attacks would end with Escobar's death in December 1993.

The new kingpins are more subtle, but they're no less scary. Cali bosses Gilberto and Miguel Rodriguez Orejuela prefer to write and phone editors like any aggrieved citizens to make complaints. When news stories mention their wives or children, the Rodriguez Orejuela brothers hint strongly at violent reprisals, according to those who have received the calls. Several months ago, Colombian television correspondents in Cali simultaneously received threats on their pagers, warning them to play down reports of a successful crackdown by the police. (As I write this, Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela has just been captured, his brother is in hiding and several of their cohorts have surrendered.)


DOMINGO

EL TIEMPO

Fiscalía llamará a Jacquin de Samper a declarar

NARCODINEROS

DESCUADRES

THE MIAMI HERALD

La nueva nota de Vive

Panorama

Gasto público

The fact is, the traffickers no longer need to bomb newspapers and use violence to intimidate the press. They have paid off and terrified judges. And they have learned to exploit the "tutela," which gives every citizen extraordinary power to sue and demand immediate action for problems ranging from raucous neighbors to embarrassing news stories.

"The law has made us more responsible, but it went way too far," said Francisco Santos, Deputy Managing Editor for El Tiempo, a 1992 Nieman Fellow.

In one of the most ominous turns, a judge ordered El Tiempo to publish a front-page article apologizing for calling Ivan Urdinola a drug trafficker in 1991. The newspaper complied.

Urdinola was later captured and sentenced to prison for drug trafficking. (In his statement to a judge, he said he had bought ranches, estates and business with money won from a winning lottery ticket "but I don't remember the number.")

Santos grimaced as he recounted the time a court made his columnists apologize for scolding a well-known bishop (now archbishop), Dario Castrillon, for taking money from drug traffickers. It didn't matter that in 1984 Castrillon himself had told the media that he accepted money from Carlos Lehder, a founder of the Medellin Mafia.

"I've been taken to court by drug traffickers and murderers, and I can't spend any more money on lawyers," said Juan Carlos Pastrana. He edits the feisty—some officials say irresponsible—tabloid newspaper called La Prensa.

In a country where most of the media are loyal to the Liberal party, which controls the presidency and Congress, Pastrana is often dismissed as a frustrated Conservative. The son of a former president, Pastrana has been jailed and threatened with death because of his paper's reporting on drug traffickers, guerrillas and corruption. He travels everywhere with a bodyguard from Colombia's DAS, or FBI.

Not long ago, I dropped into La Prensa to report a story on the media's troubles. I didn't have to wait long. A snappily dressed federal senator, a Liberal, walked in to complain about a story that suggested he had links with cocaine traffickers.

Juan Carlos Pastrana pointed out that the man's nickname, "Joselito," had been mentioned on an undercover recording of traffickers' conversations.

"It was?" the senator said.

Pastrana reminded him that the recording, which referred to several prominent Colombian politicians, had caused a national scandal months before.

"Well, they must have been talking about another Joselito," the senator said. Politely at first, he tried to get La Prensa to issue a retraction: "Juan Carlos, I've known your family for a long time. Your brother and I went to school together...."

The more the visitor pushed, the angrier Pastrana got. Not always the most diplomatic person, Pastrana launched into a tirade about drug-related corruption. The conversation took a nasty turn, and ended with the senator threatening a libel suit. (Pastrana says the senator did sue, so he retaliated by suing the senator, and the two ended up agreeing to abandon the legal actions.)

In September 1994, Joe Toft, the outgoing DEA chief, granted an exclusive interview to QAP, a leading television newscast. Toft accused the Samper campaign of taking money from traffickers and called Colombia a "narcodemocracy." QAP co-producer Maria Elvira Samper showed the tape at the presidential palace. The president asked her to quash the story, reporters say. But Toft gave brief statements to competing stations, and QAP went ahead and aired portions of its interview.

QAP said it did nothing unusual. But consider the outrage if a leading American evening news program had a damaging interview about President Clinton, then showed him the raw tape so he could argue against broadcasting it. And consider the scandal if the program's co-producer, the one visiting the White House, was a Clinton relative. Maria Elvira Samper is President Samper's cousin.

At the American embassy, President Ernesto Samper has been dubbed a "poll-meister"—a man obsessed with his image. The president is so concerned with good press that he called Semana's owner to complain when one of his occasional adversaries, Chief Prosecutor Alfonso Valdivieso, was chosen "man of the year" in 1994, the editors said.

Last year, several journalists told me that President Samper and his advisers persuaded editors to tone down coverage of Colombia's problems, including drugs and drug-related corruption. At one television station, a reporter said that Mr. Samper's spokesman, Juan Fernando Cristo, called after many broadcasts to complain.

At Semana, editors say that Cristo stopped by on at least two Friday nights in a row earlier this year, when they were trying to close sensitive drug-related stories. "It was like having a censor here," one editor says. (The visits stopped after The Dallas Morning News published that comment.) When I asked if the Samper government put unusual pressure on the media, Vice President Humberto De La Calle smiled and said "I can't answer that. I'm not in a position to measure those things."

More shocking, last year a staffer said that the government bugged Semana's telephones. "As an experiment, I've made calls where I say, 'Hey, how's that investigation on such-and-such going?'" the staffer says. "Soon after, I got calls from the presidential palace. They said, 'Do you need any information on such-and-such?'"

The government says it does not tap the media's phones.

One of the stories that almost never runs in Colombia has to do with who owns the media. Reporters complain that the country's two largest conglomerates own the largest magazines and radio stations and control the biggest blocs of television advertising time.

A law increasing the number of TV channels was supposed to change that, but instead the conglomerates are merely getting more air time, the reporters say. U.S. Ambassador Myles Frechette was so upset at the conglomerates' broadcasting clout that he told top government officials they were throttling democracy, an embassy source said.

A friend of the president heads a commission that is privatizing television. Television reporters say producers, eager to get a share of the lucrative television market, are careful not to offend the government.

In July, Mr. Pastrana's newspaper denounced the government for awarding new FM frequencies to friends and supporters of the president. The Ministry of Communications has said that it doesn't favor one group or another for broadcast licenses.

Colombia may be a country of 35 million, but the élite is small and clubby. The revolving door between the government and the press spins quickly. At Semana, the publisher, Alfonso Lopez Michelson, is a former president. Mauricio Vargas was a Cabinet minister in the last government. The largest paper in the city of Medellin, El Colombiano, is owned by the family of Juan Gomez Martinez, a former mayor, governor and now President Samper's Minister of Transportation.

At El Tiempo, many editors expect Juan Manuel Santos—one of the owners—to run for president in 1998. If he does, they promise to cover him like any other candidate. Santos is a 1988 Nieman Fellow.

La Prensa, small and nearly broke, is owned by former president Misael Pastrana. His son Andres is a former Bogota mayor; in the last presidential elections, he came in second. The Pastranas also own a weekend TV news program.

When I visited the presidential palace a couple of years ago, a top advisor to President Cesar Gaviria reprimanded me. "Why do you foreign correspondents keep quoting this crazy newspaper that Colombians don't read?" he said, ruffling a copy of La Prensa.

In early August, as Colombia's so-called narco-gate scandal widened, I reached him on a cellular phone. Now retired, he told me how Cali traffickers had infiltrated politics. Almost every tidbit he mentioned had been broken in—yep—that crazy paper that Colombians don't read.

President Samper's campaign treasurer had been arrested and the defense minister had resigned while under investigation. Finally, belatedly, El Tiempo and the newsmagazines were following that crazy tabloid. But the rest of the media seemed oblivious to the biggest political crisis in decades. The daily call-in poll on Viva FM, a popular radio station owned by Colombia's largest industrial group, asked the daring question: "What are you doing to conserve water?" And El Espectador, once Colombia's voice of morality, ran a soporific editorial about fiscal policy.

What's the result of these restrictions on the press? In Washington, those who monitor the Andes say the lack of critical coverage in the media left Colombia unprepared when Congress, the White House and the State Department lashed out at "narco-corruption" earlier this year.

As for Colombian reporters, they are tired of going against drug traffickers, lawyers, politicians and owners of the media. Even the most dogged reporters admit to crises of confidence.

"I've decided not to cover drugs any more," a well-known journalist told me after being forced to leave the country last year because of a death threat. "I can't do investigations unless I have a bodyguard, and I refuse to have a bodyguard. I just want a normal life." ■

Mexico's Press in the NAFTA Era

It Is Still Waging the Old Battle To Open Information Channels

BY MARTHA A. TREVIÑO

Last June, Mexican authorities arrested one of the country's most powerful drug lords after a chartered Lear jet ran out of fuel and crashed in central Mexico. Because the trafficker, Hector Luis Palma, survived and was captured, press releases poured into every newsroom in the country, emphasizing just how important the event was. But one major fact was missing from the beginning: who owned the plane? The question seemed simple and basic, considering that the plane's tail numbers were clearly visible at the wreck site.

Thirteen days after the incident, there was still no name. Every source questioned by reporters—from the Attorney General to the Pilot's Association—refused to reveal any information. Considering the fact that there is no public access to most registration records in Mexico, finding the elusive name seemed an impossible task.

Two weeks after our investigation began through the official channels, someone suggested a U.S. database called the "Jet Net." A five-minute search was enough to come up with the owner's name.

The relevance of this finding is yet to be seen—the connection with other drug traffickers or with major political figures, etc.—but the case is one of an escalating number of examples where access to what should be basic public information is routinely labeled off-limits to the press in Mexico, although it is easily attainable through conventional or electronic methods in most democratic nations.

The problem is certainly not a new one in a country where the right to be informed is a privilege oft-quoted in presidential speeches, but must be fought over and demanded in the day-to-day business of gathering information and where red tape, bureaucracy and the government's obsession to control facts and records is constantly winning the battle over efficiency and the freedom of information.

For a country that boasted worldwide its economical and social gains during Carlos Salinas's administration and claimed to be on equal footing with the U.S. and Canada after the North American Free Trade Agreement, Mexico has shown slow progress in catching up with its First World neighbors in information policies.

Fortunately for us, in the instance of the drug trafficker's plane there was a clue, the tail numbers, that allowed our reporters to track down the information through an international connection. A few days after that story, another investigation was completed—once again through the U.S., in this case regarding efforts to extradite Mexico's former deputy attorney general, arrested in Newark last March. For 10 days after the June 22 ruling by a New Jersey judge against the request, Mexican officials at the Attorney General's Office and the Foreign Affairs Department denied reporters access to the extradition petition presented by Mexico, arguing that "it is not public domain." In New Jersey the documents were available for the asking: four phone calls and a small fee for copies was all it took.

Rarely are we lucky enough to have international links available for every story to be investigated. Normally we must rely solely on Mexican sources and records—or the lack of them.

Secrecy is the name of the game when it comes to official data in Mexico. A privileged few, like top-level Government officials, have access to current and reliable facts, but not the general public. Basic information is kept out of reach of journalists or the common citizen under a wide variety of excuses. The answers when tracing official records always seem to fall under the category of "it's privileged information" and "it's not public domain," or "it's strategic for national security matters" and "someone else has it."

This evasion applies to key information as diverse as the updated national debt, politicians' income or tax returns, witnesses' accounts in murder trials, the conditions imposed on Mexico in international agreements, Mexican aid to other countries, the Central Bank's foreign currency reserves, traffic and border crossings and so on.

When information is not banned, it's obsolete or impossible to tap. Most official data collecting in Mexico is done by old methods, with tons of documents and copies. Overstuffed boxes of files are the preferred approach. Records are invariably months or years

Martha A. Treviño joined El Norte in 1974 through the newspaper's annual journalism Summer School Program for young students, and soon became a general assignment reporter. In 1980, she was appointed Editor off the cultural section, and two years later, Managing Editor. Treviño was named Executive Editor of the Monterrey-based newspaper in 1993. She was a Nieman Fellow in 1988-1989, the first Mexican in the program.

out of date and rarely reflect the current status of things. Public property records are seldom up to date; months go by before important court decisions and law amendments are known in full detail, national statistics commonly illustrate what happened months long ago. The list goes on and on.

For the most part, however, the Mexican media seem unperturbed by the lack of access to information. They are resigned to—and content with, in many cases—their role as mere human tape recorders, reproducing sound bites and speeches brimming with rhetoric, unwilling to question authority or to disagree with the powers that be.

Exceptions are more likely to be in the print media—El Norte, Reforma, Proceso and La Jornada being examples of newspapers and magazines challenging the traditional information channels and going beyond the official statements or interviews. Private television is openly biased toward government, especially in the almost-monopolistic Televisa chain. Radio is a strong news medium in places like Mexico City and Guadalajara, but it is unlikely to break a story based on deep digging, except when an event occurs during broadcast hours.

Research and investigative reporting have a limited role in most Mexican news organizations. On the one hand, it is extremely difficult to reach the source directly, to obtain the records or documents that may support allegations. It is difficult, too, to access the right database that will provide basic information to enable a reporter to follow the trail leading to a story.

On the other hand, with Mexican journalists as willing participants in this game of secrecy, corruption and misleading and partial information, they, too, become cohorts of Government officials who deny the citizens their fair right to be informed. That cozy relationship explains why most Mexicans distrust not only their authorities, but also the press, which is generally viewed as working to further the Government's interests, not the public's.

Mexican journalism is, by and large, rich in adjectives and poor in facts; official statements are accepted at face value; hearsay and rumors substitute for the truth as a matter of course; opinions and inferences are freely inserted into news stories; influence and bribes still play an important role in covering and presenting the news. Rarely does the public ascertain the difference between the actual facts and the official version. Rumors rise from the lack of credible information, and Mexico has never been found wanting in rumors, many ignited directly by the press.

The media exceptions to this rule may be few, but they are the changing force in Mexican journalism. Both readers and the general public are more demanding than ever, with higher expectations for the press, particularly after the last 18 months of news events of unprecedented magnitude in contemporary Mexico—i.e. the political assassinations, the peasant uprising in Chiapas and the financial crisis.

Citizens are not as gullible now in accepting news reports from suspicious sources or with obvious official bias. They are becoming more discriminating regarding their information options and are finally turning their back on the dishonest media. For those of us working in the independent press, it is encouraging. Our readers give us their vote of confidence every day by buying our paper over dozens of other alternatives, and we deliver. But there are still many obstacles to surmount when it comes to professional journalism.

Now that the world is virtually connected by electronic means, with the information superhighway making a significant difference in the way we research, gather, and present our information, when we are supposed to be participating competitively in the new NAFTA era, it seems inconceivable that Mexican journalists are still waging the old battle of opening information channels. The gap in this field between Mexico and its neighbors to the north is wide and growing wider.

Alejandro Junco, publisher of El Norte in Monterrey and Reforma in Mexico City, recently addressed a Congressional committee that is studying a new information act. His request was for designating information as a tool available to everyone and not a privilege for a few, as it is now.

"As part of the information industry in Mexico and an observer of the foreign [press]," he said, "I have evidenced that the countries that we will compete with have developed an information industry that has become an indispensable competitive tool. Information creates the possibility of electing and making fast and sure decisions. In a society, the quality of its information defines the quality of its decisions."

In addition to the apparent lack of interest by Mexican news organizations in claiming their right of information and resistance of Government to modernize its record keeping and allow data to flow freely, the press in Mexico must face the fragile financial situation that has left many on the verge of losing

Mexico: Two Big Problems

"I think that, first, there is a lot of progress; there is a lot more freedom and, overall, you have a lot more journalists trying to say things; and you have a lot more organizations opening their pages. You have two big problems. One is the state has a lot of influence. Second, most people get their information through one television channel, Televisa, one of the biggest TV empires in the world, which is completely behind the government.

"The problem is what access do we have to information? The government uses technology, computers, communications. The private sector does so. Journalists are not doing so, are not trained, don't have the hardware to do so. There is a widening gap between the information we have access to and the information that government has access to, and you cannot talk any more about freedom of the press [without discussing] this question."

Francis Pisani, 1993 Nieman Fellow from Mexico, speaking at a reunion seminar May 6, 1995.

their jobs or closing their businesses. The economic crisis following the peso's devaluation last December 20 has imposed an extra burden on Mexican newspapers which, like American papers, are feeling the escalating costs of newsprint. In the six months after devaluation, the peso lost about 84 percent of its value against the dollar, advertising lineage dropped to its lowest level in recent years, interest rates shot up from 20.17 percent to 44.05 percent—peaking at 109.72 percent in March—inflation increased to 32.90 percent, commercial sales dipped 20 percent, the unemployment rate more than doubled, from 3.2 percent to 6.6 percent, and the prices of milk, gasoline and cooking oil have risen 58 percent, 47 percent and 164 percent, respectively.

The picture is bleak for newspapers, as for all industries in Mexico. This is a year of survival; few media organizations will be investing in new technology or planning growth strategies, and only the strong ones, backed by readers and clients, will breathe easily by the end of the year. Things are now looking stable—not good, just stable—without the shocking news that was part of our everyday life in 1994 and the first months of 1995.

Changes come slow in Mexico. Although the pace at times seems exasperating, steps have been taken in the right direction. A new information act has been promised before, but the Congressional committee studying the possibility has been moving. Now it seems that time and circumstances are on our side for a new relationship between the media and a more accessible administration. President Ernesto Zedillo offered his first open press conference to the Mexican media last June and promised it will be a regular monthly routine. So far, this unheard of commitment has been an uncensored display of fair play, with open questions and apparently honest answers. A first in Mexico.

Certainly there is nothing yet to cheer about —there are so many shortcomings to conquer—but at least it seems there is something to look forward to, a reason to keep pushing the limit, forcing the gains that are so needed. ■

Problems Overseas

Some views of the problems of the press from Nieman alumnae/i who spoke at a seminar at the Nieman reunion May 7, 1995:

Russia: Two Worlds

We were very excited after August 11, 1991, when the press finally got freedom of speech in Russia. Then, in December 1994, the war broke out in Chechnya and journalists again found themselves on the opposite side from the government.

Russian journalists have never been so powerless as we are now. There is what I call the veil of the freedom of press. Since Russian authorities are seeking money from the Western democracies, they understand that freedom of speech is the language of the Western democracies. That is why they don't shut down the press openly. Even if the press manages to survive through the economic problems, the government pays no attention to what we do and what we write. We are existing in two different worlds, and I'm not sure that the situation will be overcome very soon.—*Yevgenia Albats (1993), Russia.*

Vietnam: Strict Censorship

Very few news or media organizations have been in touch and successful in developing programs in Vietnam for two reasons. It is difficult to raise funds. On the other hand, the government is still very sensitive about media development, about news. They all talk about Internet. "Censorship control is still quite strict. It's a system that editors of each publication have to take responsibility and they are often reluctant to go ahead with anything that would be taken as too critical, too sensitive. I think it's a question of losing your job, which would make a lot of editors have second thoughts about a story. I think to close the gap is very difficult. For media and journalism to develop, there's still a long way to go.—*Nguyen Dy (1993), Vietnam.*

Mozambique: Struggle

What we are trying to do is to combine editorial principles with sound financial policies in our small publications. We don't get the same priorities as Eastern Europe. We are not thrown fax machines and printing presses as a number of countries in Eastern Europe got a couple of years ago.

I think that freedom of the press in our countries has to do with fairness. The way we are competing with state media has to do with free access or equal access to newsprint, access to printing presses, paid telecommunication, because if state media is getting more privileges than we've got, we are not competing in the same way, so freedom of the press is endangered because the state press is always more privileged than we are. We need to continue to struggle, we need to have a large and dynamic press in order to defend this freedom.—*Fernando Lima (1987), Mozambique.*

In Argentina, Contradictions Abound

By Oscar Raúl Cardoso

The Argentine press is facing up to the fact that hard times are the real stuff it is made of. While the media, both print and broadcast, are facing problems in emerging countries all over the world, consider the special nature of the situation in this nation of 33 million people:

- It is still caught up in the uncertainties of a historical process characterized by political scientists as a transition to democracy, even after 12 years of uninterrupted constitutional rule.
- It is trying to ride the crosswinds of the overlapping trends of globalization and the technological information revolution.
- It is wrestling with the social impact of the many downsides of a prolonged experiment in structural adjustment and market-oriented modernization.

Contradictions, both apparent and real, abound and configure everyday choices for publishers, editors and reporters alike, not just a few of those choices between bad and worse. And, as plain common sense indicates, choosing between bad and worse is not really about making the best decisions but about condemning oneself.

So times are not only hard for the press in Argentina, they are also extremely sensitive. For what is really at stake is not just the best way of muddling through another day, or another edition, or building readership or audience. Fundamentally, what confronts the media is a legacy left by a near past where dictatorial rule acted from an intense hatred of critical thought, which is the essence of a free press. The extreme and widespread violence provoked by that hatred inflicted enduring damage to the social fabric.

Thus the Argentine press seeks to process that legacy in a way that will help it build a modern, efficient national media, not only on the basis of impersonal and greedy—legitimately greedy, but greedy nonetheless—corporate criteria, but also on the basis of the mandatory standards for strengthening democracy that apply with a special emphasis to all in the information business.

The inheritance is painful and difficult to deal with. Since March 1976, when the military deposed the constitutional regime of Isabel Perón, and December 1983 when the last de facto ruler in uniform handed power over to Raúl Alfonsín—the first civilian democratically elected President of the present historical period—95 to 100 journalists were abducted, tortured and killed by paramilitary squads in clandestine detention centers. The number goes well into the hundreds if the count includes journalists and other intellectuals forced to flee the country.

A blue-ribbon commission, set up by Alfonsín at the start of his mandate, recalled in its final report that among the earliest decisions of the first Military Junta were to intervene in journalists' trade unions and to issue Communique 19—an instrument that in those days carried a power greater than the written law—warning that whoever was found "disseminating or propagating by any means, news, communiques or images with the purpose of disturbing, damaging, or affecting the prestige of the Armed Services, law-enforcement or police agencies" could be "repressed with reclusion of up to 10 years."

The concepts of truth, lie or libel were not mentioned in such political instruments. Newsgathering and dissemination of anything that came close to a description of the occult workings of a military acting as an illegal aggression machine were potential threats; most of all if the reports proved accurate. During those dark years military censors were rarely assigned to the newsrooms or the editorial departments, though at least one national publisher, Jacobo Timmerman, was abducted in 1977 and his daily, the prestigious La Opinion, was put under military control. The straight cooperation and complacency of local major news organizations with the military regime, openly sympathetic to the coup d'etat even before it materialized, and

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Ana Laura Perez helped research this article.

the fear of editors and reporters of becoming—or having a relative, a friend or a lover become—a *desaparecido* (missing one) and another unaccounted prisoner in the dungeons of pain and death of the juntas made Argentine press a silent partner to the national tragedy, a ghost that still haunts the media.

Argentina was then the kind of country that Bertolt Brecht defined once, with Nazi Germany in mind, when the playwright wrote that you could only live in it if you were able to leave it behind. The real and precise fate suffered by most of the journalist victims of clandestine repression still remains a national mystery despite political, official, independent and judicial inquiries. Victims are dead but the lack of burial sites or places that can be associated with their memory and their sufferings keeps them in an imaginary purgatory of non-existence (they vanished so perhaps they never really were).

Some of the brightest and most talented journalists, a majority belonging to the Argentine equivalent of the American baby-boom generation, were lost to this strange Bermuda triangle of they-were-then-perhaps-not of the collective memory, much like fictional characters get lost in fantasy literature plots. As Argentine journalist María Luisa Mackay wrote recently: "In novels written in the style of magic realism, anything can happen. And in Latin America, the cradle of this literary genre, the same holds true for journalism." This is a lasting burden, without which the return of a free press and its evolution within the environment of a recovered democracy in Argentina cannot be really comprehended.

This legacy is a source of collective shame for the media. The fact that the whole of society shares that shame for the 30,000 or so desaparecidos, the final count of the violent period, makes it no less of a burden on publishers, journalists and other media-related personalities. Relatively few people were actively involved in the terror; the rest just let it happen.

About a hundred daily newspapers are published in the country. They sell 124 copies for every 1,000 of its 33 million inhabitants. A couple of decades ago the proportion reflected a higher cultural priority that Argentines assigned to reading news. It has been dwindling, mainly because of an economic recession that steadily turns print media into luxury objects for people who, when employed at the current minimum wage, earn the equivalent of $3,600 a year or even less.

The impact of the electronic media, especially television news, has also cut into reading of newspapers and magazines. So has the fragmentary "video clip" culture, which, as in the rest of the world, addresses emotion and intellectual passivity rather than abstract reason and meaningful participation.

Even so, Argentina has the Spanish-speaking world's largest circulation daily, Clarin, with 1.1 million copies on Sundays. Buenos Aires and its suburbs, making up a metropolis of more than 12 million, are served by 11 dailies. Two of those newspapers, La Nacion and La Prensa, have been published for more than a century, and Clarin will reach its 50th anniversary this year.

Three national wire-services—Telam, the biggest one, which is completely owned by the state, and the privately controlled Noticias Argentinas and Diarios Y Noticias—cover the country. Telam has several bureaus in other Latin America countries and stringers in a couple of European capitals. A fourth national wire service, Interdiarios, owned by newspaper companies of the Cuyo region, performed well during the last two years, more in the fashion of a limited number of syndicated quality in-depth reports on the day's news than as an actual cover-everything news agency. It suddenly folded last month, contending that it could no longer afford operational costs.

NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED IN BUENOS AIRES AND GREATER BUENOS AIRES

	Certified Sunday sales (1)	Certified weekly average daily sale (1) (except Sundays)	Declared weekly average daily circulation (2)	Declared Sunday Circulation (2)
CLARIN	1.153.339	638.416		
AMBITO FINANCIERO			120.000*	
EL CRONISTA COMERCIAL			60.000**	
EL EXPRESO			40.000	60.000
LA NACION	261.549	188.440		
LA PRENSA	25.000	20.000		
LA RAZON (3)			51.000*#	N/A
PAGINA 12	163.500	115.400		
CRONICA			375.428 (a) 75.000 (b)	N/A
DIARIO POPULAR (4)			80.000	110.000
CUARTO PODER	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(1) Figures independently verified by the *Instituto Verificador de Circulacion*

(2) Circulation figures as declared by the publishing firms

(3) Evening papers

(4) Could be considered as a provincial paper because it is published in the county of Avellaneda but it is also sold within the federal district and it competes as a local paper.

(a) Circulation figures for the primera (morning) edition.

(b) Combines circulation figures for the quinta and sexta (evening) editions

Hundreds of radio stations cover the length and width of Argentina's 1 million plus square miles. Households have a radio set for every 1.5 persons and each of the country's 7 million plus TV sets serves an average of 4.6 inhabitants, a viewer-per-set ratio that is one of the largest in Latin America.

Cable TV has been the most amazing of media phenomena of the past decade. 46.15 percent of Argentine households subscribe, making it the most "wired" society in Latin America. Regular television stations have experienced long-standing difficulties in delivering clear signals in a vast and complicated national geography. These troubles led in the 80's to experiments with "communal antennas" and distribution by wire of signals, the prehistory of cable TV, first to the interior of the country and then to Buenos Aires, starting with its northern affluent, residential areas.

As in Bruce Springsteen's acid lyrics of "57 Channels (And Nothin' On)," Argentina is going through the first stages of a debate that has already developed in most of the industrial nations, especially in the United States, over the *non plus ultra* hype of the "information revolution."

Poignant questions can be endless: is it worth it to have so many options and mostly voids to choose from? What is it doing for culture, global or national? Who will control the flow and content of information? What will it do for, or against, participative democracy? Is the future narcoticizing dysfunction—that unlimited exposure to media of audiences driven to passivity because of the impossibility of handling the amount of frequently useless information that bombards them—anticipated by Lazersfeld and Merton as early as the 1940's?

Whatever the final answers may be, the fact remains that the maximum number of signals that a cable TV subscriber can have today at his disposition is amazing for a country such as Argentina: 65. Satellite downloading, fiber optics, diverse forms of signal compression and even interactivity gadgets are the tools with which the industry in Argentina plays hopscotch with technological development. One cannot help but wonder if, as Neil Postman has put it in the subtitle of his book "Technopoly," this virtual road is leading to some place where "the surrender of culture to technology" will become inevitable.

Novelties are almost universally welcome in the field of information and entertainment, especially because they have a great potential to feed private and collective dreams of equality with the most developed and affluent societies of the planet. If, from any shanty town in Buenos Aires, I can tune in the same CNN playing in the global village that somebody is watching in Big Sur, California, or in Sutton Place in Manhattan, or in the Avenue Foch in Paris am I not to be considered an equal in every aspect? Perhaps I can't understand what they're saying and maybe I cannot buy anything offered through QVC tele-marketing venture in Argentina, but I most certainly can yearn for the same goods, even at the same time, that an American viewer does.

There is room for concern. The country has yet to emerge from underdevelopment, but the unlimited opening of its markets to imports—the laissez-faire ideology that has become almost a theological dogma in Argentina's public discourse—is bringing cascades of new technologies, products and ultimately public debate agendas and values that are, most of the time, asymmetric and others plain alien to the experience and evolution of Argentine culture.

The Movie Channel is Cinecanal here, and HBO has a Spanish flavored "Ole" added to its logo, the brand that identifies its Venezuelan partner in the Latin American venture. As far as news is concerned, any subscriber can watch the American CNN, part of the PBS programming and even C-SPAN 1, Spanish TVE, the Mexican ECO, the German Deutsche Welle or the Italian RAI. Or, what is more frequently the case, tune one of the four main local signals that operators devote to CNN-style-24 hour uninterrupted news broadcasting. Nevertheless, the increasingly dominating television news shows get their best ratings in open air channels, such as the five that broadcast from Buenos Aires—13 (part of the Clarin Multimedia Group), ATC (state owned), 11(partly owned by the Atlantida Group, one of the most important publishers of maga-

They Did Not Die in Vain

When the Committee [to Protect Journalists] was formed in 1981 the most serious area in the world for us was Latin America. You had more journalists killed in Argentina probably than in any other single country ever recorded, at least in the last 20 years. Also in Guatemala and Salvador you had at least 20-40 journalists murdered.

Today, thankfully, the death of a journalist for being a journalist in Latin America is an extremely rare event. There are cases, especially in Colombia, because of drug terror, but they become news. We have more press freedom violations than ever before in Latin America but that again is a byproduct of the fact that you have a lively, combative press. It is all part of the democratization process....

The single crucial fact is the replacement of military regimes with elected democratic governments....I think history will bear us out that the journalists who died did not die in vain there, that it will be seen retrospectively that they were the forefront of demanding changes in the governments that were eventually successful.—*William Orme Jr., Executive Director, the Committee to Protect Journalists, appearing on the Alex Jones show, "On the Media" on radio station WNYC, New York, March 26, 1995.*

zines), 9 (part of the Alejandro Romay Group, with interests in radio stations) and 2 (partly owned by El Cronista Comercial Multimedia Group)—but reach virtually all of the country.

Yet some relevant things are missing. Though the country has more than 1,200 cable operators that do a good business in narrowcasting and regulations are loose, they have yet to offer a channel resembling the American C-Span contribution to the public interest.

The three principal cable operators in Argentina are Cablevision (founded by El Cronista Comercial Multimedia Group, which made a multimillion-dollar sale of part of its shares to an American partner) with 450,000 subscribers; VCC with 550,000 subscribers, and Multicanal (Clarin) with 400,000 subscribers, but which operates more than 30 cable stations in the country.

The real impact of Cable TV in Argentina, and the windows it has opened abruptly to the world, remains unknown and unmeasured, but some sociologists and media critics believe it will prove to be the most powerful modernizing force of public discourse since the advent of psychoanalytic therapy in the late 50's and early 60's, a trend that was all pervasive especially among élites.

In terms of statistical references, Mercados y Tendencias, a local consulting firm, estimates that in Buenos Aires 12 percent of TV "switch ons" on weekdays and 15 percent on weekends go directly to cable signals and—even accounting for "zapping," an almost national pastime—remains there until "switch off."

Other avenues are opening up in Argentina's hyped media world. Audiotext services, whose offerings range from sports information, to horoscopes, to dull jokes by well-known humorists, to pornography disguised as "adult entertainment" to other irrelevant amenities, have become the latest attraction offered in Buenos Aires from the telephone duopoly, which resulted from the government decision to break the state monopoly of the telephone industry. The multimedia groups that own the largest dailies and the most important TV stations, both open and cable, are beginning to probe the profit potential of these new services, as well as other information-related activities, from cellular phone services to live entertainment production, thanks to a legislation that sets not too many barriers.

The recent advent of full on-line Internet services, though still offered at mind-boggling prices by the standards of industrial world hackers, is the newest silver lining in this horizon, as is packaging of information in CD-ROM databases, given the last two years of the local boom in the multimedia computer market, fed by the affluent 20 per cent of Argentine society.

Yet Argentine society is deep into what the Venezuelan economist Moises Naim has ingeniously described as "structural adjustment fatigue," after more than a generation of enforced painful economic and social "modernization" that started with the debt crisis of the early 80's, has continued to grow worse in its effects and failed so far to deliver most of the social prosperity its advocates promised.

More than two million of Argentina's economically active population are unemployed (18.6 percent is the latest official rate) or underemployed; poverty afflicts in different degrees the best part of the lives of almost 40 percent of the country's population; social tensions and outbreaks of violence, like the bad moon of the old rock song, are "on the rise" and even the national Government—reelected as recently as last May with 50 percent of the popular vote—concedes that, as in one of the many corollaries of Murphy's law, things will surely get worse before they get even slightly better.

Argentine journalism is right in the middle of strong forces going in opposite directions, not always showing it has a clear idea of where—or even if—it should try to lead public opinion, what relevant information it can offer the public opinion for enlightened decision making or finally if it should just be driven by comfortable trivial trendiness that may sell copies and boost audiences.

Old habits die hard, especially in power structures, and even the animosity with which the Military Dictatorship regarded an overall complacent national press has not disappeared entirely from the scene. Just a few hours after the national polls had closed on last May 15 and his second term in office guaranteed by an absolute majority President Carlos Menem sat in a TV studio and declared without a trace of blushing:

"I've beaten the opposition candidates but that is inconsequential, really. What is important is that I've beaten the press."

Since his first Presidential bid in 1989, Menem has made no secret that he considers, with very few exceptions, Argentine and even international journalism hostile. His administration was responsible for privatizing almost every state-owned media, especially open-air TV stations, and for lifting legal barriers that banned publishers of print media to own radio and TV stations, thus allowing a rapid concentration of media. Yet he has come to almost regret these decisions.

During his first term Menem tried to introduce legislation toughening press controls, but over and over again he has bowed to pressure from the influential organizations like ADEPA, ADIRA and others representing publishers and owners of the media. In spite of this, his perception of the media as the only real opposition force that he could not overcome is still an intimate and strong conviction and a source of periodic frustrations.

Curiously, that same media has critized Menem only regarding his personal and polemical style and for his tendency to stretch the constitutional limits of his powers. With few exceptions the media has carefully refrained from reporting or examining with a critical eye the basic tenets of his modernization policies, which are at the heart of Argentina's winter of discontent.

Freedom recovered for the media and the exercise that comes with relearning how to use that precious commodity brought about, from 1984 onward, a resurgence of the so-called "negative journalism" and later of more articulate "investigative reporting." Consigned at first to books, many of

them instant best-sellers, such reporting eventually found its way into the pages of dailies, magazines and finally radio and television.

Revelations about the violent past and the junta's clandestine repression soon were followed by exposés of public corruption, the infiltration of drug cartels into the structure of legitimate power and even sex and marital scandals. Menem, who has always defined himself as a transgressor, and his administration got the lion's share of the uncomfortable revelations.

By 1991 Alma Guillermoprieto wrote about the many attractions of Buenos Aires in a lengthy piece published by The New Yorker—the Opera, the soccer stadiums, the ice-cream parlors—but concluded that "what's best is to stock up on newspapers and magazines and repair to a sidewalk café to absorb the latest scandal."

Investigative reporting has had its bright moments, though a major judicial conviction is yet to arise from a journalist's exposé, and the genre, as defined by Bob Greene (that it be the product of an original investigation, that its findings be of public interest and that it involves something that somebody needs to hide), has slowly been shifting toward an articulate variety of mostly unconfirmed gossip and of course the new domain of infotainment and reality shows, whether they be electronic or old fashioned print media. Those curious new brands of pseudo-journalism that in Argentina have as many panegyrists as anywhere in the world.

"A current general cultural trend is that which tends to erase all clear limit between information and fictionalization," explains media critic Oscar Landi.

Even with the overlapping nature of investigations, revelations, plain gossip and reality shows, Argentine journalism has come a long way in earning the trust of public opinion. As a study done by pollster Graciela Romer points out: since December 1993 to date, a percentage always bordering on 50 of people polled has considered that the mass media are "reliable" and "very reliable," an appraisal that shows no significant differences when distributed by genre, age or socioeconomic level.

"This data," argues Romer in another part of her analysis, "acquires special importance if compared with the low confidence levels obtained by labor unions (6 percent), political parties (20 percent), the judicial system (22 percent), the Congress (35 percent) and the Armed Services (35 percent)."

For all this public esteem, journalists nevertheless seem to feel insecure about their standing in the community and even suspicious about their own ethical integrity. A national survey carried out in 1992 exclusively among journalists by an academic organization showed that 88.5 percent of a qualitative and quantitative sample of 200 reporters, editors and publishers believed that corruption was a fact of the trade. Almost 20 percent of those who considered corruption as a characteristic of Argentine journalism added that it was rampant.

The present historical moment of Argentine media is one of change and redefinition. As such, a degree of confusion is the inescapable sign of the times that brings no easy choices.

Instant technological leaps by import—not through genuine breakthroughs by indigenous R&D—and modernization of the trade are often offset, or at least compensated, by the shrinking of markets (for products as well as for labor). "As in the rest of the world where triumphant market democracy has become a synonym for intellectual hegemony, in Argentina a dual society is taking place. The increasing number of "have nots" are being pushed steadily and even enthusiastically away from the near frontiers of the digital age, the information superhighway, the yet somewhat dubious paradise of virtual reality and all the many promises of the age.

The media is having a hard time finding a voice to warn about this reality and even to move away from complacency and complicity and to exercise the kind of "heretical thinking" about reality that has been the trademark of Western cultural evolution.

The intense process of concentration of media ownership that has been taking place during the past decade in Argentina is also posing some disturbing questions for the public at large as well as for media people. How diverse can the offer of information and opinion really be if leading TV stations and the largest circulation newspapers and magazines belong to a few holdings or corporate groups? If the new "public space" that was the realm of politics since Aristotelian times is now solely defined by the media, will politicians have to be accountable to publishers rather than to the public? Are 30-second soundbites what we will have instead of the "public philosophy" that Walter Lippmann thought indispensable?

The Argentine media industry has had and is still having its field day with deregulation. Consequently the doubts of the "five myths of deregulation" described by Vincent Mosco—that it lessens the role of government, benefits consumers, diminishes economic concentration, is widely supported and, above all, inevitable—are emerging to the surface of public debate. Open questions in Argentina today do not differ greatly from those that came up during the American academic and public debates over the concentration of media property that can be traced to the early 70's and is still unfinished. For reporters, editors and publishers difficult questions about ethics and even about the nature and legitimacy of the press also loom large. Is muckraking journalism to be accepted as the post-modern version of investigative journalism? Should content of papers and news broadcasts be shaped solely by marketing techniques or are they to follow other, more traditional imperatives? Can corruption, small or big, be tolerated when it is so clearly visualized by the journalists themselves?

In the end, Argentine media does not seem to be able to find redemption or condemnation on its own. Fate will be largely influenced—some say decided—by what the society to which it belongs and which it serves can accomplish for itself. ■

Ecuador's Timid Press

BY JAMES R. ROSS

The front pages of Ecuador's daily newspapers all carried essentially the same story one Monday in September, 1994. Based on a statement from a presidential spokesman, the newspaper stories criticized a false report that Ecuadorian President Sixto Durán-Ballén was dead. In the statement, Durán-Ballén's spokesman, Santiago Aguilar, denounced a Guayaquil radio station that, he contended, had falsely reported the president's death. The president, Aguilar assured the nation, was alive and well.

This might have seemed like nothing more than a bad Latin version of an old Mark Twain joke, except for one other fact: no one—in Guayaquil or anywhere else in Ecuador—had broadcast a story that Durán-Ballén was dead. It was all a hoax, apparently fabricated by the president's spokesman. Aguilar had telephoned journalists throughout the country that Sunday to deny a report that never existed. What motivated him to do so remains a mystery.

But what seemed even more remarkable was that the nation's press had swallowed the hoax so thoroughly. The nation's largest newspaper, El Universo, even embellished it by fingering Radio Tarqui as the station that had broadcast the story on the president's death. Radio Tarqui's owner later said his station had been broadcasting nothing but sports all day Sunday, but no one at El Universo had bothered to telephone the station to check.

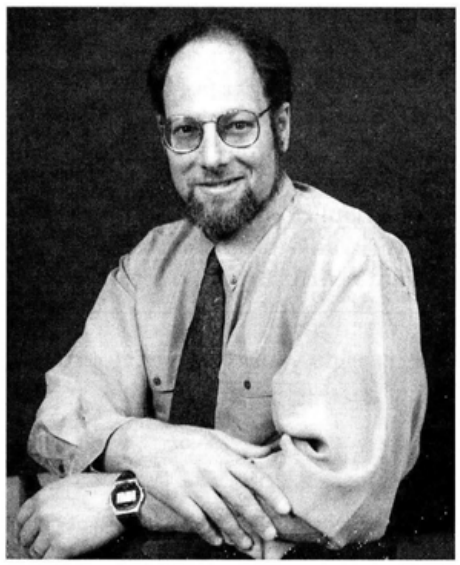
A few weeks later, when I, a Fulbright Fellow assigned to the media, was in Guayaquil to teach seminars, I asked reporters and editors at El Universo why they had been so negligent. The answers weren't encouraging. One editor noted that the Ecuadorian press is expected to report what the government tells it. A reporter said the story broke on a Sunday, when it's difficult to track down government officials. And how about calling Radio Tarqui, which is based in the same city as El Universo? Well, yes, we do tend to be a bit lazy, another reporter admitted.

In much of Latin America, the press faces threats of government repression and fears of retribution—including murder—by guerrillas, gangs and drug lords. But Ecuador (despite its sporadic border war with neighboring Peru) has remained tranquil, and its press has been free to criticize politicians and government officials and to investigate corruption. Ecuadorian reporters, however, rarely take advantage of that freedom. Instead, the free press, with a few notable exceptions, has been held in check by well-connected owners and editors and frustrated by underpaid, poorly trained and lazy reporters.

"There's no follow-up, no investigation, no research," says Santiago Jervis, a former director of El Commercio who now works as a columnist and correspondent based in Miami. "Journalists know a lot of facts which they don't consider publishable."

Jervis spent three weeks in Ecuador this winter during the peak of its border war with Peru. He said journalists were too fearful of the military to investigate government claims that the war was a result of Peruvian aggression, although there is evidence that the Ecuadorian military has been preparing for war for four or five years.

Newspaper owners and editors show preferences to political friends and relatives, both on the news and editorial pages. Reporters complain they are often told to water down or kill stories that offend a publisher's cronies. Newspapers also fail to make clear distinctions between their editorial policies and their news pages and most reporters tend to follow the lead of their editors.



James R. Ross recently completed a Fulbright lectureship in Ecuador, working with television and newspaper reporters and editors. He also has been a visiting journalism professor in Shanghai. Ross is the author of two nonfiction books, "Escape to Shanghai" and "Caught in a Tornado," and has written widely for numerous magazines and newspapers. He is an Associate Professor and coordinator of the graduate program at the Northeastern University School of Journalism.

There are others who must share the blame for Ecuador's timid press. The national journalists' association requires its members to have university degrees in journalism in order to practice in Ecuador, but most journalism programs focus on theory. Reporters are also ridiculously underpaid. Few beginning newspaper reporters earn enough each month to afford even the cheapest apartment in Quito or Guayaquil. Reporters themselves share some of the responsibility for the press's shortcomings. The journalists with whom I worked in Ecuador, like reporters everywhere, are reluctant to leave their newsrooms and talk to people on the streets. They are often more interested in reflecting on their own ideas and observations than in reporting the news.

Many editors and publishers with whom I spoke recognized these problems and challenges. But few of them seemed to have any hope—or any pressing desire—for change. Most owners are making substantial profits and see no reason to alter the status quo.

There are some encouraging signs, however. Hoy, a daily based in Quito, is a colorful and innovative newspaper whose publisher—a member of the Mantilla family who left El Commercio—seems willing to take chances. Editor Benjamin Ortiz Brennan recently completed a Mason Fellowship at Harvard and is eager to try new ideas. His reporters are writing stories about the effect of lead in gasoline on people with pulmonary problems; the growing underground economy, and the frightening toll from traffic accidents.

Hoy's publisher, Jaime Mantilla, added 40 percent to the price of one of its Sunday papers in August 1994 (about 10 cents per paper) and announced that he would donate the extra revenue to relief in Rwanda. Mantilla also is working on plans to print and distribute a free tabloid—mostly of pictures and headlines—to the illiterate and semi-literate and to combine that with free seminars in poor neighborhoods to teach people how to read and how to deal with social and medical problems.

What remains out of reach for Hoy and the rest of the Ecuadorian press is an independent role in educating the public and in criticizing and challenging government, even for such minor transgressions as spreading hoaxes about reports of the President's death. The press is among the most popular institutions in the nation (trailing only the Catholic Church and the military), but it has yet to assert its strength. It is a momentous opportunity: the press is perhaps the only institution in Ecuador that can create the foundation for a real and lasting democracy. ■


hoy

VIA SATELITE — Edición Nacional

Expectativa por elección de rector de la Universidad de Guayaquil: Ver 8-A

Jueves

Ecuador, 20 de octubre de 1994

Precio Sr. 500

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Is Public Ready for News on Computers?

BY W. RUSSELL NEUMAN

We have a reliable and time-tested system for getting the news out to the public. Since the commercialization of the steam-powered rotary press in the 1830's, newspapers and magazines, and then from the 1920's, radio and television have evolved and negotiated a rather useful division of labor. Each medium draws on its relative strengths in emphasizing depth of coverage, period of coverage, style of presentation, or immediacy. Each responds in its own way to the daily ritual of a reliably news-hungry public. Who needs computers and data networks to get out the news? They are expensive, hard to use and surprisingly inflexible and inconvenient for all the high-tech hoopla.

One is reminded again of Henry Thoreau's commentary on the telegraph in the 1850's: "We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas," he observed in Walden, "but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate." Thoreau's curmudgeonly response may seem amusing in retrospect, but let's take a look at the parallels.

Thoreau, of course, was concerned about American values and traditions likely to be trampled in an impulsive rush to electronic communication. Indeed, Maine and Texas were not waiting impatiently for instantaneous communications; the commercial interests of Western Union and the railroads saw a profit potential and pushed ahead successfully with little concern about the long-term effects of who would be communicating what to whom.

The computer revolution in modern journalism has many of the same characteristics:

- It is driven by technology vendors and computer visionaries, rather than professional journalists.
- The news audience is neither dissatisfied with the current news media nor particularly enamored by the prospect of reading news stories on computer screens.
- Viable systems of intellectual property rights, subscription fees and non-obtrusive advertiser support for computerized news delivery have yet to be demonstrated.
- A great deal of what draws serious institutions of journalism to the Internet and the World Wide Web, it would appear, is more of an economic defensiveness than a professional enthusiasm.

Should we be concerned? Of course. Should we try to erect barricades against the digital onslaught? Not unless we are angling to get trampled. My vote is to take advantage of a brief period of dramatic change in the news industry to rethink first principles.

Take it as given that within five years, networked computers in the workplace and the home will compete on an equal footing with the existing news media as a routine source of news for over half the public in the industrialized world. Skeptical? OK, then make it ten years. We're not discussing the end point anymore, just the shape of the diffusion curve.

Diffusion of the Computer Into the Home

I've been involved in a series of research studies over the past decade that attempt to understand how the technological revolution will affect communication into (and out of) the average home. We have tracked the early experiments with two-way cable television, Warner's primitive QUBE system in Columbus, Ohio and television-based videotex and teletext experiments in the U.S., Japan and Europe in the early 1980's. By most measures, these experiments were failures in human, journalistic and commercial terms. The technology was expensive, slow, awkward and ill-designed. The research subjects were polite about it; they enjoyed the chance to play with prototypes but were not at all inclined to abandon television news or their newspaper.

Technology, of course, is a moving target. The new personal computers are less expensive, more reliable, easier to use, faster and more flexible. Think back for a moment about the first generation of home computers. One had to load a series of floppy disks and wait patiently while the computer made sounds like a miniature washing machine as it set up its operating system.

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After all that effort one was rewarded with a flashing "C" indicating which disk drive was active. Users were expected to be programmers and electronic hobbyists. No color. No communication. Frequent system crashes. Available programming focused on typing, spreadsheets and a few primitive games. Not very user friendly.

Most modern PCs and laptops come with operating software loaded and ready to go. There are color graphics, built-in communication for on-line information services and E-mail, high quality audio and now a somewhat jerky rendition of full-motion color video. The software is sophisticated, diverse, and almost user-friendly.

As of mid-1995 current studies converge on an estimate that about 40 percent of American homes are equipped with personal computers of various sorts. In white-collar homes (college graduate, head of household) it is over 50 percent and among higher-income college-graduate households, about 75 percent. Computers are also available at work and school. Among adults under 50, 69 percent report access to computers outside the home; among those in their teens it is 88 percent. Although less than half of the current population of home computers have modems for communications, high-speed modems represent the area of the steepest growth in the industry. By the end of this year, industry experts are predicting, one would have to go to some length to purchase a computer without a modem already built in and probably complete with software for surfing the net. Currently new subscribers are signing up to the commercial on-line services at the rate of 10,000 per day. At this rate by the end of 1995 there will be 10 million households on line, representing what the business periodicals are inclined to label as a $1 billion dollar industry. We are beyond the stage of pilot research. How this industry will evolve and how it will impact traditional news media, however, is far from clear.

The News Ritual

A key question is how on-line news becomes incorporated into the daily habits of the on-line households. Each of the traditional news media finds its niche in daily ritual. The morning newspaper is read over coffee, or perhaps on public transit during the commute. Radio news is, of course, dominated by drive-time, the car radio audience of commuters. Nightly network news is associated with the rituals of preparing, eating or relaxing after the evening meal. Journalists and editors may have an idealized vision of their attentive viewers and readers, closely attending to the facts, the background issues and the style of a finished news story. But in the real world of news audiences, the phone is ringing, the kids are screaming and coffee has been spilled over half the front page.

In the early videotex tests there were staged photographs of the test households with well-groomed young couples attentively tapping away at their keyboards and proudly studying the news scrolling on the video screen. This was no doubt a very misleading image. It is based on a notion of computerized news as a substitute for traditional news media—the idea that time in front of the TV newscast or newspaper will now be wholly replaced by time in front of a computer screen.

A more likely scenario is that in the course of picking up your E-mail or paying some bills on line, you'll pause to check the headlines. Or perhaps you are at your desk at home working on a letter and your computer beeps to indicate that a headline on a topic of special interest has just been received. Or, in reading your electronic mail you find yourself reading a news story of interest which has been electronically clipped and forwarded by a friend who ran across the story web surfing the night before.

At the moment, even among the early adopters, on-line news in not a news habit. The number of American adults who report reading a newspaper regularly is 71 percent. The same number watch TV news regularly. Radio news is only 56 percent. And among home-computer modem users only 28 percent often or sometimes seek out news, weather or sports information. Among those on line, newspaper and newsmagazine reading and television news viewing is no higher or lower than that of their off-line compatriots.

A particularly interesting question is the behavior of the youthful audience. The wired generation is at ease with the computer and on line more frequently and for longer periods than their elders. In many ways the web, as captured by Wired, the on-line fan magazine, is dominated by the art, language and rebelliousness of youth culture. The past two decades have documented a decline in the newspaper reading habit among teenagers and young adults, the most significant element in overall newspaper circulation decline. Furthermore, there is little evidence that these young people are picking up newspapers as they become 30- or even 40-something. They tend to rely on electronic media. Although it is not yet evident in the survey numbers, this cohort may rediscover "print" in a newly electronic form.

Human Use of Computers

A standing joke among researchers in this field is the notion of curling up in bed with a good computer. Marketing research actually indicates that news magazines are more likely to be read in the bedroom than any other room of the house. (Yes, you are right, the bathroom, as I recall, was a close second.) We have developed the habit of watching the 11 o'clock news over our toes. Would anyone want to curl up with a computer, even a laptop? Perhaps.

Direct comparisons of the human factors of computers to the traditional print and broadcast media tend to favor the traditional media. But perhaps direct comparisons miss the point. Some will take their laptops to bed, to the porch, to the beach. But most will simply note stories of interest while they were at their computers earlier in the day and print them out. Ninety percent of home computers are connected to printers. The quality and speed of printers are improving dramatically. Cur-

rent laser printers fall somewhere between newspaper and magazine quality output. Color printers are currently expensive but prices are falling dramatically as the technology matures.

Why would someone actively choose to catch up on the news from a computer rather than the traditional media? Perhaps the answer lies in time and space.

People don't receive news passively, they actively scan and filter it. For print media, news is organized in space and readers scan illustrations, sidebars, headings and headlines for cues on what to read more fully. In broadcasting, news is organized in the time domain. People tune in and tune out mentally as stories of interest roll by. In the computer world it is a bit of both. The computer can act as an intelligent agent, seeking out, filtering and formatting news stories in response to the readers tastes, prejudices and mood.

It is sometimes argued that on-line news readers will virtually become their own editors in choosing priorities and formatting their personalized front pages. Not likely. Most people do not want to do the work of the editor and appreciate the benefit of journalists' professional judgment. But people do know what they like, and as before, they will continue to actively scan, ignore and seek out subtle clues of what in the flow of news really interests them. The negotiated ritual between editor and reader will take on a new electronic form. A bold headline about complex negotiations in the former Yugoslavia signals newsworthiness as does a flashing icon on the computer screen. In both cases the reader takes note and values that signal. In both cases, perhaps, the reader, weary of a distant and confusing conflict he must struggle to comprehend, chooses not to read the story.

Audiences, however, do value the availability of a wide variety of content to choose from, even if they tend to stick with the known and familiar. Most viewers regularly watch fewer than a dozen of the 50 to 150 channels available to them on the modern cable and direct satellite systems. They value the electronic bounty, even if they don't get much chance to catch up on recent Senate hearings or on the latest mulching technology on the gardening channel. The Sunday newspaper is ritual of bountiful newsprint. It is not valued less because it is virtually never read from first page to last.

Likewise, people value the energy and variety of the on-line world, even though it threatens to overwhelm. A recent national survey asked if respondents felt overloaded with information. Overall 37 percent said they felt they were. Among on-line respondents only 30 percent said they felt overloaded. The reason is that in addition to additional information they get additional control. Sixty-four percent of the on-line respondents said computers give people more control rather than less, compared with only 45 percent in the general population.

The New News

The News in the Future Research Consortium at the MIT Media Lab has developed its own prototype news services nicknamed FishWrap. Research sponsors, faculty and students log in to read an individualized electronic newspaper, The Daily Me, as Director Nicholas Negroponte dubbed it. The readers have indicated topics of interest. They automatically get reports on weather from their hometown. News from across campus and across the world are intertwined according to the readers electronic instructions. One electronic front page may only contain stories on the Red Sox. Another may have explicit instructions to filter out any story that even mentions baseball or the Red Sox in passing. No two editions of this electronic newspaper are the same.

The fact that no two editions are the same is not troubling. It is unlikely that any two readers of a metropolitan daily will read precisely the same stories. The idea of filtering out unwanted news, however, may strike one as troublesome indeed. What if in a fit of frustration an otherwise well-meaning citizen instructed her electronic newspaper to ignore any story that happens to include the words Serbia or Bosnia. Readers may ignore a front-page newspaper story from that region of the world, but, for the record, the story is still where it belongs on the front page. At least the newspaper reader has to consciously skip over a front page headline. In the filtered electronic newspaper the story does not exist.

A cause for concern? Certainly. Grounds for some sort of regulation or guidelines to protect an informed public in an electronic era? Not at all.

If the broadcast news media had predated the print media we could have made the same argument about the need to regulate print media. In broadcasting it is harder for the listener to ignore the lead story than in print. A newspaper reader can turn to the comics and sports page and throw everything else away. Perhaps more readers do than we would care to admit.

The capacity of the audience to select and filter the news flow has always been significant. Now the computer will empower that human faculty even more. The computer will not replace the journalist or the editor. It will energize the process of negotiation between professional journalist and news audience to define what is newsworthy and to put news in human context.

In an era when network television news dominated, Walter Cronkite could conclude with the phrase "And that's the way it is." The New York Times still proclaims it offers "All the News That's Fit to Print." Such mantras have an authority and finality that no longer ring true. If that represents a shift in public culture, it is, in my view, a positive one. ■

Timing Is Really Everything

By James C. Lessersohn

Media executives looking for growth investments during the 1980's had two big chances to strike it rich. Early in the decade, cable television blossomed. Later, cellular radio telephones produced a second bonanza. Following these successes, many media executives of the 1990's undoubtedly envisioned a third pot of gold when their technology experts began touting the potential of the "information superhighway."

The phrase information superhighway conjured up images of a civilized convergence in which previously separate industries like publishing, telecommunications and cable television would merge in orderly progress to a clearly marked destination: "Information Nirvana...Straight Ahead."

But reality is proving far messier. In fact, the information superhighway is beginning to look more like a New England traffic rotary at rush hour: chaotic, with destinations poorly marked and traffic so heavy there seems to be no safe way to get on or off. A few big trucks are in there throwing their weight around (hi there, Microsoft), but most of the cars are just hoping to reach home without having an accident.

What makes it so hard to make money in the new media of the 1990's? The pioneers of the information superhighway lack at least three big advantages enjoyed by the builders of the cable and cellular industries: customers willing to pay, easy money, and, above all, government protection from competition.

In the case of cable, system operators discovered early that two of three households in any geographic area were willing to pay $20-40 a month to broaden their television viewing choices. At these prices, 50 percent cash flow margins became routine when governments almost everywhere declared cable a "natural monopoly" (only one provider per community, please) without regulating subscription rates.

Always willing to bet on a sure thing, bankers and insurance companies started lending "100 cents on the dollar" to anyone able to secure a cable franchise. (That's right, no money down!) Systems that cost roughly $700 per subscriber to build rose steadily in value to as much as $3000 per subscriber by 1989.

The story was similar for cellular radio. From the day Ameritech opened America's first cellular system in Chicago, businesses and affluent individuals jumped at the chance to pay $70-100 a month for the convenience of mobile wireless telephones. Junk-bond dealers and equipment vendors provided much of the start-up capital this time after government did its part to nurture the industry by giving away the licenses and limiting competition to two service providers in each metropolitan area. By the end of the 1980's, a cellular license could be sold for as much as $200 for every man, woman and child in its coverage area.

Compare those can't-lose situations to the challenges faced by companies seeking to profit on the information superhighway today. The first missing element is revenue. Something like 6 million Americans subscribe to on-line services, but few are willing to spend more than $10-15 a month for the privilege. Internet surfers are even more difficult to nail for a fee. Of the thousands of home pages available on the World Wide Web, only a handful come with a subscription charge.

Advertisers are similarly skittish. In theory, on-line services provide a perfect milieu for searchable classified advertisements and electronic catalog shopping. On-line's transactional capabilities could also revolutionize financial services and the travel industry by eliminating many traditional middlemen. Countless entrepreneurs and technology companies are eager to test this potential.

Of course, the prospect of buyers and sellers communicating with each other directly threatens to undermine the role not only of the traditional advertising media, but also of advertising agencies, retailers, real estate brokers, employment agencies, travel agents, banks and even the post office. As a result, all of these industries feel compelled to test-drive the infobahn for defensive reasons, even though there is no clear indication of how, or even if, on line works as a marketing medium.

The attitude of government has also changed. Far from sheltering new media from competition, government today is promoting competition by removing the regulatory barriers that have separated publishing, broadcasting, cable television and the telephone industry. The federal government has even begun auctioning precious spectrum space to the next generation of wireless service providers.

All this uncertainty has driven the easy money away, also. Companies like Microsoft and AT&T can afford to commit $100 million of their own money to create on-line networks, but most companies will limit their early commitments to the amount it costs to mount a modest offering on the Internet—usually less than $100,000—until a profitable business equation emerges.

The result is a free-for-all where a multitude of would-be service providers will scramble to steal business from each other until a dependable source of revenue is established. Another frenzy of speculation may well occur when full-motion video becomes available on demand through interactive cable and/or telephone services, but it is unlikely that any future service provider will benefit from the most important of all advantages enjoyed by the success stories of the 1980's—government protection from competition. ■

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New Education for Journalists

A Call for a Radical Overhaul of College Programs To Deal With the Realities of the Digital Age

BY J. T. JOHNSON

Who would have thought the Pope and the U.S. Coast Guard would end up in near pas de deux, and in cyberspace of all places? Yet that is what happened within a 48-hour period this spring. On March 30, the Vatican announced that 2,000 years after the first papal letter was written by St. Peter, Pope John Paul II's 200-page encyclical was coming out on a computer disk. $5.60 at bookstores everywhere.

Two days later, the U.S. Coast Guard announced that after nearly 100 years of listening for distress calls via human-generated clicks of a telegraph key, it was turning off its Morse code equipment. The reason? A switch to digital hardware.

Or how about this: at the end of 1993, there were 923 World Wide Web sites on the Internet. By the end of 1994, the number was up to 11,576. By April 1995, one reliable tally put the figure as high as 45,000.

These are indicative of the massive, high-speed changes happening on an almost daily basis in the infosphere, that environment where thousands of species of data handlers and information managers exist. Journalists and journalism educators are among those species, along with insurance company actuaries, law enforcement personnel, agri-businessmen, and the communications specialists working for the church and the Coast Guard.

Journalism education, though, needs to become as up-to-date as the Roman Catholic Church, as evolutionary as the Coast Guard.

Just as species in the ecosphere/biosphere draw on carbon and oxygen resources, all of us draw on the data resources in the same environment. We identify and retrieve the data traditionally appropriate for analysis by our information species. We analyze that data with a variety of tools ranging from mathematical formulas to something as inexact as gut feeling, and arrive at some synthesis of meaning. We then package that data-turned-to-information and communicate it to an audience, be it our employer, client or the general public.

For 5,000 years, those data have been packaged and stored in something only marginally different from the ink-on-paper (IoP) format found on every corner newsstand in the world today.

But as the Vatican and the Coast Guard recognize, the infosphere has changed. IoP is no longer the sole medium of choice. For reasons of cost and efficiency, it is being duplicated—and increasingly replaced—by electrons stored in silicon.

These changes directly influence each of the species who dwell in the infosphere because the traditional definition of literacy—the ability to extract meaning from printed symbols—is no longer sufficient. Given the shift in the storage medium, unless one has the skills necessary to identify and retrieve digital data from cyberspace, to use the appropriate tools to analyze that data and to communicate those findings in a digital medium, he or she can no longer be counted among the functionally literate population. But on the positive side, the shift from IoP to digital offers unprecedented opportunity for all who relish ideas and communicating them.

Will journalism education programs move to adequately address these changes? Do journalism faculties have the skills and experience to even recognize the speed and magnitude of the changes and take advantage of them? If not, then neo-journalism education, in the long run, may well have to come from outside the existing faculties, departments and schools.

I have been investigating, formally and informally, the impact of the Digital Revolution on journalism education for more than 15 years. The shift from IoP to digital storage of data—the Digital Revolution—is directly influencing the discipline at two levels. First are the effects on the administrators of journalism education programs. The second is on journalism curriculum. Issues related to journalism administration—power, authority, access to data, ethics and free speech—are significant and deserve discussion in a separate article. However, changes needed in journalism curriculum are more pressing and affect more people.

The necessary changes in knowing what to teach and how to teach it seem to be the most difficult for all journalism educators to comprehend and adjust to. We can take some solace that journalism departments are not alone: the same challenges are faced by colleagues in engineering, medicine and schools of education.

The crux of the issue is that although the mainstream journalism curriculum has been evolving, especially during the past 40 or 50 years, it still relies on traditional foundations. That instructional core today focuses on reporting,

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writing, editing and design skills, ethics, history and First Amendment law and issues. That core curriculum is generally solid and pertinent, valuable and valued by both journalism educators and the profession. But because of the changes in the infosphere, that traditional curriculum alone is no longer viable.

Today's challenge to curriculum designers is:

(A) How do journalism educators retain the solid core curriculum, add on the necessary content-specific and conceptual courses demanded by the Digital Age's infosphere, and,

(B) still meet the laudable goals articulated by the journalism accrediting agencies?

Simplistically stated, the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) calls for journalism undergraduates in accredited programs to have 25 percent of their course work in the journalism major and 75 percent in the liberal arts. Up until now, that meant most J-majors took approximately 32 or 34 units in the field out of a total of 124 units in a program that operated on a two-semester calendar and typical three-unit courses.

I submit that the ratio was intellectually valid and effective. But the emphasis here is on the past tense: because of changes in the intellectual preparation of undergraduate journalism students (a general decline), and the Digital Revolution, that ratio alone is no longer an adequate goal.

It seems a safe bet that when Socrates and Plato were complaining about poorly prepared students, some older teacher down the hall said, "So what else is new? Students come to us precisely because they don't know anything."

But after 18 years of teaching in a tax-supported "commuter" college in a major West Coast city—where the average student is 25 or 26—I believe that the intellectual preparation of undergraduates has declined. This conclusion is also derived from conversations and evidence from colleagues in a variety of universities around the nation.

For a number of years, I have given a quiz the first day of the semester just to get a sense of the ability of a particular class. The same tests are given to students at all levels. In recent years, it's another safe bet that when given a multiple choice test, 50 percent of the *U.S.* educated students will not be able to pick out the half century when the U.S. Civil War occurred, identify who was the U.S. president during most of World War II or know the value of a "point" of stock on the New York exchange. And don't bother to ask about geography.

Journalism educators have always recognized that we don't just teach journalism but, along the way, significantly add to students' knowledge of history, law, literature, political process, economics and sometimes even science and math.

In the past, our students came to us with higher skills and a base knowledge of both facts and the process necessary to put the data into some context—context of history, context of magnitude and of social or economic significance—and then use their newly learned techniques of journalism to communicate the results.

I recognize the risk of sweeping generalizations. Yet when we read of the College Board tacking 75 points onto the SAT verbal scores and 20 points on the math to "bring the average scores back to the center of the bell curve" (where they were when the test was first given in 1941), one has to wonder about the abilities of all university students.

So, to our contemporaries' query of "So what's new?" the answer is this:

Today we have access to more data/information than ever before and can get it faster and more easily. That alone says nothing about the quality of that data nor the quality of the subsequent analysis performed on that data. But when it comes to communicating our findings, we have the potential to reach everyone on the planet in an instant. Consequently, our burden of responsibility as journalists has just increased a thousandfold. Instead of simply being the analytically passive recipient and courier of someone else's analysis, journalists need to be better skilled and conduct their own analyses.

Until recently, I have championed the need to systematically teach the Big Five applications appropriate to analytic journalism in the Digital Age: telecommunications, sophisticated word processing, spreadsheets, data bases and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). This spring, I concluded the infosphere has raised the ante on us again: we now need to add instruction in creating and designing World Wide Web home pages. This, at least, can lay the foundation for creating multi-media news packages, a promising medium rich with potential for new intellectual and economic questions for the academy and profession.

There are those who argue that it is not, and should not, be the task of journalism educators to teach what they perceive as narrow skills involving how to use a computer. Such topics, goes the debate, are mere technique, something akin to typing. I say, nonsense.

Classification is the root of all cognition. Teaching telecommunications and on-line research demands that students think hard about the assumptions they use in defining search terms. For example, is one really looking for something about race, or is culture a more apt term, and why? Who uses which definition under what circumstance? Have those definitions changed over time?

Word processing? Demanding that students know how to use the endnote function on their word processor and literally cite the sources used to support each paragraph of their stories leads them to focus on what they really know and how they know.

Spreadsheets? I've found they are the best way to introduce quantitative analytic techniques—that is, elementary but necessary skills, like computing percent of change or proportion—to the often mathematically impaired journalism student. And in the end the students will have a tool that can be used on any beat or edit desk.

But now comes the rub. To do an adequate job of educating students in these new areas of knowledge requires at least four—and probably five—three-unit, semester-long courses. That adds a minimum of 12 to 15 instruction units in the journalism major. Under this rubric, we have just turned an undergraduate journalism major into a 50-unit degree, and the 25/75 goal—for a traditional undergraduate journalism major—is moot.

Plan to Revitalize System

The deficiency in the intellectual standards and quality, coupled with the demands of the Digital Revolution, leads me to conclude that undergraduate journalism education in its current state cannot adequately train journalists for the next century. There are, though, three things that might at least revitalize—if not "save"—journalism education, both those programs that focus on professional training and those more orientated toward scholarly research.

First, we should eliminate undergraduate journalism degrees. It has taken me a long time to arrive at this point of desperation, and I do so with resignation. For years I argued that journalism was the best liberal arts degree in the university because it taught students how to identify and retrieve data/information quickly, analyze them, and communicate them clearly. But journalism educators are falling behind in knowing how that data today are identified, retrieved, analyzed and communicated. I can no longer stand behind that argument for undergraduate journalism degrees.

If we are going to be truly a "profession"—if such an intellectual goal is possible without incurring the standards for admission and control attached to real professions such as medicine, law and engineering—we should subscribe to true professional training. We should stop trying to refurbish undergraduates who lack adequate knowledge to bring to the intellectual challenges of journalism. After all, how many bachelor of medicine degrees or bachelor of law degrees are granted? Even undergraduate engineering and education degrees often are five-year programs. Such a suggestion implies the establishment of more masters of journalism programs. Those programs should have rigorous intellectual standards for admission and for graduation, and a curriculum reflecting our field's solid intellectual and ethical heritage, plus the realities of the Digital Age.

Next, more journalism education programs should move beyond the strict model still with us from the days of the land-grant university. That is, stop trying to educate everyone as only general practitioner journalists to meet the general needs of every newspaper and broadcast outlet in a specific state.

There is a need for highly specialized graduate programs that don't try to do everything for everyone. Why not have programs scattered around the nation, especially for mid-career journalists, that only focus on training specialists in info-graphics—both for IoP media, broadcast and electronic publications? Why not have a couple of programs working to meet the demand for analytic journalists, those who can pull down mountains of data on campaign contributions or health care, for example, move it to a mainframe if necessary, and massage those numbers into meaningful pointers for other reporters to follow up? Or schools developing tools to use virtual reality hard- and software—along with sonification—to let journalists or "readers" walk through tons of data (all the health care data for the state of California, for example), looking for their own correlations of interest?

This probably hasn't happened because, heretofore, journalism educators, experienced in or identifying with the profession, were themselves generalists, and appropriately so. Journalism has often been the best refuge for serious explorers of everything intellectual. But the time and tools are here for greater intellectual maturity and specialization.

There are some successful models for this. John Wilkes' science communication program at UC-Santa Cruz has worked with great success for years, and on a campus without any of the usual trappings of a school or department of journalism. Or Jon Franklin's new program at the University of Oregon—albeit, in this case, within a School of Journalism—is training literary journalists. Or the Latin American journalism program at the University of Southern California.

Some of these speciality programs might indeed be designed to attract mid-career journalists who have burned out on covering the umteenth zoning commission meeting or written their 123rd play-by-play of an unimportant football game. If universities and, most of all, editors and publishers, invested in them, perhaps the IoP profession could be intellectually revived.

Go Outside J- Schools

Finally, we should forget about trying to retrofit existing journalism programs by retraining all the faculty. There's just too much to learn, the inertia too strong. After 10 years of suggesting (reasoning? cajoling? shouting?) that all journalism educators need to have some experience in all phases of the Big Six—and should know how to use at least any three fairly well—I've concluded that it ain't gonna happen.

Therefore, the real innovation in journalism education will be coming from departments other than journalism. Most likely those departments don't exist yet. They will be created somewhere similar to what is happening in the exciting multimedia education program at San Francisco State University. (I have no connection with this program.) This was started not as part of the regular university curriculum in the journalism or art or broadcasting departments. No, the program was built by a couple of far-sighted innovators in the school's Extended Education program, the extra-campus, high-tuition-per-unit division of the university. It's not journalism in the form we know it, but the energy is there to understand the journalistic process and use the tools appropriate to the infosphere. Or it may happen at well-funded, innovative programs like Columbia University's Center for New Media, which brings together educators from journalism, art, engineering, architecture, film, music, art history and chemistry.

Somewhere soon a university administrator—or, perhaps, some entrepreneur—will see that the old journalism, with a couple of exceptions, is dead. He or she will start fresh by assembling a new faculty drawn from those 50 or 60 journalism educators and practitioners scattered around the country who have been making an aggressive effort to grasp the Digital Revolution and all its implications, who have been learning its tools and integrating them into the curriculum and newsrooms.

I am reminded of a tale often told by the late historian Elting E. Morison. At the beginning of World War II, the British Army was still using light artillery from the Boer War and World War I, 40 or more years earlier, but now pulled by trucks instead of horses. Some officers sensed that the "rapidity of fire could be increased. A time-motion expert was, therefore, called in to suggest ways to simplify the firing procedures.... Puzzled by certain aspects of the procedures, he took some slow-motion pictures of the soldiers performing the loading, aiming, and firing routines," Morison wrote.

"When he ran these pictures over once or twice, he noticed something that appeared odd to him. A moment before the firing, two members came to attention for a three-second interval extending throughout the discharge of the gun. He summoned an old colonel of artillery, showed him the pictures and pointed out this strange behavior....The colonel, too, was puzzled. He asked to see the pictures again. 'Ah,' he said when the performance was over, 'I have it. They are holding the horses.'"

Morison called this an involuntary tendency, necessary for humans to accommodate to changing conditions. It's needed, he wrote, "to protect oneself against the shock of change by continuing in the presence of altered situations the familiar habits, however incongruous, of the past."

Horses are fine animals. But however pleasurable, and in some cases, efficient, they do not represent today's transportation environment. ■

Guiding Principles and Values For New Media

In a report prepared for the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the Harwood Group, a public issues research and innovations firm in Bethesda, Md., said that interviews with twenty-two editors, citizens in four focus groups, sixteen leading thinkers in newspapers and academia and seventeen potential media partners suggest that journalists must adhere to two sets of ideas. The first set, Guiding Principles for New Media, are:

"Participants in this study believe that newspapers and journalists should actively pursue new media. Yet the participants see inherent challenges in practicing journalism in this new world; operating in print is not the same as traveling in cyberspace.

"But whatever differences exist, virtually everyone interviewed claims that a key to success will be the ability of newspapers and journalists to stay true to their role in society and to adapt to the new media arena within that context.

"Six principles emerged in our conversations with editors, citizens, leading thinkers, and potential partners to guide newspapers and journalists in their new media journeys.

"1. Stick to Your Knitting—the distinctive value of newspapers and journalists does not change in the new media world. Journalism is journalism.

"2. Focus on the Community—the newspaper's niche is the local news franchise. Community coverage should be its main focus.

"3. Connect to Readers—newspapers and journalists will need to have a deeper understanding of their readers as consumers and citizens. Staying connected is an imperative.

"4. Be Ready to Adapt—new media will require newspapers and journalists to embrace new practices and skills, but within the context of their journalistic values.

"5. Make the Leap, but Don't Expect Nirvana—newspapers and journalists should get involved actively in new media, but should not expect instant success or payoffs.

"6. Roll the Presses—both print and new media have their own unique value and role in providing news and information. Make sure there is room for both."

The second set of ideas, Enduring Journalistic Values, are:

"When journalists gather and present the news, editors, citizens, leading thinkers and potential partners say it is essential that a set of core values guide them. They all agree on what those core values should be:

"• Editorial Judgment
"• Balance
"• Accuracy
"• Leadership in the Community
"• Public Access
"• Credibility

"The participants in this study believe that these values must apply to new media and print—that the very nature of journalism does not change, even as the medium might. Thus, peoples say that the news hole in print and new media should be treated the same. Beyond the news hole, people want newspapers and journalists to create new media services that hold true to the spirit of their journalistic principles and values; people do not want newspapers merely to copy the chaotic, free-wheeling, anything-goes cyberspace culture." ■

How to Go On Line Quickly

By Tom Regan

My friend's voice on the other end of the phone betrayed a sense of urgency. He had just returned to his job as editor of a medium-sized and well-respected newspaper on the West Coast and had discovered that management had been treading water for a year on the issue of starting an electronic edition.

Oh, his paper's managers had studied the idea—from every possible angle, in fact. But they had made no decisions nor taken any actions that might actually lead to their paper publishing on line.

My friend's sense of urgency came from his quite correct belief that the sooner you get on line, the better.

"So what do I really need to get started?" he asked me. "I'm not worried about a fully functional version right now, we can build towards that. I just want to get our paper on the Internet in an interesting and useful fashion."

Interesting question. I like to joke that when my old paper, The Halifax Daily News Worldwide went on line in June of 1994, it cost us $30 and four coffee mugs. The $30 was for our Internet account, and the four coffee mugs were for the technicians in the basement of the Dalhousie University Computer Science Department who helped put us on the Web.

It's a lot more expensive than that these days. Recent estimates put the cost of creating an electronic edition between $100,000 and $250,000. It can also be done for a lot less, however, if you learn how to "repurpose" your newspaper staff, and then supplement this repurposing by hiring a few key people.

First, let me reemphasize my friend's belief about getting on line as soon as possible. The reason that so many people read The News and Observer's NANDO project is not just that it's attractive and informative. They also read it because it's been available for a long time. It's been added to hotlists all over the world.

That's why it's important to create a site on the World Wide Web as soon *as possible*, even if it doesn't have bells and whistles. Bells and whistles can be added as the product grows.

To start an on-line edition, you need:

1. **An Internet account.** One that offers at least 10 megs of space on a WWW server. It shouldn't cost you any more than $50 a month. If it does, you're being robbed, so shop around.

2. **An Editor/HTML writer**. Find a person in your newsroom who has a feel for the Internet (I assure you, there will be at least one), and make him or her your editor. It would be nice if they can write HTML, but even if they can't, it takes about a week to learn it. (HTML—Hypertext Markup Language —is not a programming language.) Buy several copies of Laura Lemay's "Teach Yourself Web Publishing with HTML in a Week" (Sams Publishing), and pass them out in the newsroom. Encourage staff to get involved.

3. **A graphics person.** Newspapers tend to run graphics people off their feet, so if you want to hire one new person, this is the position that needs full-time attention. You can have a truly different looking on-line product if you find the right graphics person to give your paper the right look. And keep that look fresh. And teach them HTML while you're at it.

4. **A salesperson**. You want to make money, don't you? Then convince management that you need the attention of a full-time sales representative. Make him or her a part of the team, so they will understand the potential of this on-line product. (Teach them HTML as well, so they can work on ad design with your graphics person.)

5. **A techie-CGI guru.** You don't need to hire this person immediately. After all, there are many interesting on-line publications that don't use CGI scripts. But it can give your paper a robust functionality. Where can you find this guru? Your local university is crawling with them, eager young men and women computer geeks who would kill for a chance to work with an on-line publishing venture.

Next, assemble your team and take a week to design your paper on paper before you start to write the HTML coding and to decide your rate of growth.

It should only take a month from this point to get your paper on line. ■

Tom Regan works for the Christian Science Monitor on-line project. You can write him at tregan@usa1.com and you can find his home page on the WWW at http://www.tiac.net/users/tregan/tom.html.

What New-Niche Newspapers?

In the World of the Internet, Print Publications Seem Quaintly Out of Step

BY JOHN H. CLIPPINGER

The death of newspapers has long been reported by newspapers. In fact, the newspaper has died many times only to be reinvented technologically, editorially, and financially. But this time it may be different. The changes are so multiple and simultaneous that the very idea of the newspaper as an institution may be at risk. Piece by piece, newspapers are being deconstructed by new technologies and new competitors. What does the masthead mean in a world where on-line services can virtually eliminate production and distribution costs, where classified ads become interactive, transactional, and personal and where subscribers can select their own writers and editors? What is a newspaper in this new digital interactive world? The changes this time are not peripheral but strike at the very center of gravity that holds a newspaper together.

At their best newspapers give order and structure to communities. Such an image may seem as a relic of another, sentimentalized time. What once seemed to be an orderly neighborhood of large estates and tidy homes has been overrun by a raucous cacophony of eager, new media immigrants, large and small, oblivious, if not disrespectful of all that preceded them. The reflex is to turn back the clock, close the borders. But as the Internet so vividly demonstrates, there are no borders. There are not even traditional market segments as communications becomes many to many—not one to many. In the world of the Internet how do newspaper publishers make money where information is free, in abundance, and every man a publisher? In such a world newspapers seem quaintly 18th Century and out of step.

What Is a Newspaper

Will newspapers, like radio, reinvent themselves as niche players in the wake of television? Or will newspapers resist the change, cling to an identity that is no longer viable, economically or socially? Too often these questions are answered without first confronting the more fundamental and logically prior question: what is a newspaper?

It Is a Paper Medium

If the industry identifies itself with the medium in which it is stored, displayed, and delivered—paper—then it is in trouble. While the printed newspaper meets the celebrated three-B portability test—Bathroom, Bedroom, and Beach—it also fails a number of other tests. Within the next five to seven years, computer display technology will be at a price-performance point where there will be better color resolution on an ultra-thin flat panel display than in a magazine or a newspaper. If you are looking for a car or scanning the personals, newspapers just don't match up to interactive media. No, the paper side of news papers is not the right place to fight the fight.

It is a Medium for Reading

Newspapers, it could be argued, are a print medium, for reflective, thoughtful reading. Reading engages another part of the brain, it slows people down, gets them to consider the deeper issues, look at the facts, apply a critical eye. Yet newspapers have also been and are tabloids that have sensationalized and trivialized the news as well as television or radio. The heart and soul of what is uniquely valued in newspapers lies not in the fact that it works with the printed word.

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It Tells the News

That only leaves the "news" in newspaper. It is the news—all that the newspaper deems fit to print. Therein lies the opportunity and the danger. All media, electronic and print, have been accused—with some justification—of creating news in order to sell advertising and subscriptions. News is not simply what is new or novel; it is what is deemed to be important to a community, a society; it is what matters or will matter. Deciding what should be on page one, that is news; it requires judgment, insight and foresight. It is to set the agenda not only for your readers but also for those who serve them or are elected by them. It creates a bond and a reality among its readers and other news organizations that can't be ignored. It bestows significance and import. It is an enormous power. And it is a dangerous intoxicant. The line between reporting and creating the news is easily crossed, and in recent years the distinction between the two seems to have been all but erased by the broadcast media. Newspapers, like the other media, can become self-referential, self-serving and self-aggrandizing.

But this is not what is meant by newspapers when we think about how the best of newspaper values can be translated into the new digital media. Great newspapers have a voice; they are of the communities they serve; they are trusted; they are careful, and they listen. Newspapers are also everyday living organs of the community; they embody the daily rhythms and beat of the community and link it to the world at large; they provide a means of connecting. They can link news with actions, provide ways of surfacing and remedying problems. Putting faces on issues and achieving accountability. At their best, newspapers provide continuity and context for news in a community. They are part of the public memory of the community, the commons for the discussion, sharing, and solving of problems. They can embody and express the heritage and experiences of a people. Newspapers are a daily reminder of a community what it is to itself; it is a way of looking in the mirror, to see what has changed and what needs attention and grooming.

Newspapers are ideas—not artifacts. The artifact of the newspaper, the pulp and print, may well be on its way to serious modification, if not outright extinction. But ideas can persist and grow beyond the particular form they take. By equating the idea with the form or artifact, there is always the danger of trivializing or losing it. This predicament is similar to the fate of the fearsome Tyrannosaurus Rex, which, according to some paleontologist, exists today in a downsized version as the roadrunner bird. But ask any kid, and they will tell you that a roadrunner is not a T Rex. Likewise, newspapers may become downsized into niched publications the way radio was forty years ago, with specialty listening stations and talk hosts. But twenty years hence ask any newspaper person whether that is a newspaper and they will say, "That is not a newspaper." And they would be right.

News as Drama

Although the idea of a newspaper, especially in its print and paper form, is a relatively recent invention, beginning first in 18th Century England with the invention of the modern editorial voice of The Tatler and The Spectator, its roots go back to Fifth Century Greek drama. Then the medium was drama rather than newsprint. Every major city had a theater and well developed local dramatic tradition. Although the definition of what constituted "news" differed in interesting ways from contemporary notions of news, in that the issues were evergreen rather than ever changing, the theater gave identity and cohesion to a community.

Many of the leading creators and thinkers in the new media look to Greek drama and theater as the editorial model for interactive media. Since the news media of the next century very likely will be interactive and engage all the reader's senses, there is interest in applying many of the principles of drama and theater to news reporting. Brenda Laural, one of the more influential and thoughtful creators of new media, sees in Greek drama a role not too dissimilar to a city newspaper.("Computers as Theatre," 1991.)

"Quite simply, Greek drama was the way that Greek culture publicly thought and felt about the most important issues of humanity, including ethics, morality, government, and religion. To call drama merely 'entertainment' in this context is to miss most of the picture....The human need for such forums has not changed, but television seems to be the only pervasive means American society has devised for meeting it. A case can therefore be made that the trivial content and impoverished range of points of view that characterize commercial television diminish the human spirit by diminishing what we think about and how we think about it. The Greeks employed drama and theatre as 'tools for thought,' in much the same way that we envision employing them in the not too distant future."

As proponents of the new media will argue, there is nothing about the new digital media that subverts the idea of the newspaper. On the contrary, the new media offer new business, market and editorial models that could add to the idea of the newspaper, make it more responsive, deepen the sense of community, create accountability, provide for multiple points of view and empower people with the knowledge and facts to act. Technology, and more specifically the Internet, has shattered the high costs of the acquisition, production and distribution of global information. There is no inherent economic reason or social benefit from the media being aggregated or centralized. The idea of the newspaper is more obtainable now than at another time.

Rather than looking for familiar artifacts of the newspaper in the new media—electronic look-alike newspapers—newspaper persons should be looking beneath the skin of their raucous new neighbors to see what they are really doing. What are these "zines," MUDs, and MOOs, that kids are experimenting with? What is behind some of these "news groups" forums? What is the real story behind the sensational-

ized coverage of pornography and other knee-jerk stories? The driving force behind the new technologies is "community"—finding new ways to connect, discover who they are, orient themselves in the world. Context and continuity. That is the real stuff of newspapers. And it won't be found just in paper or print.

The challenge for today's newspapers is as Arthur Sulzberger stated at the recent Nieman technologoy conference, translating what is best in your brand from the old medium into the new medium. Increasingly that will entail establishing an ongoing and trusted relationship with your readers; not as atomized consumers, but as people connected to and participants in real and virtual communities. To be trusted to set the agenda for page one requires knowing the mind and soul of you readership. This could be a difficult transition for many traditional papers, because it will require flatter and more tightly coordinated organizational structures, new business models, mastering new interactive techniques, and major innovations in the editorial processes. In an era of rapid technological transformation, past success is often a handicap to future success. Not only are the barriers to entry very low, but the new entrants are a mixture of the very large and powerful on the one hand, and the very creative and nimble on the other. Given the inevitable transition from a one-way broadcast medium to an interactive medium, it is hard to see newspapers' being able to prescribe for their audience what the page one stories are for their subscribers with the same force they have in the past. As the two dimensionality of the printed page becomes broken down and as dialogues are opened between the "paper" and its readers, the newspaper's power will shift from the impact of page one to providing the context and continuity for dialogues over time, providing those trusted points of affinity where people can listen and be heard. ■

Pretrial Publicity Rulings Lack Empirical Evidence

"When we speculate that pretrial publicity prejudices jurors, where is the empirical evidence that most judges and lawyers would expect to undergird an assumption? The scattering of research I've found on that subject is more superficial in its form and suspect in its sponsorship than judges I know would admit into evidence in their courts. Yet the judiciary has embraced the unproven assumption and forced the law to follow lockstep behind its precedents.

"Am I unsound for believing the original point of the jury system was to assure an accused a verdict from peers who probably knew him in the village, knew his accuser, knew his record, knew the village gossip about the case, and thus came into the jury box pretty well aware of the rumors and the hearsay, and far from being prejudiced by the publicity, were entrusted because of it to be sure the prosecutor proved his own charges on the basis of evidence convincingly established? When and why did we depart from the original belief that a jury of one's peers who know most will serve best?

"I have served on enough criminal court juries to have convinced myself that the informed juror is likely to be the fair juror, and that most jurors are exacting in their insistence on a verdict based solely on the evidence presented in court. Yet the judiciary's untested assumption to the contrary prevails. So the lawyers calculatedly berate the press in search of advantage for their clients. The public understandably comes to believe the press's coverage of a case gets in the way of a fair jury trial. How much worse it would be to leave trials unwatched. But as I said, this is an element of the press's unpopularity that we can't do much about, except to ask you to think about it.". ■

—Eugene Patterson, Editor Emeritus, St. Petersburg Times, on receiving the Elijah Parish Lovejoy Award at Colby College on November 19, 1994

The Faithful and the Media

As a follow-up on its "God in the Newsroom" issue (Summer 1993), Nieman Reports asked some of the clergy what their followers would like from the press. Here is their response.

First, Learn Some Basics About Religion

By Jessica Crist

It's not that I am completely ignorant about sports. Name a team and I'll probably be able to tell you whether it is football or baseball. There are even a couple of sports heroes on my list of people I admire. But, even though I am not interested in sports, I deal with a lot of people who are inspired by sports to heights of passion I cannot begin to comprehend. So I have learned not to schedule church meetings on Superbowl Sunday or workshops during high school basketball tournaments.

It has been my experience that most journalists feel about religion the way I feel about sports—cocktail party conversant, aware in a simplistic way of the big news, but really not very interested personally. From my experience I know that journalists regularly mishandle, misreport and misunderstand religious news and events on the local, national and international scene, largely because they do not have an adequate understanding of the religious issues and motivations underlying many of the world's current events.

The issue here is not so much comprehending a particular doctrine or practice of a specific religious tradition. (Although if journalists had known that Jimmy Carter's "lusting in his heart" was a quote from Jesus they might have treated his whole presidency differently.) Rather, the issue is one of an overall failure to see religious faith as a legitimate motivation for newsworthy activities, whether in the Middle East or the Blackfeet Reservation.

Following are points for journalists to consider in their efforts to understand and interpret the people who create and consume the news.

1. **Religion is not a neurosis**: For vast numbers of the world's peoples, religion is a major motivating factor in their private and public lives. Not only Jim Jones and the Dalai Lama, but millions of people from every political, cultural and ethnic background, are guided in what they do by religious convictions. To be sure, some religiously motivated people are neurotics, psychotics, psychopaths and worse. Most are not (at least not in any greater number than the general public). More to the point, to take the position that religion is *de facto* a neurosis, albeit one indulged in by many fine people, is to dismiss the importance of what is of primary significance to a majority of people. To report people's actions while misinterpreting their motives is to lose an opportunity to seek truth. To downgrade religion to a neurosis, character defect or superstition is to pollute the reporting process with bad judgment and to miss the point.

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2. All religions are not the same: Religion means different things to different people. Religions develop out of a culture and are lived out in a culture. Some religious traditions stress the communal, others emphasize individual response. Religious traditions and faith groups are at various points on a continuum from apologist for the status quo to critic of culture. H. Richard Niebuhr's five paradigms on how religion and culture relate (Christ Against Culture; The Christ of Culture; Christ Above Culture; Christ and Culture in Paradox; Christ the Transformer of Culture) in his "Christ and Culture" (Harper and Row, 1951) can be adapted usefully to other religious groups. Much of American journalism operates out of a dualistic world view, which works well, at least superficially, in covering the two-party political system. But life is more complex than point—counterpoint. Religion is more complex than point—counterpoint. Understanding where a particular manifestation of a faith tradition stands in relation to culture, what its history is, whether it is more individualistically or communally oriented, whether it values action or contemplation—these are essential in understanding why people do what they do.

3. All religions have some things in common: While there are some philosophies and movements that deviate from the norm, the world's great religions all have some identifiable things in common. First, while not all religions talk about God or a god, they do have a belief in the transcendent, the holy, that which goes beyond the ordinary and the rational. Second, the world's religions all involve some sort of gathering. Some stress the importance of the physical gathering of the community of the faithful. Others emphasize the importance of the connectedness in spirit. Third, all religions make a claim on the adherent that differentiates religion from philosophy. Religion makes claims on both the internal life of the believer and the external life. Religion affects not only action, but motive. The 1960's FOG BOM (Fatherhood of God, Brotherhood of Man) assessment of religious unity does not stand up under scrutiny. It is important to dig deeper to understand what religious traditions have in common before dismissing their significant differences as "mere semantics." Stephen L. Carter, author of "The Culture of Disbelief," (Basicbooks, 1993) dedicates his book to his children: "Who should be able to live in a world that respects your choices, instead of tolerating them."

4. People respond differently to the same religion: Martin Luther King and Jerry Falwell were both Baptists. And there are many Baptists who would identify with neither the theology nor the politics of either. Extremists on an issue like abortion or the death penalty make more interesting coverage than centrists. But it is a misrepresentation of religion in general and religious traditions in specific to imply that an extremist position on say, creationism, represents the bulk of the people in that tradition.

I would not make a good sports writer, nor a commentator on anything even remotely related to sports, because I lack both interest and knowledge. But by far the biggest reason that I could not report sports-motivated events with integrity is that I simply cannot comprehend why people could possibly care so much. I implore you journalists to do better with your blind spots than I do with mine. Muster all your professionalism, set aside your prejudices, don't be afraid. Reserve skepticism, if you must, for your personal life.

In our action-oriented society, politics and sports provide a distracting facade that hides who we really are and why we think and feel and act as we do. Tapping into religion as being, and not simply as doing, will help journalists understand the mood of the public, and, ultimately, do a better job at reporting the doing. ■

Muslims Ask for Fair Treatment

By Imam Talal Eid

Help me solve this puzzle: if a non-Muslim commits a crime, he or she alone is held responsible in the media for the act. If, however, a Muslim commits the same crime, every man, woman and child who follows that religion will stand guilty in newspapers and on radio and television.

Why should that injustice exist in this country, devoted, as its Constitution proclaims, to equal rights for all, regardless of religious creed?

We all know that at the time of the Oklahoma City bombing some elements of the press leaped to the conclusion that Islamic terrorists committed that horrible act. Weeks passed before Muslims were absolved of any role in the tragedy.

We all know, too, that when Frederick Griffin and Paul Hall killed doctors and John Salvi killed two receptionists to protest abortion each was held individually responsible, not all Christians, nor even all fundamentalist Christians, despite the fact that all of them are devoted Christians.

Christianity was never blamed for the political conflict in Northern Ireland. The media was careful to single out separate Christian groups for the terrorist acts, not Protestants nor Catholics in general. In the former Yugoslavia Orthodox Christianity was not blamed for the murder, torture and rape indi-

continued on next page

vidual followers committed on Bosnian Muslims.

The same can be said about Jews. The Israeli doctor who massacred more than 60 Muslims worshipping in a mosque during the holy month of Ramadan, cannot be equated with all Jews, with Judaism nor with the state of Israel, even though he was a devoted Jew.

True, some terrorists, whatever their faith, invoke the name of a religion. True, some who use violence describe themselves as fundamentalists. But there are various kinds of fundamentalists, and I am certain that if I read the Bible I would conclude that "Christian" terrorists are Christians in name only, that their action runs counter to the basic teachings of their religion.

I am surprised and disturbed to find a reputable newspaper like The Boston Globe continually misinforming—whether deliberately or not—the general public by publishing articles that give negative impressions about Islam in general and depict the typical Muslim as a "fanatic" without realizing the simple fact that within the domain of Islam many fanatics do operate, that many of the individuals who are responsible for violent and destructive crimes in the name of Islam are in fact acting completely outside the fold of religion. One week after the bombing in Oklahoma City President Clinton addressed the nation, describing the perpetrators as "un-American," even though the suspects were American citizens. Of course, since Americans do not murder children, kill innocents and damage government property, no matter how justified they feel. Sincere Muslims also neither spread mischief nor kill or terrorize innocent people.

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The answer, then, is for the media to do basic research to learn the true nature of Islam. Unfortunately, sound background material is seldom found in the American media.

For example, the word "jihad" is commonly translated into English as "Holy War" and for a long time has been linked with terrorism, fundamentalism, hijacking and taking of innocent people as hostages. It was Christianity, however, that first used the term "Holy War." Islam has never allowed its followers to be involved in a Holy War.

No doubt jihad has been misinterpreted and abused by some political groups who are far removed from Islam but call themselves—or others call them—Muslim groups. In fact, there is no room in Islam for hostage-taking or for terrorism. Islam cannot be understood from the actions, reactions or the political behavior of Muslims.

In its true meaning, jihad is important to Muslims. It means endeavor, strain, exertion, effort, diligence, fighting to defend one's life, land and religion, fighting to free people from injustice. Thus if the United States were threatened with an invasion, American Muslims would respond by declaring a state of jihad, an indication of their willingness to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their country.

In its wider meaning, jihad involves hard work to achieve the best in every field of life, to serve and help people, to study hard, to work honestly, to pray for peace. Once, when a Muslim army had returned from battle, the Prophet Mohammed said, "You have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad." Asked what the greater jihad was, the prophet said, "It is the jihad against one's own desires and lusts."

Here is a brief review of other fundamentals that reporters and editors should learn:

- One should properly speak of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition, for Islam shares with other Abrahamic religions their sacred history, basic ethical teachings in the Ten Commandments and, above all, belief in One God.

- The Qur'an (also spelled Koran) is the Word of God revealed through the archangel Gabriel to Mohammed during the 23 years of his prophetic mission. It is the guide par excellence for Muslim life and the source of all Islamic doctrines and ethics.

- People of all races and colors come from one origin, implying that all people are equal.

- Islam invites all mankind to live together as a family of God, every member a shepherd or keeper unto every other and be accountable for its welfare.

- The word Islam, derived from the Arabic root that means "peace," means, in the religious sense submission to the will of God and obedience to His law.

- The Five Pillars of Islam are:

1. Shahada, the Declaration of Faith—there is no god but God, the One and the Creator, and Mohammed is the servant, the prophet and the messenger of God.
2. Salat—the obligatory worship prayers performed five times a day and directed toward the Holy City of Makkah in Saudi Arabia.

3. Zakat—annual almsgiving of 2 1/2 percent of a Muslim's possessions distributed among the poor and other rightful beneficiaries mentioned in the Qur'an.
4. Sawm—dawn-to-dusk fasting from food and liquids during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar.
5. Hajj—the once in a lifetime obligation to make the pilgrimage to Makkah for those who are physically and financially able to afford it.

- The Qur'an acknowledges Moses as the messenger of Judaism who received the Torah as the Word of God. Muslims, like Jews, stress the Oneness of God.

- The Qur'an acknowledges Jesus as the messenger of Christianity who received the Gospel as the Word of God. Muslims hold Jesus in deep love and respect. The Qur'an confirms the miraculous birth of Jesus of a virgin mother, the pure Mary, through the same power that brought Adam into being without a father. Islam encourages the Muslims to establish friendly and peaceful relations with Christians and Jews. The Muslims are instructed by the Qur'an to speak, dialogue and argue with them in a fruitful way. ■

Muslims and America

The Muslim thinks that everything that people do in the West is related to their religion in the same way that everything he was doing back in the Islamic world was related to his religion. Even if he didn't do it, it was related to his religion. He cannot understand that there are many people here for whom the basis of their action, the criteria which determine the value of their action, the morality or lack thereof, in fact, has very little to do with the religion even if they hold on to a religion. Many of them do not hold on to that. He cannot understand that. That's very difficult for a Muslim to understand, the category of a secular mind.—*Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Muslim theologian and Professor of Theology at George Washington University, in interview on National Public Radio, December 13, 1993.*

Judaism: 4,000 Years of Media Attention

By Yosef Wosk

In responding to the principal question for this report of whether the media provide the information that members of the Jewish religious community want to receive, I must preface my remarks with two important observations.

The first is that Judaism, in its fullness, cannot be considered as only a religion. It encompasses a series of sometimes distinct—but more often integrated—religious, political and cultural components.

Although Judaism has existed in one form or another for almost four millennia, the question of "who is a Jew" is one that continues to be defined both within rabbinic circles as well as in the Israeli courts. However, since classical definitions of a Jew involve both religious as well as national implications, I would find it somewhat confining and historically inaccurate not to include media coverage of the state of Israel when reflecting upon coverage of the religion *per se*.

As a corollary to the first point it must be stressed that, especially in the modern world, we cannot expect one authoritative answer to questions such as "what does Judaism think about topic X?" An accurate report would include tens, if not hundreds, of opinions reflecting the various denominations as well as cultural and political permutations that affect Jewish communities throughout the world. The "faithful" live in many worlds. Judaism—permeated by the effects of adapting to hundreds of cultures encountered throughout its diasporic wanderings—is represented by an astonishing cultural diversity. While Judaism may advocate monotheism, it certainly is not monolithic.

Some Jewish religious communities impose a veritable ban upon the secular media, including television, film, radio and almost all outside written publications. At the other end of the spectrum you will find secular Jews who possess no direct knowledge of the sacred texts but who quote the newly omnipresent media with biblical certitude and talmudic acumen. They, too, still include themselves within some definition of loyalty and identity with Jewish history and continuity. Their attendance at gatherings of the Workman's Circle, Jewish Community Centers or service organizations such as B'nai B'rith or Hadassah, still constitutes a type of congregation or a gathering of the faithful. Indeed, the traditional Hebrew phrase for a synagogue is not a "Temple," nor is it a "House of Prayer," but rather a *Beit Kenneset,* a

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"House of Gathering." Neither God nor prayer nor the commandments are mentioned, just the gathering of community. It seems that community concerns are as important as God's concerns. True spiritual maturity is achieved when the two coalesce.

I urge the reader to keep the above definition of community in mind when considering whether the media reflects the world in which the faithful live. It is my intention here to cast a wide net that includes all expressions of Jews gathering as congregations or even as individuals. The Talmud reminds us that all Jews are responsible for each other. Although some Jewish denominations would exclude others on matters of theology, authenticity or practice, most of us appreciate the differences that have arisen among us. From the earliest days of our tribal tradition we have learned to accommodate multiple opinions. To be a successful personality or nation these days it seems that one must not only be a healthy schizophrenic but also must embrace the challenges—including the agonies and ecstasies, confusions and certitudes—of a carefully orchestrated polyphrenia. Even if various components of the Jewish community cannot appreciate our essential commonality, we can approbate the opinions of those non-Jewish observers, ranging from Judeophiles to anti-Semites, peering in through that proverbial glass darkly. They, at least, see us as one religion and as one people. As do the media, for better or for worse, all too often.

Issues Of Interest

When considering the question of whether or not the print and broadcast media provide the information that the Jewish communities may want to receive I would have to respond "yes" and "no." "Yes" in that the media occasionally report on items of particular interest to us such as our history, holidays, Israel and some communal news. Those articles or interviews are usually taken from syndicated columns or news services, with some local reportage and occasional in-depth reportage. "No" in that it does not report on the daily affairs of our community; nor does it go into any great depth or sensitivity in understanding issues close to our hearts.

As for the observant Jewish communities, we do not look to the media in general for issues that concern the devout; they do not speak, nor can they nor should they, for us. Sometimes, in our opinion, the media over-reports with perceived bias; at other times the opposite is true and we are only offered superficial tidbits or even an ignoring of stories with relevant Jewish points of interest. Most Jews do not expect the media to provide the particular Judaic-oriented information that the community wants to receive. If we want specific information about the Jewish community or Israel, then we can subscribe to some of the many niche publications dedicated to those interests. Many of us are satisfied with a minimum of coverage of Jewish-related subjects, personalities and news and do not want any more of what are often considered our private affairs aired in public.

In the midst of all this discussion of over- and undercooked stories let me share with you my genuine surprise whenever I chance upon a story with Jewish content in the secular press. "Why do they mention us?" I ask myself as adrenaline quickly grips my body and attunes my mind. "Why are they so interested in our affairs, our opinions, accomplishments and transgressions?" The amount of attention that the media do give us seems out of all proportion to our relatively small numbers. Is it because the Jewish people are not seen just for who they are but also for what they represent? Are we also considered an ancient archetype or historic relic that has exotically survived and lived to share the earth with modern humankind? Are we a theological conundrum to the majority Christian population which, when reading another article about those curious Jews, is reminded about some restless aspect of their own spiritual journey?

A Related Issue of Concern

I should also point out that issues of interest to us are not necessarily solely nor overtly identified by Jewish content. The Torah reminds us to actively pursue righteousness and justice. When any story, anywhere in the world, reports such acts of kindness and justice or the perversion of such issues, we find that of particular interest. The concerns of the world are our concerns; we are, by and large, an involved and proactive people. If, after struggling to ensure our own chances of survival, we still have time left for an "international Jewish conspiracy" it is just this: we are generally empathetic to a fault to the suffering and hopes of others. If the media reported nothing about Jews and Judaism but was filled with stories of heroic seeking after righteousness and justice, that would be enough.

Our Sensitivity To Every Perceived Criticism

When the erstwhile secular media—and certainly the politically or religiously sponsored media—criticize Israel they usually insist that they are only reporting factual news about a secular state, and are not in any way disparaging Judaism. The reaction in the various Jewish communities, however, is usually of a knee-jerk variety. We feel threatened and, more often than not, interpret the criticism as a subtle form of anti-Semitic diatribe. While the ability to accept legitimate criticism is a sign of emotional and spiritual maturity, our initial reaction to perceived destructive criticism is born of centuries of unfortunate experience in the face of every variety of persecution imaginable. Many of us are survivors or children of survivors; all are grandchildren of survivors or at least related to survivors of mass killings and/or political persecution in one area of the world or another.

For us, the question as to the quality and quantity, form and content of media reportage is not just a theoretical nor pedantic question. It is, in very real terms, a matter of life and death, or at least something that affects the quality of our everyday lives in the countries of our sojourn.

We remain among the smallest of nations and religions. Over the millennia we have undergone media scrutiny in all its forms, whether oral, carved in stone, impressed into clay, painted on papyrus, enscribed upon parchment, sped through the presses or instantly broadcast through a plethora of electronic media. Countless cultures and passing civilizations have engaged in reporting upon this somewhat enigmatic people in their midst. Such an extended historical experience has equipped us with a broad perspective on current media reportage. On one hand we tend to respect the power of the word and care about the opinions of others. On the other hand, however, we maintain an attitude of detached recognition that assigns greater power and longevity to the Word than to the word.

Is The Media Kosher?

That *kosher*—a term usually confined to describing permitted and forbidden foods—could be applied to the media is an intriguing idea. What combination of signs and criteria could be applied to the media that would make it a welcome guest at one's table? It seems that the body of the media, i.e. the hardware or delivery system of choice, is not the issue but rather the content of the report. Numerous biblical and rabbinic directives offer clear guidelines as to what is permitted to enter not only one's mouth but also one's eyes and ears, as well as one's heart. To fully explore this issue would require an extended study, but it could be stated rather simply now that while some issues would be considered kosher (learning, kindness, justice), others would be forbidden (certain explicit advertisements, gossip, inciting to hate or violence). Still other issues would have to be considered according to the circumstances.

As pointed out above, the wide spectrum of Jewish communities ensures a great diversity of opinions. In general, most components of the extended Jewish communities view the media as an organ of the secular society and respect both its possibilities and limitations as such. Except for some of the most ultaorthodox communities, the secular society is not necessarily perceived as inimical to Judaism. We should not be too quick to disparage those particular orthodox communities that effectively ban almost the entire secular media and replace it with their own publications and broadcasts. They, as anyone, have the right to decide what to read, view or hear. In many ways they provide us with a viable model of spiritual discipline. For them, the boundaries of what is media *kosher* and what is media *treif* has simply been extended.

Conversely, it should be noted that a mirror image of the ultraorthodox exists in the secular media who, not content with the separation of church and state, champion the non-religious, nonspiritual aspect of their lives with a passionate fervor themselves. Feeling threatened by the extradimensionality that characterizes the religious personality, the secularist will often react with unexamined biases equal to the ones they imagine or perceive in the "faithful." Such a reporter, media organization or government will often color the commentary, and certainly the headline or photograph, with a bemused touch of the perverse, of the antiquated, exotic, quaint or absurd when reporting about an aspect of any particular religion.

Traditional vs. Secular

While the vast majority of reporters pride themselves on thoughtful objectivity and trained writing technique, they regard their work as wordsmithing, that is the skillful arrangement and use of words to achieve a particular effect. What they do not recognize is the depth, power or significance that the word possesses in traditional religious communities. The Torah, as well as the sacred texts of numerous other spiritual traditions, describes words as the agents of Creation: "...And God said: 'Let there be Light, and there was Light.' An appropriate word can give life; it can also take it away.

Whereas to the sensitive religious traditionalist the Word is jealously guarded, the modern secular media uses words in a much more fleeting manner. With the technological ease with which we gather and dispose of words today, they have become devalued. No longer are they held to be sacred, but rather profane; no longer are they rare, but rather common. They are seldom preserved, but often disposed at day's end to make room for tomorrow's newspaper or next week's magazine. Electronic media has proven to be even more evanescent: the moment of transmittal it is flung into a simultaneous rhythm reverberating between being and not-being.

In most cases and for a variety of reasons the popular media, with few exceptions, addresses the lowest common denominator. It strives to be a politically acceptable, homogenized, pasteurized and neatly packaged product. The secular media reflects its own agenda and not the particular *weltanschauung* inhabited by the religionists of any specific persuasion. In a very real sense, the secular media not only does not do a very good job of reporting on religious issues but it even ends up competing with the traditional religions by establishing itself as a representative of Modern Reality.

In the mainstream of daily life the secular media has become the dominant source of news and information, therefore giving it an edge in interpreting the vicissitudes of life and lending it a form of competing theology. Every reportage is also an interpretation; every interpretation is an expression of subjective belief. A reporter, therefore, whose words and images are widely broadcast to be witnessed in a trance of epiphanic wonder by millions of viewers, is given a platform equivalent to Moses, or even God, on Sinai.

The secularized media tends to equalize all values and to report on a veritable smorgasbord of topics, so that the greatest number of potential customers will be attracted to the resultant product. When one subscribes to a particular medium, it indicates that a choice has been made, a contract has been signed and another convert has been initiated. We all have our gods, our

reference points of belief. The tragedy is that each speaks of a different discourse; the irony is how similar they all seem to be. Once upon a time that Great Tower in the Ancient East offered a universal hope crowned with eternal possibilities. Not since Babel, however, has that never-forgotten promise been revived. And if it were, what then? Would we look to the Tower for our one source of media or would we, even then, long with a new-found nostalgia for the days when we each possessed our own language and spoke in our own voice?

I will not belabor this point any further, although much more reflection about the relative weight of the word needs to be understood. What is important to grasp at this point, however, is that the modern media *by its very nature* is somewhat threatening to the traditional religious community. Ultimately, however, the Jewish community will not be adversely affected by the imposition of any new media upon its ancient offerings. We have learned the lesson of the iconoclasts well: break the idols even if they are of your own making. Although we continue to respect our oral tradition as well as the sacred aesthetics of the inked quill upon prepared parchment, we have learned not to idolize any particular delivery system. The Torah will continue to be written in its prescribed manner, but we also embrace the satellite and the computer. In many ways we have come to appreciate the evolution of media as a reflection of the incarnate Mind and Spirit upon their paths of return to Universal Consciousness. ■

Delete 'Fundamentalist'

By Will D. Campbell

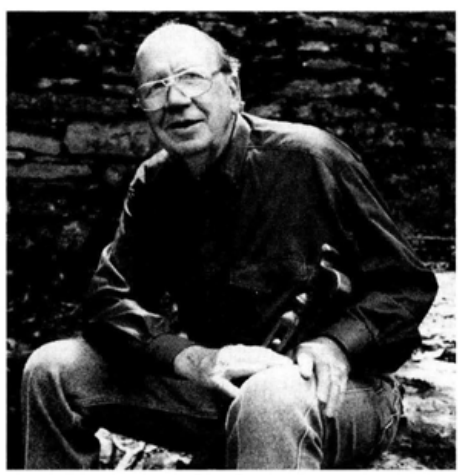
It is my belief that too much attention is given to irrelevant news *items*, and not enough to religious *stories*. It's the nuances that are missing, the ironies and intricacies of a happening that should make a news item worth reporting. Going behind the news is not only good journalism, it is the decent thing to do. Examples:

NEWS ITEM: Today President George Bush addressed 30,000 Southern Baptists at their annual convention.

THE STORY: In the 16th Century the progenitors of the Baptist movement in the Low Countries and throughout most of Europe would not have met in annual convention because they were hunted down like rabbits by armed men on horseback. No civil magistrate would have been allowed to attend or join their meetings. That persecuted minority—the left wing of the Protestant Reformation they were called—would not participate in war, vehemently opposed the death penalty, would not serve on juries and would not baptize their infants because they said it was a way the king kept track of his vassals. For those crimes they were tied on ladders and pushed in burning brush heaps, placed in pokes and drowned in Lake Zurich or the Amstel River. They often had their tongues screwed to the roofs of their mouths (for the most part by other Protestants) to prevent them from proclaiming their faith on the way to the scaffold. But the Commander-in-Chief of the world's most powerful military complex speaks to the nation's largest Protestant denomination and talks of more prisons, executions and destruction to a throng of their cheering progeny, flanked by armed guards, and, although their founders were the first to espouse strict separation of church and state, his backdrop is a wall-size national banner. The vocation of a journalist is to interpret and enlighten. The frenzied conventions applauding George Bush, Dan Quayle and Oliver North should have had it reported of them that their forebears were anarchists. Christian anarchists, however, not political anarchists. There is a vast difference between the two.

NEWS ITEM: The fundamentalist, religious right has taken over the Republican Party apparatus in several states.

THE STORY: The New, or Religious Right is not a variation of Protestant fundamentalism and never will be. The fundamentalist movement was a respectable and responsible Bible-based and religious movement, not a political one. In fact, its earliest detractors saw it as dangerous precisely because it eschewed political involvement. What is now known as the Religious Right grew out of the national campaign of 1968,



Will Campbell is a graduate of the Yale Divinity School. He has written 13 books. His "Brother to a Dragonfly," a Book-of-the Month Club selection, was reported by Time magazine as one of 10 books of the 1970's worthy of surviving. In addition to his writing career, Campbell was a soldier in World War II, a pastor and university chaplain, civil rights activist, itinerant social worker, farmer and tour-bus cook for his friend Waylon Jennings. He and his wife of 49 years have lived on a farm near Mt. Juliet, Tennessee since 1956.

when research was done by the National Republican Party to determine the biggest virgin block of non-voting citizens. Out of that research came the appeal to what was called "Middle America." Because most of what they labeled as "Middle America" consisted of white Protestants, generally pietistic, the stage was set for the Falwells, Robertsons, et al., with agendas of their own, to join forces with the political right with such illusive and elusive things as prayer in public schools as bait. Thus the Religious Right is not an offshoot of historic fundamentalism but rather a fundamentalist heresy. Religious writers should see its rank and file as victims, not victors, because their religious heritage has been used to deceive.

NEWS ITEM: The Reagan-Bush era joined forces with the Christian Right to oppose abortion.

THE STORY: While it is true that many conservative Christians, including this writer, oppose abortion as it is practiced in America, even a cursory examination of the facts will show that more abortions have been brought about by the policies of the political right than have been prevented by its rhetoric.

The list of quickie news *items* contrasted to potential and significant religious *stories* is long. I believe a disservice is done the Christian community by careless use of the term "fundamentalist." I am a conservative Christian because I furiously cling to many of the positions of my spiritual ancestors. The well known leaders of the so-called Christian Right are part of a modernist movement because they have abandoned most of those principles. They should not be reported as part of historic Protestant fundamentalism.

As for the competency of those reporting on religious matters, my only suggestion is that the word "fundamentalist" has been so abused that today it defies definition. Therefore, I recommend that it be stricken from the lexicon of all editors in favor of more accurate labels. ■

What Would Attract Pentecostals?

By Denver Stanford, Sr.

To address any trait among Pentecostals, it is necessary to remove radical extremes that fall under the classification of Pentecostal. To be Pentecostal is to be part of a movement, not necessarily a church or an organization. The number of people who are receiving their personal "Pentecostal experience" makes it the fastest-growing religious movement in the country.

Denver Stanford, Sr. grew up in an Apostolic Church built on a lot donated to the church by his grandmother. He was a youth leader in his home church for a short time and then went to Pentecostal Bible Institute in Tupelo, Miss. There he met the lady he would marry, Netta-Gay Sexton. Both their sons are ministers. Just days after their wedding, they moved to Coatesville, Pa. to start a home missions church. Since then he has evangelized across the country, from New Jersey to California and New Mexico and then Kansas. At age 40, he moved to Boston, where he is Senior Pastor of the United Pentecostal Church.

The broad base of those who are Pentecostal, yet not on the fringe of mainstream America, represents the large volume of all those whose faith includes being filled with the Holy Spirit in the same manner as the Apostles were filled. Speaking in tongues is always a part of this infilling experience.

We hold the opinion that the news media is inaccurate. Early in my ministry, I heard this accusation made by other ministers from time to time, but I was not convinced. Then, when we had an ex-nun speak to our congregation in Wichita, Kansas, I was very surprised at the inaccuracies in reporting this event. Again, when I was involved in a situation at a Massachusetts correction institution, even a face-to-face interview with a newspaper reporter was distorted.

Each year Pentecostals hold an international conference of ministers. When over 20,000 of us show up in a city, the media will usually cover the event. Invariably, we are amused at the way things are reported. No wonder we lack enthusiasm concerning the media. There must be "news" every day to meet deadlines and space requirements. When there are no breaking news events, other things are made into news. Thus we are fundamentally suspicious of all news.

There is also the suspicion that some important items are bumped for the exotic.

The coverage of the shootings at the Brookline, Mass., abortion clinics is a case in point. The story received front-page treatment nationally. Yet, even though the man arrested for the crime has been described as somewhat emotionally ill, the conclusion still seems to be that his acts were part of some great conspiracy of the "religious right."

Using that same logic, the killings at some of our churches, along with a number of burnings of our churches, would require the media to conclude that the "liberal left" is conspiring to destroy churches—not that there are some sick among us who don't respect anything.

However, recent articles on the widespread growth of the Pentecostals in The Boston Globe by Larry Tye were encouraging because of his fairness and accuracy.

Very probably, an appropriate term of "real" can apply to the information Pentecostals enjoy most. Thus, if there is no meaningful national news, we would rather that fact be mentioned and would appreciate interesting local news items.

When 50 percent of the media information has to do with Prince Charles and Princess Di, or O.J. Simpson, there is not much that relates to our lives that we can focus on. Mention Paul Harvey to most Pentecostals and they will immediately talk about subjects they have heard him address. He and The Readers Digest seem to address each person's interest. Their information always seems to have a bearing on what we consider important. They both are able to find a human experience that is common to all of us, e.g., fear of darkness, fear of being audited by the IRS or an event in a public school classroom reminding us of our youth.

Paul Harvey claims to have the largest list of couples married over 50 years and Readers Digest always has stories such as "My Most Unforgettable Person."

While President Bill Clinton's actions will eventually trickle down and influence a small part of our lives, we recognize that there are other less newsy events that will affect us soon and directly. Since we can influence most of these happenings, we consider them most important. Local festivals, craft sales, local church functions, accomplishments in the community by residents of the local town are some of the things of interest.

Sensational and extremely violent behavior will get our attention and keep it for a time. Even those things we criticize and express dissatisfaction with sometimes get our attention, but these are not the most sought after by us.

Two areas that hold considerably less of our attention when compared to non-Pentecostals are sports and the arts (movies, TV, theater, etc.). We are not prone to see many movies, watch TV, and/or attend theaters because of the excessive violence and explicit sexual content. Sports is considered a recreational activity to be indulged in as leisure. Our commitment to honest hard work and maturity, and our interpretation of that, cause us to view the fanatic worship of professional sports as an addiction.

Thus, things real to life, things that are close to home and family, and great human interest items would attract the attention of most Pentecostals. ■

Radio to TV, First Class

Not So Wild a Dream
Eric Sevareid
University of Missouri Press. 522 Pages. $24.95

Of all the journalists' autobiographies crowding library shelves, none holds its age better than "Not So Wild a Dream," the life of Eric Sevareid. This book will read as ancient history to contemporary readers—it was first published in 1946—but time cannot destroy the grace of Sevareid's writing or the content of a unique career in American journalism.

The story that begins in the flat prairie around Velva, North Dakota, continues half-way around the world to Europe where Sevareid became one of the premier radio newsmen. At a time when first-class radio journalism depends on the fate of embattled National Public Radio, it is wonderful to read again how good it was before and during World War II. Sevareid made the transition to television as the best commentator on the news that the industry has produced.■M.S.

About Journalism

American Magazine, The: Research Perspectives and Prospects. David Abrahamson, ed. Iowa State University Press. 288 Pages. pb. $24.95.

Bits, Bytes and Big Brother: Federal information Control in the Technological Age. Shannon E. Martin. Praeger. 184 Pages. $52.95.

Cyberspace and the Law: Your Rights and Duties in the On-Line World. Edward A. Cavazos and Gavino Morin. The MIT Press. 214 Pages. $19.95.

Early American Press, 1690-1783. William David Sloan and Julie Hedgepeth Williams. Greenwood Press. 248 Pages. $59.95.

Freedom's Champion: Elijah Lovejoy. Paul Simon. Southern Illinois University Press. 232 Pages. $24.95 hc. $14.95 pb.

Froth & Scum: Truth, Beauty, Goodness and the Ax Murder in America's First Mass Medium. Andie Tucher. University of North Carolina Press. 257 Pages. $34.95 hc. $13.95 pb.

Media and the Mayor's Race, The. Phyllis Kaniss. Indiana University Press. 395 Pages. $39.95 hc $16.95 pb.

Media Ethics: Cases & Moral Reasoning. 4th Ed. Clifford G. Christians, Mark Fackler and Kim Rotzoll. Longman. 350 Pages.

Media Literacy: Keys to Interpreting Media Messages. Art Silverblatt. Praeger. 352 Pages. $65 hc. $19.95 pb.

Power of News, The. Michael Schudson. Harvard University press. 255 pages. $29.95

Press Gang, The. Mark Wahlgren Summers. University of North Carolina Press. 405 Pages.

Race, Myth and the News. Christopoher P. Campbell. Sage Publications. 174 Pages. $38 hc. $18.95 pb.

Regulating Broadcast Programming. Thomas G. Krattenmaker and Lucas A. Powe, Jr. The MIT Press. 369 Pages. $30.

Spin Control: The White House Office of Communications and the Management of Presidential News. John Anthony Maltese. 323 Pages. $15.95 pb.

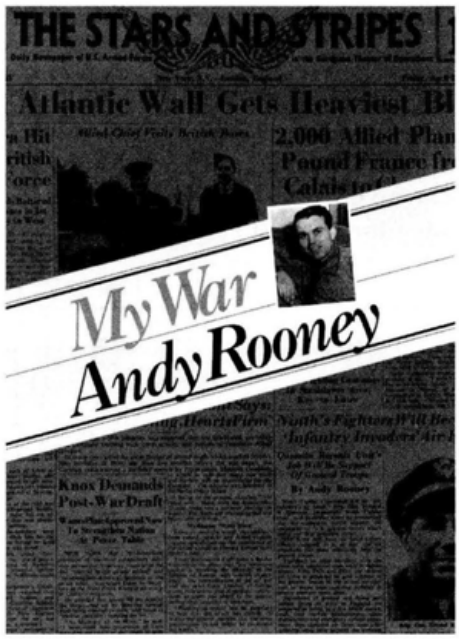
Books

Memoirs of Two War Correspondents

My War
Andy Rooney
Times Books.
300 Pages. $25.

The Mark, A War Correspondent's Memoir of Vietnam and Cambodia
Jacques Leslie
Four Walls Eight Windows Publishers.
296 Pages. $22.

By Jack Foisie



Here are two journalistic books with only one thing in common: they are highly-personalized accounts by men who, in their twenties, accidentally became war correspondents. Neither journal threatens to become a classic but each, in its way, contributes to the valor of one of the elements in war that is usually neglected.

Andy Rooney, now the droll commentator on CBS's "Sixty Minutes," was a GI staffer on the Army newspaper Stars and Stripes in London and Paris in World War II. He spent his first two years mainly reporting on the England-based American air forces and the almost daily assault of the heavy bombers on German-held Europe. After the Normandy landings he covered fighting on the ground as well, but of greater impact are his accounts of air missions (he went on several) and air crew survivor interviews.

I, too, was a Stars and Stripes staffer (but on the Algiers and Rome editions). In North Africa, Sicily and Italy the infantry fighting predominated in my coverage, and so did my admiration for the front-line grunt. Rooney's "My War" makes me aware, as never before, of the equal stress and courage of the air crews over Europe. He marshals statistics to show that, as a percentage, the killed-in-action rate of bomber crewmen was probably higher than in ground war.

Jacques Leslie reported in Vietnam, but not until 1972, when cease-fire negotiations with Hanoi were stumbling along in Paris. Leslie acknowledges arriving in Saigon being "the greenest reporter," with little knowledge of the military and none of combat. With the cease-fire signed in January, 1973, providing a bare face-saving for President Nixon's gradual disengagement of American troops, Jacques turned to reporting the corruption of the Saigon government and the lackluster effort of the Saigon military command to carry on the war, even with its wealth of American equipment.

With daring and determination, Leslie and an Agence France Presse colleague, Veronique Decoudu, were the first foreign correspondents to spend considerable time with the "enemy"—the so-called Viet Cong, the local peasant rebels supporting Hanoi. Leslie provides a graphic account of their overnight stay with black-pajamed villagers armed with AK-47s, the initial suspicion with which the two are viewed, and the gradual rapproachment with the local leader.

It is the highlight of "The Mark." The title stems from a correspondent friend's definition: the "mark" meant becoming addicted to the intrigue and hyperbole in the mix of information on how the war was going, and in Leslie's instance, his frantic need for the ap-

proval of his Los Angeles Times editors on his generally sour view of the American performance in Vietnam.

Leslie is a graceful, descriptive writer with enterprise. He ventures into such sensitive subjects as harsh prisoner treatment by the Saigon military and corrupt practices by both official Americans and Vietnamese. They are the strong sections. Unfortunately, Leslie does not show sensitive handling on all subjects; he writes devastating portraits of his parents. And his appraisal of the 500 American prisoners-of-war released from the "Hanoi Hilton" after the cease-fire is either misfired sarcasm or is cynical beyond comprehension. He writes: "They were said to have suffered horribly; to have been tortured, but so many of the stories I read about them confused Vietnamese torture with American culture shock....

"Anyway, weren't the POWs military men who accepted capture as a risk of their profession, weren't most of them caught bombing the north....They were the American fig leaf, obscuring our lack of purpose in Vietnam."

After such blistering prose, it is a pleasure to get back to reading Andy Rooney and "My War." He writes with the same relaxed style as he chats on "Sixty Minutes," full of anecdotes and humor interspersed with mildly caustic observations about the mishaps of war.

A draftee early in World War II, his college degree not withstanding, he found himself in an artillery outfit with the job of putting out the unit newspaper. He half-heartedly tried for officer's candidate training, was rejected for being undisciplined, and so applied to Stars and Stripes. It proved to be the start of his lifelong career as author, TV script writer, and good-natured philosopher. ■

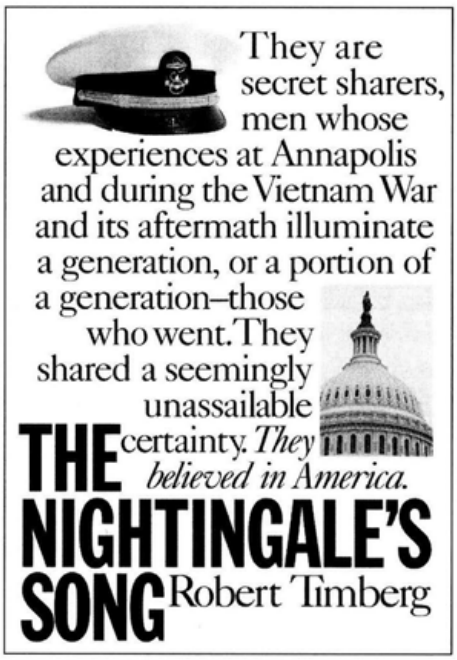
Jack Foisie, Nieman Fellow 1947, lives in retirement in Monmouth, Ore.

Five Key Players in the Reagan Era

The Nightingale's Song
Robert Timberg
Simon & Schuster. 543 Pages. $27.50.

BY PETER BRAESTRUP

Without Vietnam, there would have been no Iran-Contra. So says Robert Timberg, Deputy Washington Bureau Chief of The Baltimore Sun, Annapolis 1964, Nieman Fellow 1980, and former Marine platoon leader in Vietnam. He is a sharp reporter and a thoughtful writer. He brings to life Ollie North, Bud McFarland, John Poindexter, John McCain III, and James H. Webb—five important, ambitious players of the Reagan era, and shows how both their Annapolis training and the Vietnam experience affected their personal lives and their varied responses to political Washington.



In so doing, Timberg gives the reader remarkable insights into the Navy, Iran-Contra, the Reagan White House and those of Timberg's generation who served in Vietnam in what Reagan called a "noble cause." Few of today's journalists, academics, or politicians were among them.

According to Timberg, the nightingale has a template in its brain that contains all the notes for the music, but the bird cannot sing unless its song is first triggered by the song of another nightingale. The Nightingale's Song, as rendered by Ronald Reagan, did more than attempt to recast Vietnam in the popular mind. Reagan repeatedly portrayed servicemen not as people to be reviled or pitied, as they often were during the Vietnam years, but as men to whom the nation should be grateful, worthy of respect and admiration.

This election-year song, coming after the confusions of the 70's, had a special appeal to Timberg's protagonists, especially McFarland, North, and Poindexter. They were not nightingales, waiting to sing for the first time. But their vocal cords had been stunned into silence during the Vietnam era by bumbling political leadership and by the hostility heaped upon them by their own countrymen. Their pride and confidence were revived by Reagan. They were ready to do what the new commander in chief wanted done.

"The trouble was McFarlane, North and Poindexter confused the singer with the song," says Timberg. "The song was sweet. The singer, in many important ways, was a fraud."

A solid, competent Midwesterner, John Poindexter graduated first in his Annapolis class (1958), gained a Ph.D. in nuclear physics, performed superbly both at sea and in the Pentagon. He hoped someday to become Chief of Naval Operations, the Navy's top job.

But he ran aground in the intrigue-ridden Reagan White House, where, starting out as a staff aide, he wound up as the President's National Security Adviser. He had two fatal flaws: he abhorred the Washington political process and he trusted the good sense of his subordinates, including Marine Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North. The Iran-Contra scandal led him into a long nightmare: a conviction for lying to Congress and finally to vindication on appeal in 1991.

Poindexter's immediate predecessor in the NSC job was Robert McFarland (Annapolis '59), uptight, workaholic son of a Texas congressman, who found himself attracted to international policy—and hence not destined for stardom in the Marine Corps. After two Vietnam tours as an artilleryman, he became a White House Fellow, later worked with Henry Kissinger under Nixon and with Alexander Haig, Reagan's first secretary of state. He was heavily involved in U.S. Mideast policy, including the ill-fated Marine deployment to Beirut. He eventually became top NSC advisor, unduly awed by his superiors, unwilling to warn a passive president of trouble ahead. He quit the White House before the Iran-Contra scandal blossomed but allowed himself to get involved in it—and later attempted suicide.

McFarland's troubles stemmed in part from the activities of his NSC subordinate, Lieut. Colonel Oliver North, (Annapolis '68), a charismatic Marine, who, his peers said, was brave and aggressive in Vietnam, but highly manipulative and at least "10 percent bullshit." In effect, North was told to create and run his own CIA (with a ragtag collection of helpers) to keep the anti-Sandinista rebels going in the face of on-again, off-again Congressional strictures on aid. Money came from secret arms sales to Iran. The ironies of Iran-Contra Timberg lays out crisply and well. He attributes North's zeal in part to Vietnam: North was determined not to abandon the contras the way the United States had abandoned the South Vietnamese. Despite his unflattering account of North's character and career, Timberg also suggests that criticism in the media and elsewhere of the manic colonel as a Nazi and worse has been overblown.

Timberg's favorite among the five is clearly North's Annapolis classmate, Jim Webb, a stubborn, cool, outspoken Marine who never liked Ollie much, and never quite swooned over Reagan. Webb, a military brat, proved a natural leader in Vietnam combat, admired by his men, winning a Navy Cross and surviving severe wounds that eventually invalided him out of the Corps. While going through Georgetown Law School, derided by anti-war professors, Webb hammered out "Fields of Fire" (1978), widely recognized as among the best Vietnam novels; it established him as one of the genuine spokesmen for those who served. He outraged feminists and upset the Navy brass with a lengthy 1979 magazine piece deploring the softening effects of the admission of women to Annapolis: why should the taxpayers cough up $200,000 per midshipman for just another liberal arts graduate? He later modified his stand to say only that women should be barred from combat.

After playing a major role in the controversies over the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, Webb joined the Reagan Pentagon and became Secretary of the Navy in 1987. To his swearing in, he invited 23 members of his old platoon.He did not last long. He questioned the deployment of Navy ships on an ambiguous mission protecting tankers in the Persian Gulf and resisted Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci's demands to abandon the goal, set by Reagan, of a 600-ship Navy. He quit in 1988, dismaying some of his friends, and returned to writing and to making a movie of "Fields of Fire" (on location). He spoke out against President Bush's decision to go to war in the Gulf in 1990 (No More Vietnams), but once the battle began, he strongly supported the troops.

John McCain III, Annapolis '59, was captivated by Reagan's song. But more than the others, he put Vietnam behind him, using it occasionally, but moving beyond it as opportunity beckoned. Son and grandson of Navy admirals, McCain, a fun-loving fellow, graduated fifth from the bottom of his class. He was shot down over Hanoi in 1967. He mocked his captors, endured severe torture and deprivation for almost six years, refused a North Vietnamese offer of early release. His injuries precluded a post-Vietnam Navy career as a pilot; he wound up running successfully for the House, and then the Senate from Arizona, always with ferocious energy as if to make up for time lost. He was talked about as a Bush running mate but carelessness dimmed his star: he was tarred with the brush of the savings and loan banking scandal, although, Timberg says, he was by far the least culpable of the "Keating Five," the senators who to varying degrees sought to intervene with the bureaucracy on behalf of rogue banker Charles Keating. He survived, shaken but unscathed, and was easily reelected in 1992. He was a key supporter of President Clinton's move to reopen diplomatic relations with Vietnam this summer.

To his subjects, Timberg is often sympathetic, but always clear-eyed. He describes failure of nerve or judgment, marital breakdowns, broken friendships and other twists and turns of life. He is no great admirer of Ronald Reagan or the machinations of cabinet officers. And above all, he is unsympathetic to those Baby Boomers who self-righteously assailed North and McFarland or, on the Republican side, were anti-communist hawks, but "who (had) avoided military service by jiggering their college schedules, marital status, or health histories...."

He quotes one of Webb's friends: "There is a wall 10 miles high and 50 miles thick between those of us who went and those who didn't...." Timberg's book, in addition to its other virtues, should help others understand that wall. ■

Peter Braestrup, Nieman Fellow 1960, is author of "Big Story," a study of Vietnam news coverage recently reissued by Presidio Press.

In the Days When Unions Were News

The CIO, 1935-1955
Robert H. Zieger
University of North Carolina Press. 491 Pages. $39.95.

BY HENRY FLEISHER

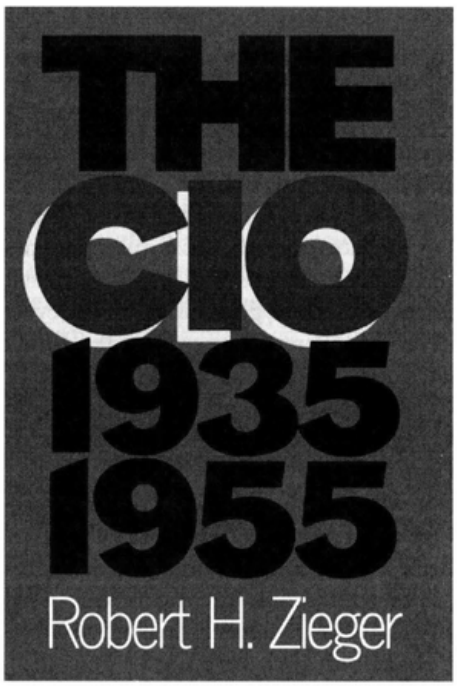
During the early stages of the 1995 campaign to elect a successor to Lane Kirkland as president of the AFL-CIO, an anonymous union source commented to The Washington Post: "At least, they're writing about labor again." For the past several years, labor reporting has been almost exclusively concerned with the nuts and bolts of day-to-day collective bargaining and strikes, with little depth and even less attention to union philosophies and outlook.

It was not always thus, as Prof. Robert H. Zieger of the University of Florida reminds us in a monumental, and readable, history of the remarkable 20-year career of the CIO, the Congress of Industrial Organizations. The CIO created news—often dramatic news—that was reported in detail and often with great perception by a large press corps. A few reporters continued on the beat through the leaner years after the 1955 AFL-CIO merger, including Harry Bernstein of The Los Angeles Times and Frank Swoboda of The Washington Post. Others moved on: David Brinkley moderated a weekly Sunday public-service labor-management radio discussion on NBC before becoming a TV superstar; Joe Loftus of The New York Times became a public relations aide to George Shultz at the Labor and Treasury Departments; Hobart Rowan of Newsweek became economics writer for The Washington Post—to name just three.

Professor Zieger's "The CIO, 1935-1955" recalls why this union organization, with a peak membership of about 5 million, attracted much public interest—some friendly, some hateful. Its leadership was dramatic: John L. Lewis, Philip Murray, and Walter Reuther all had an instinct for public relations. They also, in their individual ways, produced events and trends that not only left an impact on the American labor movement but also changed the nature of working relationships in the core industries of the American economy.

Zieger traces the CIO history from the day at the 1935 AFL convention when John L. Lewis, the spokesman for industrial unionism, swung his fist (or, as some versions claim, bumped his belly) at Bill Hutcheson of the Carpenters, the dean of craft unionism. Zieger notes the successes, after years of impotence, in organizing the big basic industries (and the less successful efforts in other sectors of the economy); the adaptation of the collective bargaining process to the needs of the country's mobilization for World War II and the Korean episode; the growth of labor political activity; and, inter alia, what Professor Zieger sees as the seepage of workers' power from the shop floor to the bureaucratic process of grievance handling, mediation and arbitration. He gives the CIO high marks for its help in defeating the Axis powers, in overcoming Stalinist influences in the labor movement, and taking important steps to fight discrimination against minority workers by management and, in some cases, the unions themselves.

"My own experience," writes Professor Zieger, "in political and labor organizing causes me to be impressed with their achievements rather than angry at their failures." And, he adds, "we could use a man like Walter Reuther again." Perhaps a revived labor movement, perceiving the threats to its achievements and existence that are voiced almost daily in Congress, will produce such a man or woman. Zieger's book on the CIO reminds us of the potential for achievement. He has written an important book. ■



Henry Fleisher joined the CIO staff in 1937 as an Assistant Editor of the CIO News, and was the CIO's Director of Publicity, 1951-1955.

South Africa: The Anecdotal Version

Tomorrow is Another Country
The Inside Story of South Africa's Road to Change
Allister Sparks
Hill and Wang. 254 Pages. $22.

By Rose Moss

In the last days of apartheid two prominent political opponents, one white, one black, accept a businessman's invitation to a fishing weekend in the country. They do not know they will meet each other there. On the Saturday, the host must take his daughter to the hospital, and the guests, left on their own, go fishing. Roelf Meyer, a National Party Deputy Minister, flings a trout hook into his finger. The wife of Cyril Ramaphosa, an African National Congress leader, tries for an hour to remove the barb. Eventually, Ramaphosa says, "Roelf, there's only one way to do this." He pours a glass of neat whisky for his colleague and prepares to wrench the hook out with pliers. "If you've never trusted an ANC person before, you'd better get ready to do so now." When he yanks the hook out, Meyer says, "Well, Cyril, don't say I didn't trust you."

Sparks opens his account of the death of the old South Africa and birth of the new with this anecdote about two men who became principal negotiators for their sides, and facing their mutual dependency together, helped the country avoid civil war. Later he gives another memorable episode, the dawn of Ramaphosa's forty-first birthday after an all night negotiation. Meyer proposed a toast and brought out a birthday cake. The band struck up, and the two swung onto the dance floor.

Focusing on such emblematic scenes, Sparks gives an anecdotal history of how people who had feared and hated each other learned respect and trust. Almost uniquely, he reports the friendships among people on opposing sides that transformed consciousness before official policies transformed the constitution. With an eye for the bloody and the funny, he renders the texture of the "gigantic and ongoing seminar" when people in South Africa learned to live with each other and found out, with surprise and pleasure, that they could. He was the first to tell the remarkable story of Mandela's invitations to tea with the presidents who kept him in prison, of drives through the countryside and of his eventual release. His account is voluminous, vivid and invaluable for the feel of events.

He does not give much space to the familiar history of apartheid's calamities, the Struggle, demographics, the price of gold or economic pressures created by civil unrest and international protests. He concentrates on the drama of rapprochement between Afrikaners and African National Congress members in the late 1980's and early 1990's.

He delivers on the promise to give the "inside story." If he was not present himself, he gives interviews by others who were—mainly politicians and other journalists. He quotes reports from courageous newspapers like The Weekly Mail and Vrye Weekblad that exposed scandals in the police and security forces, and flouted the government's attempts to censor them. They were heirs to a tradition of critical reporting that Sparks himself maintained as editor of The Daily Mail. He does not comment on the important role the opposition press played in South Africa's nation-wide seminar.

The strength of the book, eyewitness immediacy, comes with a complementary weakness. Sparks under-reports what he did not see. He passes over major leaders, does not interview people in business and gives little space to the churches. The cumulative effect of so many close-ups, especially of political celebrities, reinforcing the absence of analysis and history, suggests an odd incompleteness. We must take it on trust that Sparks or a friendly colleague were there when it mattered, and that the personal recollections of selected players give a sufficient sense of context. A few touches here and there betray an odd lack of awareness about where Sparks himself stands in the story he tells. One example: when he describes South Africa's Christmas-New Year summer holidays, he says, "...politicians and most everyone else besides, are usually at the beach or mountain resorts with their minds disengaged from anything more weighty than fishing or golf or organizing a family gathering." Everyone else besides? What country is this? Yesterday, the old South Africa, where "everyone" had servants?

Sparks asserts that South Africa plays a uniquely significant role because it is "a microcosm of the world, embodying all the global issues of white and black, of rich and poor, of developed and undeveloped peoples," and that "South Africa represents a laboratory test for a new global compromise between the North and the South...potentially the world's most challenging issue after the end of the Cold War," but he gives little attention to those who remain poor and without voice. He calls "the politics of desperation" the greatest danger to South Africa and the world, and cites scholars who warn that poor and impotent people may turn to political and religious fanaticism, terrorism and Chaosmacht—"the capacity to destabilize the entire globe with [the South's] instability," but he does not shape this book around that insight.

In this book, he celebrates the politics of reconciliation—and, given this period of extraordinary honeymoon in South Africa, it seems boorish to cavil at the joy and optimism of "Tomorrow is Another Country." ■

Rose Moss works as a freelance writer. She has published two novels, "The Terrorist/The Schoolmaster" and "The Family Reunion" and one nonfiction book, "Shouting at the Crocodile," prize-winning stories and articles.

Byte Dogs Man

being digital
Nicholas Negroponte
Alfred A. Knopf. 236 Pages. $23.

BY LEWIS C. CLAPP

"Computing is not about computers anymore. It is about living," says Nicholas Negroponte, head of the Media Lab at MIT, in his new popular book, "being digital." In his view, being digital is just about the best thing that can happen to anything or anybody. Negroponte contrasts how hard it is to transport things in the form of atoms, like bottles of Perrier drinking water shipped across the ocean, with the ease of sending information down a high-speed phone line, such as the contents of the Sunday New York Times.

"being digital" is about a future that Negroponte reveals somewhat slowly—one might be tempted to say bit by bit—looking first at the binary digit, then at its interface with the human, and finally at what digital life will be like in the "post-information age." The tomorrow he promises will be a place of collaboration and harmony between peoples in a world that transcends political boundaries. It is also, he concedes, a world with a risky potential for intellectual property abuse, the invasion of privacy, and the wholesale disenfranchisement of populations.

Negroponte grew up in fashionable diplomatic circles of Switzerland, New York and London. A brilliant student who suffered from dyslexia, he developed a distaste for reading but a love of numbers. He received both a Bachelors and a Masters degree in Architecture from MIT in 1966. In quick order, he became an instructor, an assistant professor and a full professor. He began to experiment with the relation between computers and architecture, then the connection between computers and all forms of information. In 1984 he became the founder and Director of the MIT Media Laboratory, a place with the mission to "study and experiment with all future forms of human communication." Negroponte struggled with funding until the late Jerome Weisner, past President of MIT and Science Advisor to President Kennedy, showed him how corporate sponsors could be persuaded to pay for the research in return for a first look at any promising results. Today over 60 of the world's leading technology and communications companies sponsor a $15 million annual research budget of the laboratory and its 100 research projects.

How the bits and bytes of information that represent news will reach their ultimate user is a major thread weaving through the tapestry of "being digital." The News in the Future project carries out studies with such intriguing names as Fishwrap and Doppelgänger.

Fishwrap is a customized news presentation. The user first fills out a questionnaire profiling news interests, which is stored in computer and can be updated. Each day the computer checks information from traditional news sources against the profile, keeping only those stories that match the user's interests. This "news" is then displayed in that user's personal paper. Rather than a reader having to hunt for items of interest by turning the pages, the information pursues the reader—bytes dog man.

In Doppelgänger the computer goes even further, building an information search module by observing the human at work, compiling facts about the user's normal schedule, what he or she does with idle time, and what the person likes to read. This information is used to anticipate and present only what the reader wants.

So what will the news in the future be like with Doppelgänger? Negroponte asks us to imagine a flexible, waterproof, lightweight, reusable display that is almost like paper, but which gets its information nightly from a telephone line or video cable. He asks us to imagine that little computer programs called "agents" will be brought into existence by Doppelgänger and then sent out across the Internet to search every news wire, newspaper, TV or radio broadcast solely to look for those items of new information that match with our personal interests. These digital agents, which will know our political orientations as well as our tastes in everything, from news stories to friends, will ensure that no editor need worry about challenging the reader with a photo or headline. As the Media Lab's news game studies suggest, the morning news will no longer be a matter of journalism but of entertainment.

Three years ago, Louis Rossetto and Jane Metcalfe approached Negroponte with their idea for a magazine aimed at the young multi-media computer user. When his wealthy friends turned the idea down Negroponte put up $75,000 of his own money and suggested that he write a monthly column. Wired became an instant hit, a must read not only for young computer professionals but also for executives in the electronic entertainment industry.

Through his 1,500-word column Negroponte speaks directly to this audience. Since his regular audience has already read his message, Negroponte may be saying to the rest of us, in "being digital," that he has told these things to the young people who will drive the future, and now he's writing the book so the rest of us can get clued in.

It would be easy to dismiss his prophesies as the naive ramblings of a university professor, except for one thing. Negroponte's abiding faith in the youth who will be forging that future, has been proven correct in the past. These privileged young, brought up in a world that is interconnected and information rich, already know that it is just as easy to play with a person on the other side of the world as it is to see the kid next door. Theirs is a special world where nothing seems impossible and almost every problem can be solved, at least virtually. Perhaps they will have the courage and daring to forge that future that Negroponte sketches for us. As he says, "The control bits of that digital future are more than ever before in the hands of the young." Can we too believe that beyond all the hype, there could be that much hope? ■

Lewis C. Clapp, who studied physics and computer science at MIT, is Technology Advisor to the Nieman Foundation.

Twice Around the World in Search Of Central Bankers

The Confidence Game
How Unelected Central Bankers are Governing the Changed Global Economy
Steven Solomon
Simon and Schuster. 606 Pages. $30.

By Paul Lewis

Central Bankers, once famed for their discreet near invisibility, are starting to get noticed.

Paul Volcker of Federal Reserve fame and the Bank of Japan's Tokyo Gyohten have already published an account of their stewardship of the international monetary system in "Changing Fortunes: World Money and the Threat to American Leadership."

This year saw the first American edition o f "The Central Banks," a study by Marjorie Deans and Robert Pringle, two veteran British financial journalists.

Even more recently Eddie George, as the Bank of England's new governor democratically calls himself, sent a pang of fear through bankers everywhere by declining to reprieve the venerable house of Baring.

And who would ever have thought his deputy would be forced to resign because an American girl friend told Britain's tabloid press what happened on an office sofa within the hallowed halls of the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street herself?

Now comes "The Confidence Game: How Unelected Central Bankers are Governing the Changed Global Economy," a rambling, 600-pager by Steven Solomon, who says he twice circumnavigated the globe and interviewed over 250 bankers and officials in its preparation.

Inevitably, it goes over much of the same history discussed in the two books mentioned above. It seeks to build a picture of the growing power and influence central bankers are coming to wield in today's world of floating exchange rates and integrated capital markets where trillions of dollars of what he terms "stateless money" slosh around the globe at the touch of a computer key.

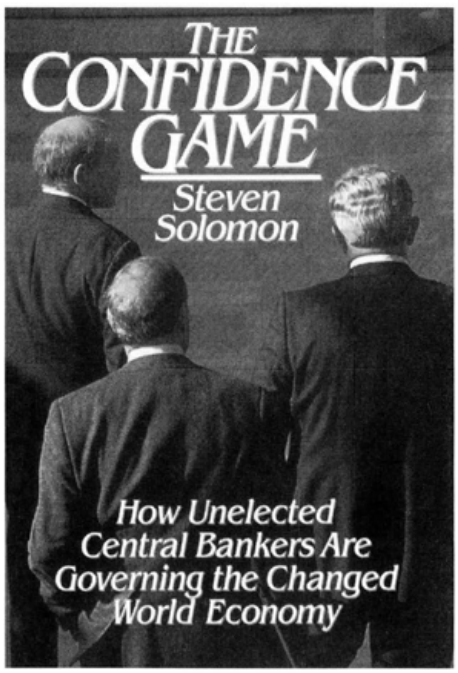
The book relates how the Federal Reserve and other major central banks contained the 1987 global stock market crash that followed Wall Street's Black Monday. It tells how Paul Volcker mastered American inflation without giving up the Fed's prized independence, something his predecessor, Arthur Burns, feared impossible.

It chronicles central bank cooperation in managing the Latin American debt crisis of the mid-1980's as well as their attempt to manage the dollar's exchange rate through the Plaza and Louvre agreements of 1985 and 1987.

And it breaks useful new ground with an account of the central bankers pioneering efforts at the secretive Bank for International Settlements in Basle to forge common prudential standards for protecting private banks in an age of hot money flows.

Unfortunately, the book closes before last December's financial debacle in Mexico, which provides the best illustration to date of its central thesis that abrupt flows of stateless money sparked by a sudden failure of confidence can inflict terrible punishment on the wealth and welfare of nations.

The book concludes with a look at the immensely important worldwide trend towards turning central banks into independent inflation-fighters and guardians of their currencies' value, walled-off from the short-term inflationary designs of elected politicians.



Mr. Solomon comes down firmly in favor of such independence but says the greatest economic challenge facing the post-Cold War world is to "civilize" stateless money, apparently a vague plea for some kind of more regimented monetary order than we have today. Without this, he warns, "the world's well being will be uncomfortably dependent upon the judgment of a tiny cadre of unelected and secretive central bankers."

This concluding populist trumpet blast seems out of place. Central banks are becoming more powerful largely because democratic governments almost everywhere are struggling to cut back bloated budget deficits, themselves the fruit of populist excess, and have

consequently lost the ability to manage their economies by varying tax and spending levels.

This leaves the control of interest rates and monetary policy, the central bank's traditional preserve, as the only instrument available for stimulating growth, restraining inflation and simultaneously ensuring that a country's exchange rate is not forced out of line by sudden stateless money flows.

What is so interesting about the growth of central bank independence is that elected politicians in a list of countries that now stretches from New Zealand through Latin America, across Western Europe and into the old Soviet empire, are choosing to entrust this task of preserving fundamental economic stability to "unelected and secretive central bankers," evidently not wanting such responsibility themselves. ■

Paul Lewis was New York Times Bureau Chief at the United Nations from 1987 to 1984. He now writes about international economic affairs.

The Pursuit of Excellence
John Hohenberg
University Press of Florida. 309 Pages. $39.95.

John Hohenberg made his journalistic debut at the age of 17 by capturing in person some of the inane remarks of President Warren G. Harding. Some 70 years later, Hohenberg is still writing and thinking about the trade. Author of 15 books, Hohenberg is remembered especially as the long-time administrator of the Pulitzer Prizes and professor of journalism at Columbia University.

Looking back 20 years after he left the Pulitzer post, Hohenberg suggests that prizes for outstanding public service should be given to leaders in other public service fields in addition to journalism. He also advocates adding representatives from beyond the Columbia establishment to the Pulitzer Prize Board. ■ M.S.

RESPONSE

In Praise of Shapiro

Chicago

To the Editor:
In his reminiscences of the deans of the Moscow press corps, Henry Shapiro and Ed Stevens, Murray Seeger pays full tribute to Henry's integrity but undervalues his immense journalistic contributions in the 40 years he spent in the Soviet Union. [Nieman Reports, Summer 1995] Murray quotes me as saying that "Henry couldn't write worth a damn," implying incorrectly that I share a low opinion of his overall journalism contribution.

In truth, Henry (Nieman Fellow 1955) was not a graceful writer, although his prose marched with a lead-footed authority that commanded respect if not pleasure. This was because he knew the Soviet Union and how it worked better than any other correspondent. By the time Murray met him, in the 1970's, he was past his prime and, as Murray notes, the Soviet Union was changing in ways that began to make Henry's style of reporting obsolete. But from the 1930's, when he arrived in Moscow, through the late 1960's, when I worked with him, he possessed skills—fluent Russian, an understanding of the Soviet system, historical perspective, personal experience with the darkest days of Stalinism, fine contacts at many levels of Russian life, great energy, unparalleled skills in the now vanished art of Kremlinology—that made him a sure guide to that mysterious city. Covering Moscow required abilities untaught in any J-school. Henry couldn't have covered a Chicago police beat, but his understanding of Soviet affairs earned him the respect and counsel of Soviet leaders like Nikita Khrushchev, American ambassadors like Llewellyn Thompson and Harvard savants like Merle Fainsod. Younger correspondents accused him of "timidity." Henry had lived and reported through the worst times of Stalin. He scorned the judgmental commentaries of newcomers and refused to join them in "fighting the Cold War." He felt instead that, by putting what he knew on paper, he was doing his job.

One more comment: Murray says that Henry "discouraged his young, talented associates from pursuing the major stories of the day, political dissidence and Jewish emigration." This isn't true. Henry never grasped the dissidents, most of them young, for the same reason that I (and I suspect Murray) avoid heavy metal concerts—not ideology nor cowardice but age. But he certainly encouraged me and other younger correspondents in the late 1960's to cover Sinyavsky, Daniel, Ginsburg, Litvinov and the others who ignited the dissident movement. Henry had his specialties—Kremlinology, Cold War diplomacy, literature. Other subjects—not only dissidence but, say, economics—baffled him. In a three-person bureau, with other correspondents eager to cover everything that came along, this was no problem.

For three decades and more, much of what America knew about Russia came from Henry. He knew a lot. He told it straight. He took chances. As Murray says, he "worked hard without compromising." Who could have done more?

Richard Longworth

Longworth, Senior Writer for The Chicago Tribune and a 1969 Nieman Fellow, was a Moscow correspondent for United Press International from 1965 to 1968.

The Old Journalism

We received the following response to a note in the spring issue in which the novelist A.B. Guthrie Jr. was described as a writer "who's book" gave Montanans a voice:

Baltimore

To the editor:
And in a journalism magazine! Whose in charge of the copy desk?

Peter A. Jay
(Nieman Fellow 1973)

We's—Ed.

Nieman Notes

Compiled by Lois Fiore

Re-entry Blues

By Larry Tye

It's a dirty little secret of the Nieman and other fellowship programs, the only down side in an otherwise spectacular year: it's called re-entry.

Which, as all alumnae/i know, is the hard reality that after spending a year being told and shown how special you are, you have to head back to work. Back to alarm clocks, frenetic newsrooms and demanding deadlines. Often facing supervisors and colleagues jealous of your year off or, far worse, who've forgotten you exist.

Here are some thoughts on how to make re-entry more tolerable:

Don't expect much consolation from colleagues who've done fellowships of their own. It's not that they don't care. It's that they suffered their own re-entry blues, and hearing about them will only heighten your anxiety. I made the mistake of asking, and got answers like, "It took me five years to settle in again" (that from someone who returned to a terrific new job as a columnist), and "I'm pretty sure I'll never get used to being back."

Don't expect much help from Bill Kovach or others at Lippmann House. They try, and he holds a useful seminar on re-entry at the end of the year, offering advice like "don't tell people all you've done on your year off even if they ask; they really don't want to hear how wonderful it was," and "don't wear to work your Harvard hat, Harvard shirt, or Harvard attitude."

The problem with that seminar is that you're still in Cambridge, and still a Nieman, and even though doubts may be setting in, you can't anticipate what your particular troubles will be. Bill can't, either. And you'll rightfully remain in denial till you really face being back.

So what can you do?

Start by thinking about what you'll do when you're back before you get back. I know, that could puncture your Harvard fantasy, but you don't have to obsess about your return, or spend all your time writing job letters and doing interviews. Just think about what you'd like to do when the reality of work life reasserts itself.

Some of that thinking should be short-term and practical. If you're an editor, think about new jobs, or ways to redefine your old one. Start talking to your bosses before you get back; you have much more leverage then, when you show that you care enough to call people back at work, when you still have the cache of being a Harvard fellow, and when they're still a bit unsure you'll actually come back.

One classmate of mine managed to totally reinvent herself without switching employers; she reminded her bosses how versatile she was, and they came up with a job that mixed high-tech education, nuts-and-bolts journalism and a big budget to hire a big staff. Another used skills fine-tuned at the Kennedy School to help define a job overseeing projects and the Sunday paper.

Reporters can get even more out of dreaming up stories or projects. You're at Harvard, after all, which thrives on ideas (or at least your editors think so). I E-mailed my paper story ideas all year. And I proposed a project based on a Divinity School class which would let me spend my first three months back traveling from South America to China to Russia, exploring a religion I'd never heard of before. It was okayed largely because of the credibility of my Harvard professor.

Long-term thinking is even more important, and more liberating.

There's no need to etch out what you'll do the rest of your life, of course. But you are somewhere around the middle of your career, and this is a good time to consider whether you want to spend the second half doing the same things you did the first. What about that book you dream about, or screenplay (just about everyone in my class had a fantasy like that)? If you're a print reporter maybe you'd like to try broadcast, if you're a commercial broadcaster what about public TV or radio, if you're an editor at a big paper what about running a small one, and if you're an environmental journalist what about trying an environmental group or maybe even running for office?

One of my fellow fellows went back to being an overseas reporter for his old paper, and loves his new life. Sev-

eral made moves to more responsible posts at new media operations, and are doing great, and one was adventurous enough to try being a house-husband, although that only lasted a few months, until a magazine enticed him back to foreign correspondency.

Others are having more trouble being back, and are contemplating moves.

Here are a few more things that might make re-entry a little easier:

• KEEP WORKING TO REINVENT YOURSELF: Even if you go back to a job very much like the one you left, your Nieman year will make you a very different person. So try hard to approach it from a new angle, putting to use all the new things you learned while you were away.

• KEEP YOUR DREAMS ALIVE: Every time you get frustrated with a daily deadline or an editor who's in your face, go home and write another page of that book proposal, or another few pages of the book.

• HOLD HANDS WITH OTHER NIEMANS: Every time I get sad or mad about my Nieman year being over I E-mail or call the only people who can truly relate: my Nieman buddies. Sharing our re-entry woes has helped immeasurably. Even better: have a reunion. I've visited classmates one-on-one in Hong Kong, Jerusalem and Boston. I've been to a terrific reunion in Phoenix, one that drew classmates from as far away as Tokyo and Monteveideo. And I've learned from trips to Hong Kong, Rio and other places that Niemans understand, and treat you as family, even if you weren't in their class and never met them before.

• CALL BILL: He's always busy, but never too busy to take a call from a desperate Nieman. He's also got more contacts than anyone in the journalism world, and more good advice on how to rescue or reinvent a career. He has to push you to go back to your original employer after your Nieman year, or else they'd never let anyone come. But once you're back, and things aren't working out, he'll be there for you. ■

Larry Tye, a 1994 Nieman, is a reporter for The Boston Globe.

1947

Frank Carey, reached by phone this summer, had just returned from playing tennis, a normal activity for someone on a warm day, but unusual if you're 87.

Carey is one of 135 members of the Arlington (Virginia) Seniors Tennis Group, which was organized more than 15 years ago. Members must be 55 or over and ante up 25 cents per session for buying tennis balls. When asked to expand, Carey, a former science writer for The Associated Press, sent an article that he wrote for The Washington Post in 1993, in which he said:

"Players of both sexes in our group substitute strategic placement and guile for the speed and power of youth. Their chief weapons are mile-high lobs and shameless drop shots. Newcomers are driven to despair.

"Unlike the professional athletes who advertise everything from shoes to breakfast food to cheeseburgers and get paid for it, our never-quits 'model' for free the wares and contraptions of the makers of bandages, straps and tapes, elastic supports and knee braces....

"This retired newsman once played doubles against and with Vice President Henry Wallace, who served in President Franklin Roosevelt's administration. I got a pretty good feature story out of that. I also received a gentle but no-nonsense lecture from the veep about my poaching at the net after I had blown a few as his partner.

"Even when one plays doubles, tennis is very much an individual game that requires concentration, hope and the ability to come from behind when the going gets tough. These are the same characteristics that are required to beat a disease or to learn to live with it.

"What, then, is the profile of our typical players? We are male and female; short and tall; many of us are married; many miss working, while others are happy to have it finished.

"Some struggle daily with 'off-court' problems and seek respite on the courts for an hour or two.

"One of us watches a loved one sink further and further into the dark place that Alzheimer's disease is digging for his wife. Another goes home after a workout to hug his bride of many years, long stricken with multiple sclerosis....

"In a recent study, a group of people who had reached the ripe old age of 100 were asked what they thought had given them the ability to live so long.

"Among the characteristics they mentioned were these three: a commitment to something; involvement with others so that isolation is avoided; remaining flexible and able to adapt as life changes around them.

"I think the key might be flexibility—the ability to take what life dishes out and adapt to the daily struggle, just as one works with the challenge of a new partner every time the tennis game begins."

Carey's wife of 54 years, Anna, died in October 1993. Carey has three daughters, eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Carey has had many health problems, including a recent ruptured aneurysm of his aorta, from which he nearly died.

1952

Robert S. Crandall, 80, died of prostate cancer on July 6 at Lee Memorial Hospital in Fort Myers, Florida. Crandall lived in Cape Coral.

Crandall was an editor at The New York Times from 1952 until his retirement in 1979. He was an Assistant News Editor, chief of the metropolitan copy desk, and an editor on the foreign desk. He was Travel Editor from 1977 until late 1978. Before joining The Times after his Nieman year, he spent 15 years as an editor at The New York Herald Tribune.

Crandall is survived by a brother, Philip, of Seattle, a daughter, Jeremy Blair Crandall of Swarthmore, Pa., and a grandson. A son, Todd, also from Cape Coral, died on July 2.

John M. Harrison writes from his home in Coralville, Iowa:

"Sorry I was unable to get to Cambridge for the reunion. Reports on it from friends are unanimously enthusi-

astic and I'd have enjoyed the program and the chance to visit with some friends I haven't seen for too long a time....

"I'm continuing to enjoy the life of retirement, despite Shirley's death just a year ago. About to embark on a piece of undetermined shape and content concerning the Whitechapel Club, which flourished in Chicago in the late 19th Century. Lots of interesting people—Finley Peter Dunne, George Ade, Eugene Field, Art Young, Brand Whitlock and many others. The Whitechapel Club was made up of a group of bohemian journalists who met regularly in a saloon in the LaSalle Hotel. The Club started in 1893 and continued for about 10 years.

"After that, I intend to get into the papers of Paul Corey, a proletarian novelist of the 30's and 40's, who grew up out in Southwest Iowa where my roots were also put down. The papers are now being catalogued at the University of Iowa libraries, which has been a great place for me to find interesting materials in the last 17 years."

1972

Syed Mozammel Huq died of a heart attack on April 23 at his home in Dhaka, Bangladesh. He was 59 years old.

Huq was Special Correspondent of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), covering national and international events, including the Istanbul Islamic foreign ministers conference and the tenure of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman. He began his career with The Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) in 1960, and was a stringer for some foreign media, including Time magazine.

Huq held an M.A. in International Relations from Dhaka University.

He leaves his wife, S. Mohsena Huq, and two sons. The older son recently graduated in Electrical Engineering from Austin University in Texas, the younger is studying for a B.A. in Business Administration at North South University.

1976

Ron Javers's book, "A Change of Mind: A Decade of School Reform," was published in April by the Rockefeller

Beijing Reunion

Nicholas Daniloff, 1974, Director of the Department of Journalism at Northeastern University in Boston, was in China in May. He writes:

"Just days before this year's anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen uprising, five Nieman Fellows, including dissident journalist **Dai Qing**, held a reunion in the Chinese capital and celebrated freedom of speech.

'We are not free to write what we think. Sanctions and detentions are a way of life here,' Dai Qing reminded us. 'China wants friendship with the United States, but it does not want freedom of the press.'

"Ms. Dai was arrested following the Tiananmen uprising when she publicly announced on Japanese television she was renouncing her membership in the Communist Party. She spent 10 months in jail. Authorities tried unsuccessfully to persuade her daughter to denounce her.

"The impromptu reunion topped off a dinner hosted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors May 21, 1995 at the China World Hotel. The Nieman Fellows were, besides Dai Qing, 1992, **Alvin Shuster**, former Foreign Editor of The Los Angeles Times, 1967, **Stan Tiner**, Editor of The Press (Mobile, Ala.) 1986, and **Yvonne van der Heijden**, correspondent of De Financieel Ekonomische, 1986.

"Although Ms. Dai is permitted to travel abroad—she visited New York in March 1995—she is not allowed to invite foreigners to her Beijing home. She told us she had been advised to leave the capital before the Tiananmen anniversary and to keep a low profile. Still, she relishes friendship with outsiders. 'The more people I know outside of China, the safer I feel.'

"Not allowed to engage in journalism, Dai Qing retains her interest in the environment and seeks wherever possible to raise social consciousness to environmental problems. She is currently trying to persuade Beijing television to use environmental topics in the English lessons it broadcasts.

"She has also founded a translation service called The Environmental Translation Center/Beijing (Fax: 86-1-3022910; Tel: 86-1-256-2658). She told us she is confident her telephone is tapped.

"Another sign that she is out of favor with the authorities: two Chinese editors invited to the ASNE dinner declined to sit at the same table as Dai Qing. They moved to another table and the dinner proceeded.

"At the end of the meal, the American editors presented her with an ASNE T-shirt. Before leaving the hotel, she slipped out of her Chinese dress and donned the shirt.

'I like the saying on the back,' she said. It read: 'Asia Tour, 1995.'" ■

Left to right: Nicholas Daniloff, Dai Qing, Yvonne van der Heijden, Alvin Shuster, Stan Tiner.

Foundation. Javers, a former Editor-in-Chief of Philadelphia and Town and Country magazines, now teaches journalism and communications at the S.I. Newhouse School at Syracuse University and consults for media companies. He lives in New York city with his wife, Eileen, and son Quinn, 17, a student at Manhattan's Trinity School. Their other son, Eamon, is a reporter for The Hill, the new weekly that covers Congress. Eileen is a Management Consultant and Director of Assessment and Training at Fox-Morris in New York.

1984

Bert Lindler writes to say that he and his wife, Kristi, "are returning to our adopted home state of Montana. I am taking a new job in Missoula. I will be a technical editor and group leader in charge of publications for the Forest Service's Missoula Technology and Development Center. Kristi will be a wildlife biologist for the State Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks."

1985

Peg Finucane, Viewpoints News Editor for Newsday, is waiting to see how she and her husband, Bob Heisler, will be affected by the downsizing of Newsday. The ultimate outcome of the downsizing of the Long Island paper and the killing of its sister publication, New York Newsday, will be known by the end of September. In the meantime, Finucane says, "we should be OK—unless we're not."

The target is to release some 200 from the editorial staff and 30 other supervisors from both papers. Finucane's 13-year seniority isn't a factor because she is a supervisor. Union members are protected by seniority, and some others are protected by personal contracts. Heisler, also a supervisor, is in charge of Newsday Books and other special print projects.

1986

Geneva Overholser became Ombudsman of The Washington Post in June. In a note to us she says she is "finding it challenging, rewarding and a lot more pleasurable than I'd have guessed....Returning to writing (i.e., to REAL journalism) has been the best (and the hardest) part. The more I hear from folks who care about newspapering, the better my work will be. So, Niemans, please weigh in."

1988

Eileen McNamara has returned to The Boston Globe as a columnist. McNamara, a reporter for The Globe for 16 years, left the paper last year. During those years she was a Metro, State House and Washington reporter, worked on special projects and wrote for The Globe magazine. She is the author of the book, "Breakdown: Sex, Suicide and the Harvard Psychiatrist."

1992

Martin Gehlen writes:

"If you don't know **Kofi Coomson**, Nieman colleague 1994, look in his newspaper, The Ghanaian Chronicle, as I did when I arrived in Ghana to attend the bishop's ordination of a friend of mine. Painting him as a journalist with 'a serious personality disorder' and 'a cognitive dissonance' as well as calling him 'a pathological liar,' the three column statement written by a high government official culminated in the outcry: 'Your infantile anarchic publication cannot stop the march of Ghana's progressive history!'

"Reading that, I called Kofi, found his humor intact and his mind in stable condition. Together with **Kabral Blay-Amihere**, the second Ghanaian Nieman (1991), we spent a wonderful evening in a restaurant in Accra. I learned a lot about Ghanaian politics, government corruption and the situation of the free press.

"Back home, I read 'Tears for a Continent,' Kabral's thoughtful and sensitive book about his experiences in the United States. I'm waiting now for both to visit me in return in Berlin."

1993

Olive Talley joined Prime Time Live as a reportorial producer in May. She writes:

"A friend of mine said he would know that I'd settled in to New York when I no longer began every telephone conversation with, 'You're not going to believe what happened today!'

"Yes, the move from Dallas to New York has been jolting. The trees, pond, and horse have been supplanted by concrete, cars and crazies. From farm to high-rise, from noisy newsroom to a secluded office, the transition from The Dallas Morning News to Prime Time Live is only beginning. Thanks to good advice from fellow classmates **Sam Hurst** and **Heidi Evans** (and, of course, Josh Getlin), I was prepared for some of the radical changes. Overall, I'm glad I'm here and I'm excited about the job. And, since the merger with Disney, I'm loading up on E-tickets. I just wish I was loaded up with stock. On the day of the merger someone put up a note that said: 'This place may be Mickey Mouse at times, but it's certainly not Goofy.' I'm ready for a wild ride. Please write, call, or E-mail: Talleyo@CCABC.com."

Barbara Gutierrez was promoted in April to Executive Editor of El Nuevo Herald in Miami, Florida. She had been Managing Editor since 1993.

1995

George Abraham announces that wife Pamela has given birth to a son, Daniel:

"Our son, the first child after four years of marriage, was born to us on May 24, 1995—the day the rest of the Niemans were enjoying their final dinner at Harvard's Faculty Club. His birth was truly serendipitous and hence Pam and I decided to have 'Nieman' as his middle name. It couldn't have been otherwise—the Nieman year gave us Daniel and a lot more, too. Bill [Kovach], in fact, has offered to consider his Nieman application in 2025. The foundation will, I'm sure, look at his request just the way they treated mine."

In August, Abraham was promoted to Special Correspondent for The Khaleej Times in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. His new assignment includes editing pieces and special stories. ■

End Note

Why I Didn't Quit The Los Angeles Times

By Frank del Olmo

That the 1994 elections were historic is old news. But for me, the realization that things would be very different after November, 1994, came even before the votes were cast. That is what led me to take an uncharacteristically public stance opposing an important editorial endorsement by the newspaper that has employed me for almost 25 years, The Los Angeles Times.

The endorsement was of California's Republican Gov. Pete Wilson, who was running for reelection. In preferring Wilson over state Treasurer Kathleen Brown, The Times endorsed a gubernatorial candidate for the first time in 22 years. As a member of the editorial board, I played a role in the deliberations that led to the decision.

I did not argue on Brown's behalf. I pushed for maintaining the policy of not endorsing. But Publisher Richard Schlosberg felt strongly that the newspaper had to choose between the two major candidates. Under normal circumstances, I would have quietly accepted that decision. But 1994 was not just another election year in California. And the Wilson endorsement was not, as my friend Shelby Coffey, The Times's Executive Editor, tried valiantly to convince me, just another endorsement.

The 1994 campaign did unprecedented harm to ethnic relations in my native state. Wilson and other politicians used the emotional issue of illegal immigration to promote their campaigns and in doing so sharply divided an electorate already frightened by a long California recession.

The focus of that divisive campaign was Proposition 187. Proposition 187 offered voters a simple "solution" to a complicated problem. The ballot initiative barred "apparent illegal aliens" from public health services. Their children—even those born in the United States—were also banned from public schools.

Wilson made 187 a cornerstone of his effort to win a second term. In and of itself, that was no great sin. The problem was that he used alarmist rhetoric and frightening TV commercials portraying illegal immigrants in ugly, simplistic and even nativist terms.

Note how I link the Wilson and 187 campaigns, although the two were separate entities. That was pivotal to my reasoning. For I was reacting to Wilson's campaign as a Mexican American. And in the eyes of the vast majority of California's 6.1 million Latinos, the Wilson campaign and the controversial initiative could not be separated. The Wilson campaign certainly made no effort to separate the two in the minds of voters.

Consider: leading up to the election, opinion polls showed 187 getting support even among a majority of Latino voters. That's because Latinos are not all that different from voters of other ethnic groups. They worry about the same issues that concern their non-Latino neighbors.

But that apparent consensus broke down in the ugly campaign waged on behalf of 187. When Latinos saw other Latinos being demonized in 30-second campaign commercials, Latino opinion swung against the initiative. The most dramatic illustrations of that shift were spontaneous Latino student demonstrations against 187 that broke out on high school and college campuses in the final weeks before the election. In the end, exit polls indicated that fewer than one in four Latino voters cast ballots in favor of 187.

Wilson was easily re-elected and 187 was adopted with more than 60 percent of the vote. Implementation of 187 has been hung up in the courts by various legal challenges, at least some of which may reach the U.S. Supreme Court. The Times, like most other California newspapers, opposed the initiative. Unfortunately, our editorials opposing 187 were largely forgotten by Latinos after the Wilson endorsement, precisely what I had feared would happen.

That is why I felt the need to make my dissent from the Wilson editorial public. I wanted current Times readers, and the young Latinos who will hopefully be among our future readers, to know that not all of us at The Times approved of Wilson or his campaign. A public dissent was also the strongest personal protest I could register against a needlessly ugly political campaign. I saw it as an act of conscience that would at least allow me to live with myself after the election.

To their credit, once Schlosberg and Coffey understood the depth of my feelings, they allowed me to publish my dissenting Op-Ed piece. I then took some time off to let my own passions cool and reflect on my future at The Times. During that period Coffey counseled me to get past any frustration I felt. It helped that on more than one occasion he cited advice and counsel he had received in the past from a close mutual friend whose memory we both revere, the late Nieman Curator Howard Simons. Those conversations with Coffey helped convince me that I still had positive contributions to make at The Times. More importantly, they convinced me that there were still positive things The Times could do to promote a healing process in the aftermath of the 187 campaign. That is why I am still here. ■

Frank del Olmo is assistant to Times Editor Shelby Coffey III and writes a regular opinion column.

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