

content

for Canadian journalists

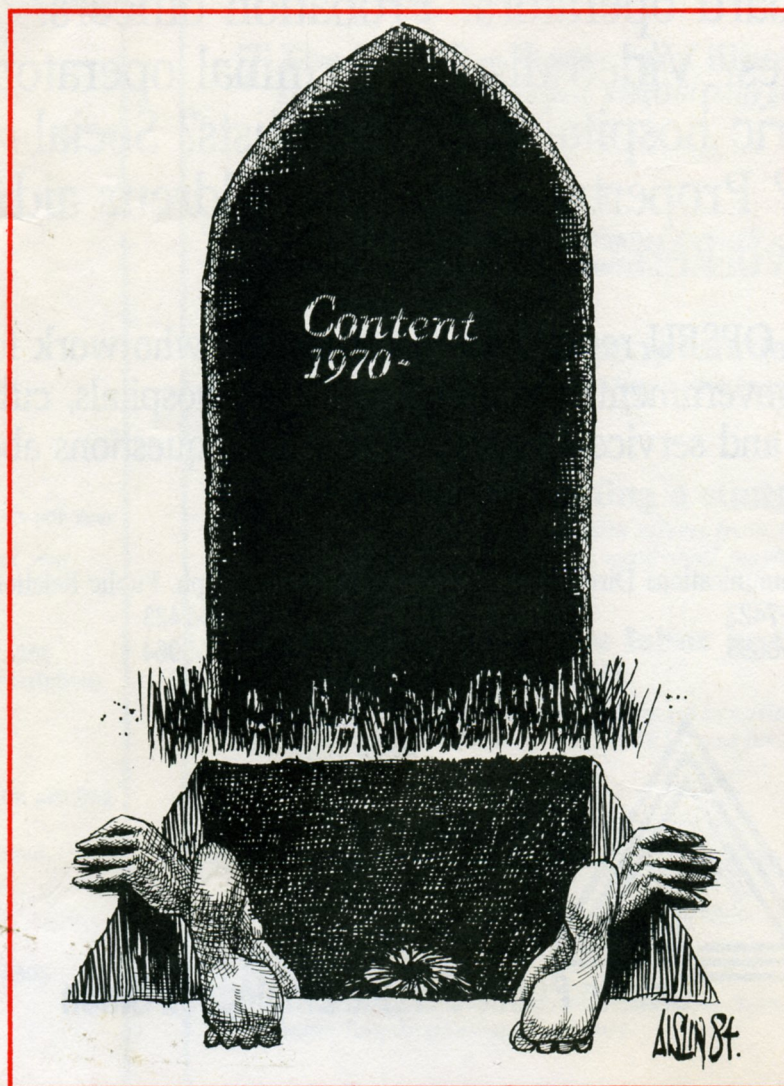
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May - June, 1984

The composite journalist

The cruise from a distance

Nobody's writing our obituary



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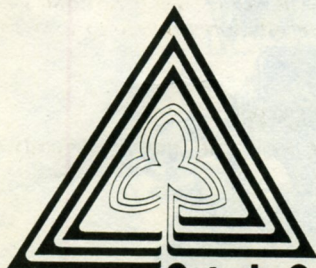
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Ontario Public Service Employees Union

content

for Canadian journalists

MAY-JUNE 1984

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friends of content

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No keeping down a good magazine

It is appropriate that Terry Mosher, perhaps better known by his professional cartooning name, Aislin, should have contributed the artwork for the cover of this issue of *content*. He supplied a caricature of Senator Keith Davey for the very first issue of the magazine back in October, 1970—and in some respects the publication before you now should be looked on as something of a rebirth or, at least, as a resurrection.

Most readers know by now that Toronto's Humber College, home to *content* for the past two years, has been forced to discontinue its direct financial support. An ad hoc group, Friends of Content, came together several months ago to seek means of ensuring the publication's continued operation. More, to find ways of making it healthier, more vigorous, and even more credible.

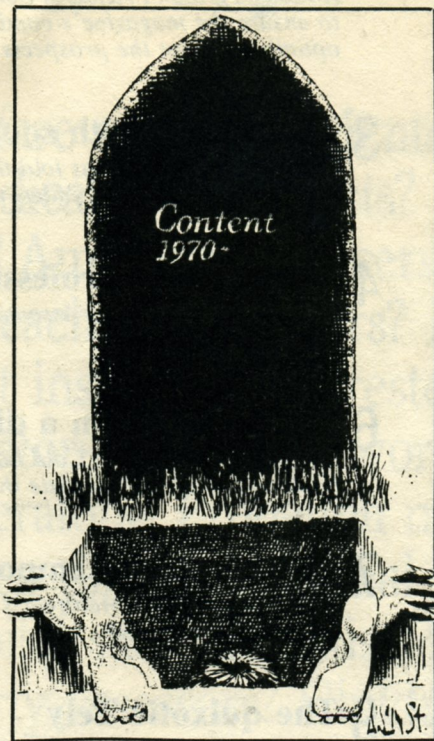
We believe the profession—and, by extension, the public—would be the poorer without this only truly national forum of news, review, analysis, and comment about journalism. I don't think that is too grand a statement; indeed, I am convinced there are many who agree that *content* has played a not insignificant part in journalism's development in Canada since the magazine was created nearly 14 years ago.

Humber College, where I am a member of the journalism faculty, for awhile will continue to provide lodging, as it were, and access to services, for which we are most grateful. We are grateful, in fact, that Humber College was there two years ago to assume responsibility for the magazine when Barrie Zwicker, its second editor and publisher, was overtaken by economic realities and had to suspend publication.

For me, there is more than just a sense of *deja vu*, having been founding editor of *content*. The challenges facing journalism are no less formidable today than then. To be sure, it is not hard to argue that the need for this sort of critical review of journalism may be greater now than in 1970.

In the first issue, the tiny group in Montreal that established the magazine said:

"A society marked by ac-



celerating change means that lives are becoming more complex, more confusing, and more interdependent. To the journalist falls the awesome task of helping people better understand the world they inhabit... It is our responsibility to sift through and disseminate the concise facts, so people can find the truth and make informed decisions based on knowledge they have acquired."

The group initially involved with *content* also believed that a prerequisite for journalists is to be aware of their own capabilities, what is expected of them, and what their role is in the community:

"Hence the need for self-criticism, conducted in a constructive fashion."

Much the same philosophy has held fast with the magazine since those early days. Too, writer June Callwood once wrote that *content* always was "intelligent and it unfailingly was honorable." The Friends of Content want it to remain so.

We can't do it alone. Nor can we keep the magazine alive by ourselves, no matter how much talent and time and

work are contributed without payment. (Management and production of the magazine will, effectively, be handled by the Friends of Content.)

Journalists, and others concerned about journalism in this country, must help—with subscriptions, with ideas. Without your direct support, in addition to advertising revenue which we must generate to become self-sufficient, *content* faces a dubious future. We hope others share our commitment.

Through the generosity of a non-journalist who cares about the quality of news he receives, short-term funding will help ensure publication of two issues.

That assistance, really, has provided breathing space for reorganization and restructuring, as well as a graphic redesign and first steps at broadening and strengthening the magazine's editorial content.

We intend to restore a regular, six-times-yearly publication frequency. And I'm prepared to say that what you'll get for \$15 in the coming year will be a real bargain; basically, it's a low-cost investment in a journalist's own professional development.

All those associated with *content*, whose names are listed on the masthead, are committed to producing a magazine that is invigorating, probing, and provocative. We will not be complacent, nor, we trust, smug. But we will be diligent in surveying the state of Canadian journalism—where it falters, of course, but also where it sometimes is exemplary.

We have a mission, yes: Simply put, it is to help enhance professional standards in journalism in this country. And we will try to achieve the goal, elusive as it may seem, by solid reporting on and assessment of the craft itself, as well as by discussion of conditions in the broader society which affect journalism.

Aislin's drawing shows us hanging on for dear life. Well, *we're* not about to write *content's* epitaph... and we're confident that no one else wants to, either.

There's far too much to be done.

Dick MacDonald
Editor
for Friends of Content

Journalism with soul

*The CIJ convention was told
the ideal reporter is confident, rough, defiant.
And sceptical, independent, sensitive*

by Dick MacDonald

With deference to other speakers at the convention of the Centre for Investigative Journalism, it was an elfin professor from Columbia who kept reminding us of our professional reason for being.

Whether conducting the workshop on interviewing techniques or as a member of a panel on ethics, or in the lobby, Melvin Mencher didn't let go. He spoke, consistently and passionately, of what he called the morality in journalism.

To illustrate, he drew on his own fine book, *News Reporting and Writing*, and quoted Canadian scholar Northrup Frye, whose words, he thought, could be discussing one aspect of journalistic morality.

Said Frye: "The persistence of keeping the mind in a state of disciplined sanity, the courage of facing results that may deny or contradict everything that one had hoped to achieve — these are obviously morality qualities, if the phrase means anything at all."

Mencher went further in his book but made allusions at the Ottawa conference to French journalist and author Albert Camus who, on accepting the 1957 Nobel Prize for literature, said: "Whatever our personal frailties may be, the nobility of our calling will always be rooted in two commitments difficult to observe: refusal to lie about what we know and resistance to oppression."

What Mencher was getting at was a composite description of the journalist with a soul — confident, rough, and defiant, but also sceptical, independent, and sensitive.

That's an unusual blend of traits, Mencher said, yet it is a combination which tends to produce the sort of substantive journalism required for today's society.

Mencher's message came as inspiration for the 80 students registered for the sixth CIJ convention, Feb. 24-26. For the nearly 300 professionals who attended, what

Mencher said — and others, too, to give them their due — perhaps arrested some flagging notions about the higher purposes to which journalists presumably aspire.

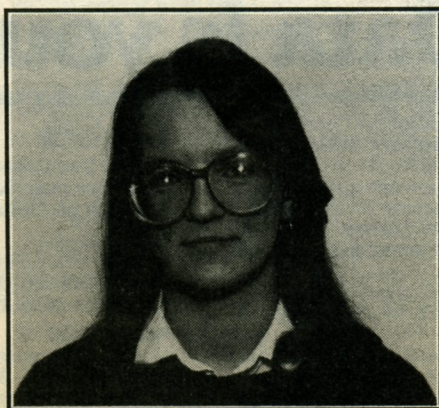
Mencher called journalists "truth-seekers" — an obvious but often forgotten description. The composite journalist Mencher talks about in his book also is part-artist, part-sentry, and part-town crier.

"An accomplished professional," Mencher writes, "the journalist is forever the student, reading, observing, always honing his or her talent and enlarging his or her mind."

Although he didn't use the exact words during the Ottawa meetings, Mencher could have quoted Wickham Steed, an editor of *The Times* of London, as he does in his book, saying journalism is "something more than a craft, something more than an industry, something between an art and a ministry.... Journalists proper are unofficial public servants whose purpose is to serve the community."

That belief did pervade most of the conference sessions and it clearly is a cornerstone, if unstated, of the Centre itself. It is the amalgam of ideas put forward at the yearly convention which gives the lie to those who suggest there is no need for a national organization of journalists, any kind of national association of journalists.

The sharing which goes on at such a



Wendy Jackson: CIJ president.

weekend gathering in itself justifies what the CIJ does. The pity is that most professionals in the craft don't take advantage of what the Centre has to offer.

And what it offers is considerable. Even while contending with periodic waves of poverty — seemingly an inevitable condition for many professional journalism endeavors in this country — the CIJ runs regional seminars and newsroom workshops, publishes its quarterly *Bulletin*, and maintains study committees on such issues as press freedom and libel.

But, back to the convention, and to the session on ethics, libel, and self-censorship of which Melvin Mencher was a part.

Another panelist was Jack London, dean of the University of Manitoba Law School, who played a major part in last autumn's Canadian Managing Editors Conference in Winnipeg. (The debate there on ethics has since been broadcast by CBC-TV and is available in edited videotape form from the Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association, 321 Bloor Street East, Toronto, Ont., M4W 1E7.)

Journalists, said London, must recognize that a fistful of issues need to be addressed. There are, he suggested, obligations of accuracy, of fairness and balance, and of knowing well the subjects written about.

The question is, London went on, how to ensure that these obligations are met. As did panelist Stuart Robertson, one of Canada's best known communications lawyers, London preferred voluntary commitment to principle over state-imposed standards.

The point is that if self-regulation doesn't work, the state may see itself compelled to intervene.

A similar philosophy ran through a CIJ session on press councils, which often are seen as "gutless," the term used by Judi McLeod, a Toronto *Sun* reporter who was disillusioned by the Ontario Press Council's lack of action on the Brampton *Times* firing of her and her editor husband, John.

(concluded on next page)

Suspected of professionalism

by Kevin Cox

Both Ken Strachan, editor of the Brantford *Expositor* and a member of the Ontario Press Council, and Gilles Paquin, a reporter for Montreal's *La Presse* and a member of the Quebec Press Council, tried, somewhat in vain, to point out that councils do exist to correct press misbehavior.

The cynical view prevailed in Ottawa — that press councils as now constituted in Canada function as lightning rods, attempting simply to defuse public antagonism toward the press. (Such complaints were discussed when Canadian press councils met in Toronto in May to talk about the concept of a national federation, a followup to last fall's meeting in Quebec City.)

Altogether in Ottawa, CIJ ran 36 workshops between Friday and Sunday afternoons — clearly an impossible load for even the most elastic of reporters. Some sessions, however, were recorded, including that of Serpico-Silkwood reporter David Burnham, of the *New York Times*. (Contact Conference Tape, 8 Woodburn Drive, Ottawa, Ont., K1B 3A7.)

Re-elected president of the Centre for Investigative Journalism was Wendy Jackson, on leave from the *Ottawa Citizen* and currently doing work for The Newspaper Guild. Chairman of the board of directors, a new position, is Charles Bury, editor of the *Sherbrooke Record*.

Robert Winters of the *Montreal Gazette* is treasurer and vice-presidents responsible for regional affairs are Michel Girard of *La Presse* and Cam Ford of CBC in Edmonton.

The Ontario Reporters Association was born painlessly over a few beers in a Simcoe-area farmhouse on a November night in 1980. But the four founding reporters were soon to feel the infant organization's growing pains because the noisy new-born has been less than welcome in some parts of the newspaper industry.

The ORA was attacked by lawyers for the major newspaper chains before the Kent Commission. Its members have been cross-examined by prospective employers and faced the ire of some newspaper executives who see any journalists' organization as a front for union organizing.

But the ORA has helped people find jobs and keep them. It has made its presence felt in Ottawa by lobbying for legislation to control the growth of newspaper monopolies. The membership has grown to 80 and it has staged three annual meetings with speakers ranging from media critics to computer experts.

As one of the founders I found out the hard way how welcome the organization was going to be in November, 1980, when I posted my first membership letter on the bulletin board of the *Hamilton Spectator* where I was a reporter. The notice, which had my phone number but no name on it, attracted a lot of interest around the

office. It had been up only four hours when the executive editor, Jake Doherty, wanted to see me.

He was more than amiable, explaining that as long as all we wanted to do was to hold seminars to educate journalists and to lobby with Ottawa, he supported the idea. But he was very concerned about one thing: "Are you guys a front for the Guild?"

Now we were at the heart of the matter. I made it clear we were not affiliated with the Newspaper Guild nor the ITU but that no doubt members of those unions would join our organization.

He seemed satisfied, but acknowledged that some of his colleagues at the *Spectator* were "a bit edgy" about the group and didn't like the fact that there was no name on the membership letter I'd posted. I told him I only wanted to talk to people who were genuinely interested and I wanted to do it at home, not on office time.

The *Spectator* management continued to be suspicious right up to the time that the Southern Newspaper Guild, with little help from our association, unionized the newsroom in the fall of 1982.

The paranoia in Steel City died down slowly, but ORA executive members elsewhere were called in to see their respective bosses to explain the group — even before we had done nothing

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The Ontario Reporters Association claims it's respectable, but not everyone has agreed

more than offer to act as a spokesman for news people in dailies and weeklies. Some weekly bosses didn't want a spokesman for their reporters, particularly one threatening to publicize the fact that they were paying as little as \$150 a week. Those weeklies ordered their reporters not to join the ORA.

The major moment in the limelight came when David Judd, John Miner and I appeared at the Kent Commission's hearing in London, Ont., in February, 1981. We tried to convince the commission that working conditions on many small-town Thomson newspapers were bad and getting worse. We also said the chain makes all its newspapers look the same and we trotted out a series of memos from Thomson head office to the Simcoe *Reformer* to prove our point. The directives had such revealing quotes as, "Advertisers are news too." And they contained references to rationing notebooks and restricting out-of-town coverage — apparently meaning anything more than five miles away.

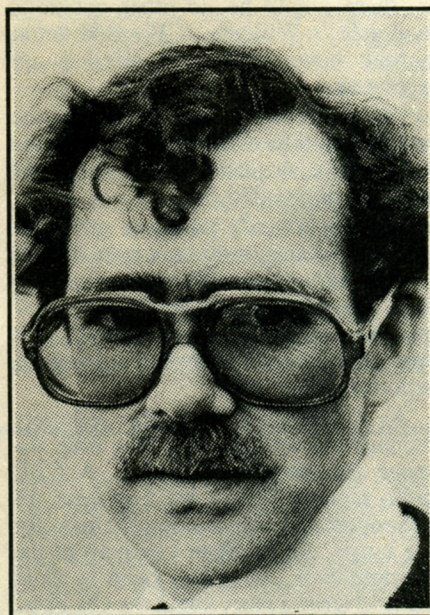
A high point of an afternoon of cross-examination, recriminations, and accusations was the testimony of Simcoe *Reformer* publisher John Cowlard. He was adamant that the head office memos were only "suggestions," although he couldn't think of any they hadn't followed. He admitted, too, that Thomson personnel came around regularly to check on the progress of their suggestions.

Asked about the quality of the Simcoe paper, Cowlard replied, "I was talking to the public relations men from Stelco and they thought we were doing a really good job." He seemed to have trouble understanding the loud laughter from a crowd of about 50, mostly journalists or journalism students.

We hoped that we had helped to move the commission to investigate working conditions in small towns and cities, and they did conduct several valuable studies in that area. However, the terms of reference did not include weeklies.

Immediately after the hearing, Cowlard and the Thomson brass tried to find the source of the leaked memos. They also conducted an internal investigation to find out how many

ORA members were in the *Reformer's* newsroom. They found members, but not the leak. The commission refused to turn over the memos to the company and would not even allow copies to be made of them. Presumably the Thomson officials hoped there might have been some clue on them to their source.



Kevin Cox: Faced doubters.

I know of no one who suffered any job discrimination or criticism as a result of our activities.

Three months later, in fact, I was hired by a Thomson paper, the *Globe and Mail*, and I have never been approached by management about my involvement with the association. I was even given an afternoon off to talk on the ORA's behalf to Jim Fleming, then minister responsible for the proposed newspaper legislation rising out of the commission findings. And the ORA's stance was directly opposed to that taken by the *Globe's* publisher.

Since the Kent Commission report we have made several submissions on the proposed act. We do not believe the issue can be ignored, nor that the legislation will die entirely. Our members have been polled on several occasions about the proposals. While the sample is small, it has shown broad support for limiting the growth of the chains, almost unanimous support for press

councils with more than just government and newspaper nominees, and a dislike of any form of government financial assistance to newspapers.

Our views have not pleased some publishers who saw the Kent Commission as a monster out to devour the industry. They see even the subsequent watered-down government proposals in the same light.

Three ORA members found out how much animosity there can be when they applied for jobs at the Owen Sound *Sun Times* in 1982. The editor then, Robert Hull, grilled them for over an hour about the organization and didn't seem to be worried about their qualifications or clippings. Why would they want to join an association when they were supposed to be competing against other reporters? How could they cover labor stories if they were members of this group? Why didn't we have a public list of our membership?

He left the three applicants stewing over this for a week. As ORA president, I sent off a letter suggesting he lay off our people. I explained we were not a union, we had not done anything that would hurt his newspaper, and that in fact we might be able to enhance it a little. Before he received the letter, he had hired one of the three people and he sent me a letter telling me I had totally misrepresented the interviews, that he had only been curious about the organization and wanted more information.

We do more than get into debates with newspaper management. We have had some positive achievements. David Judd, our executive director, has cooperated with the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs to set up seminars for journalists about municipal councils and how they work. We also send a newsletter of from eight to 10 pages every month to members with survey results and news and views about the profession from across the province.

We are hoping, among other things, to conduct a major study of working conditions across the province and to begin work on a code of ethics for journalists. All ideas and a \$15 cheque for membership can be forwarded to P.O. Box 353, Simcoe, Ont. N3Y 4L2.

Kevin Cox is a reporter with the *Globe and Mail* in Toronto.

The cruise from a distance

Military authorities in Cold Lake didn't exactly bend over backwards to accommodate the press for the first test of the cruise

by David Rooney

The first U.S. Air Force cruise missile test in Canadian airspace earlier this year was an exercise in frustration for reporters assigned to the event.

Although the March 6 test, which did not involve a launch of the unarmed weapon, was one of the most controversial events of the year, contact between reporters and military public affairs officers was haphazard at best.

Three Canadian and American information officers were bunkered down inside Canadian Forces Base Cold Lake while a small army of journalists cooled their heels in the nearby town of Grand Centre, 300 kilometres east of Edmonton. Security at the base was so tight that reporters were barred from visiting the so-called public affairs command centre managed by Maj. Dick Adam and Capt. Luigi Rossetto of the Canadian Forces with the assistance of Maj. Dave MacNamee of the U.S. Air Force.

They could be reached only by telephone — a prodigious feat since they were fielding about 200 calls a day from across Canada — and no provision had been made for holding a news conference once the test was completed. Adam and MacNamee did, eventually, hold two news conferences, but only because print reporters persisted. The first was held the day before the test, in a reporter's hotel room, and the second, hours after the test, in a hotel coffee shop.

But the worst screw-up involved pool coverage of the test's final act at the Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range, 40 kilometres north of the base. Pool arrangements had been hammered out during a March 2 meeting of Adam, Dave Reidie of the Edmonton *Journal*, Mike Williams of The Canadian Press, and representatives of United Press Canada and the Edmonton *Sun*.

They were eager to have a reporter on the range to watch the giant, missile-carrying B-52 thunder overhead at the end of its 2,500-kilometre run down the test corridor from the Beaufort Sea. But Adam, a career officer with 12 years'

experience dealing with the media, did not want to play ball.

"He told us the military would allow a still photographer and a TV cameraman onto the range and that would be it — there would be no other positions available," Williams, CP's Edmonton bureau news editor, recalled in an interview.

"He gave us two reasons: One was security and the other was space (on the helicopter). A position for a reporter was not negotiable."

Despite Adam's hard-line approach at that meeting, two days later he and other public affairs officers were telling Rob Sheppard of the *Globe and Mail* and me, of the Calgary *Herald*, that something could be worked out to get a reporter in the pool.

As it turned out, two other reporters managed to wangle their way onto the range for the noon fly-over. A CBC radio reporter talked his way onto the helicopter that was leaving the base for the range. So did Ron Lowman of the Toronto *Star*, who had been at Cold Lake to write a story about the CF-18 jet fighter. When he heard about the cruise test, he stayed behind to watch.

Sheppard learned about the CBC reporter's coup when he saw him interviewed on a 6 p.m. television news broadcast. He complained to Adam, who acknowledged that he had made a mistake. But he did not tell Sheppard about Lowman. That was left to Darcy Henton of the *Journal*, who had been told about Lowman by Jim Cochrane, the print media pool photographer from the *Journal*. Henton told Sheppard, CP reporter John Ward, and me while we were finishing dinner.

Naturally, we were furious — not with Lowman, because he had simply shown himself to be an enterprising reporter, but with Adam. I immediately telephoned Adam, who said he had not told Sheppard about Lowman earlier because he "didn't want to rub salt in his wounds." Adam also said the base commander, Col. Fred Southerland, had permitted Lowman onto the range as a favor. Sheppard telephoned Southerland, who denied it and said a public

affairs officer had granted Lowman the favor.

Not surprisingly, the *Globe*, CP, the *Journal*, and the *Herald* all lodged complaints — most of them in writing — with Adam and Brig.-Gen. J.Y. Durocher, the forces' director-general of information.

"Our major concern was that it appeared that our reporter, the *Herald* reporter, and the reporter from the *Globe and Mail* were not treated with the same even-handedness as this guy from the *Star* and one from the CBC," *Journal* editor Steve Hume said later.

"And anytime we feel the *Journal* is not being treated with the same respect as others we're going to complain."

Why were some reporters treated differently than others at Cold Lake?

"I suppose the biggest problem was that I had never worked with a pool situation before," Adam said in a later interview. "I didn't do enough asking around for help from people who had been in the business long enough to give me some guidance."

He said he recognized that he had made a mistake letting the CBC reporter get aboard, but called it an honest one prompted by concern for "the radio guy's problems of trying to get things across in that medium." Adam maintained that he had had no control over Lowman, who was being escorted around Cold Lake by Capt. Marty Tate, base information officer. Tate could not be reached for comment on his role in the affair.

"I can assure you we've learned quite a bit" from the events, Adam said. "My report to DGI reflects that. I pointed out areas where we should be better prepared in order to prevent similar problems from recurring. I think we're all aware now of the problems that we created inadvertently."

Adam acknowledged that the more than 25 reporters, photographers, and TV cameramen who descended on Grand Centre for the test had been barred from the base for security reasons.

"It was a question of control," he said. "We were afraid that if we gave

The bind of a temporary injunction

Student reporters at Montreal's McGill Daily got a crash course in law. It was an eye-opener

by Gord McIntosh

Three McGill University student journalists aren't so sure about Canada's boast of a free press after a three-month involuntary crash course in the law and press muzzling.

It all seemed so simple in early November when the three — Peter Kuitenbrouwer, Albert Nerenberg, and Karen Bastow, all 21 — decided to pick up on a story in the *Montreal Gazette* that involved two McGill professors turned-jet-set inventors who formed three companies operated in Canada, the United States, and Europe. The professors made the university a minority shareholder in a way that contravened its own charter; and then dragged the three students and a former McGill research associate into a con-

troversy that has meant jail for one of the players in this little comedy of errors.

Irving DeVoe and Bruce Holbein, both microbiology professors at McGill, came up with an invention, in the department, they said would remove different metals from liquids. The invention could be used to reduce corrosive elements in water-cooled reactors, prevent spoilage in pharmaceutical products, and recover precious metal from mine tailings.

The three students were prevented by a Quebec Superior Court judge from even saying that information, let alone writing it. But more on that later.

DeVoe and Holbein were more than a couple of guys building a better mousetrap. They borrowed \$40,000

from departmental funds and DeVoe's federal research grant that was awarded for academic research and used this money to finance on-campus research into the invention. DeVoe's wife was hired under her maiden name, Lynn Parker, to work on the project.

McGill received shares in two of the companies in return for allowing work to be done on campus. The university has been told by its own brokers those shares aren't worth much, even though the McGill charter says the university must receive 20 per cent of profits made from any enterprise conducted on campus.

The two inventors have teamed with Montreal stock promoter Irving Kott, who seems to think the invention could be worth millions.

(concluded on next page)

the media access to the base we would not be able to control their movements."

The Americans were less intractable. While Canadian reporters in Grand Centre were fuming about the security cordon thrown around the Cold Lake base, TV camera crews, reporters, and photographers were being allowed onto Grand Forks Air Force base in North Dakota to watch the 319th Bombardment Wing's B-52 being prepared for the test flight.

The Canadian authorities probably could have been equally accommodating. When Cochrane returned from the range, he told Henton and the other newspaper reporters in Grand Centre that enough bleachers had been erected on the range to seat everyone eager to watch the B-52 flyby. Adam was not responsible for the tight security arrangements, but he could have made it a lot easier for reporters to do their jobs.

"If we had a similar situation (in the future) then obviously what we'd have to do is set up an information centre off base," he said.

Other defence officials, who asked not to be identified, said an off-base media centre was not created because the forces feared some of the 100 pro-

testors who demonstrated in front of the base that day would attempt to disrupt news conferences and briefings. Had that happened, however, reporters probably would have ejected them immediately.

In any event, the military could have handled the whole affair in a more responsible and open manner. They had been aware for months of the intense interest in the cruise missile tests and should have known that the base would be besieged by the press.

Adam and other officers also should have understood the pool process. After all, the forces have used it to good effect on other occasions.

But the central problem illustrated by the foulups at Cold Lake is not one of logistics. It is a fundamental problem of misunderstanding between the media and the military brought about by mutual blindness to each other's needs and priorities.

Officers like Adam, who are charged with fielding reporters' enquiries, have little or no practical experience in news. Said Adam: "Generally speaking, the majority of full-time public affairs officers in the Canadian Forces come to public affairs from other branches at their own request. They have already

been in, say, the infantry, or tanks and jets."

They receive six months of familiarization and assessment at defence headquarters in Ottawa and then are sent to the U.S. for further training.

"We have a 10-week training program at the Joint U.S. Defence Information School at Fort Benjamin Harrison in Indiana," he said. "After that, it's a question of on-the-job training."

None of Canada's civilian or military colleges offers a course in information management which is designed for the forces' public affairs personnel, Adam said. However, they are encouraged to take courses in journalism offered by civilian institutions.

Conversely, few reporters in Canada cover the military exclusively. Most of those who do write frequently about defence are also responsible for other beats.

Regretably, until the mutual ignorance of the military and the media is corrected, problems such as those which arose at Cold Lake are very likely to reoccur.

David Rooney is a general assignment reporter with the Calgary Herald who frequently writes about defence issues.

University officials said last fall they saw nothing wrong. But a report commissioned by the university after a controversy erupted did, and said McGill failed to prevent a major conflict of interest.

Written by Montreal lawyer Alex Patterson, the report said the professors shouldn't have used the microbiology department's administrative assistant and administrative secretary to work on their enterprise. He also thought use of the grant money was something of a peccadillo.

Unlike most inventors, DeVoe and Holbein weren't keen on the world beating a path to their door. From the beginning, a veil of secrecy was thrown around the project with staff strictly forbidden to speak to anyone.

And, as the three student reporters would find out, DeVoe and Holbein would go to lengths to keep stories about them out of the *McGill Daily*. That's where the students' lesson in journalism and the law begins.

The three decided to dig up their own facts about the professors after reading the *Gazette's* piece and, being three innocents, they wanted to get both sides of the story.

So they wrote the professors a letter on the morning of Nov. 16, last year, telling them some of the stuff they had unearthed and asking for their comments. They asked the professors to call. The teachers didn't, but their lawyers did the same day.

The lawyers told the three students to be in court at 3 p.m. that day. After a two-hour wait at the courthouse, the students discovered the professors' lawyers were seeking a temporary injunction to prevent them from publishing anything that might give away secrets of the invention. The students assured the lawyers they didn't have the secret of the invention and wouldn't print it if they did.

They left the courthouse thinking they could go ahead with their investigations. In fact, they went back to the newspaper and filed a story about a chemist, Chan Fai Yam, who claimed it was he who developed the invention but was wrongfully left off the patent application. He is suing the professors for \$500,000.

The students found themselves called back to the courthouse the following morning; this time, they and Yam were hit with temporary injunctions by Judge Louis Tannenbaum. The injunctions were so encompassing and vague that the *Daily* even was prevented from reporting a

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description of the invention which already had appeared in the *Gazette*.

The students' lawyer told them to say nothing about the invention. Meantime, the injunction, a court document that anyone could read if they took the time to look it up, carried a full description.

The students tried to fight the injunction the following week, going to the courthouse this time without a lawyer. The injunction was sustained by the same judge, as it was Dec. 5. It was sustained again Dec. 15, this time by Judge Maurice Mercure.

While all this was going on, the *Gazette* was covering this new twist in the case, and repeating a description of the invention prominently in each story.

Pay attention: Today we learn Lesson No. 1 about temporary injunctions. The respondents, frequently noseey journalists, don't get to defend themselves when a temporary injunction is sought. The defence is made at a subsequent interlocutory hearing. In the case of the three students, the interlocutory hearing was scheduled for Jan. 23, effectively keeping the professors' names out of the campus paper for two months.

And now we learn about another important part of the legal system: Making deals.

By now, the students had another lawyer from Quebec Legal Aid who told them no judge would take them seriously. Also bugging the young journalists was the possibility they would be called to the witness stand and

asked to reveal sources, many of whom were microbiology department staffers fearing for their jobs.

The students wound up agreeing to a watered-down version of the injunction, which Kuitenbrouwer says they can live with; they simply can't get too technical about the invention.

For example: The students must still not report that peat moss is one of the possible catalysts used in the invention. The interlocutory injunction actually specifies that "peat moss" can't be mentioned by the respondents.

The students also were ordered to turn over all notes, documents, and other material dealing with the invention. Yet, in all the furor, nobody has come around to collect the stuff.

However, there is something the students evidently didn't learn from their two lawyers. Jeff Sack, general counsel for The Newspaper Guild, says the whole exercise may have been rendered obsolete by the freedom of expression section in the new Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

"Once it was easy to get a temporary injunction, but now you've got the Charter," says Sack. "It's a totally open field now. Didn't anyone tell them that?"

As for the others in this story, DeVoe and Holbein have taken unpaid leaves of absence from McGill. Yam went on to fight his own injunction battle at a 14-day trial in February, and lost. He was sent to jail for 14 days for contempt of court, but was released after five days on leave to appeal. The chemist still wants to claim the part of the patent he believes is rightfully his. But that would require him to tell what he knows about the invention and as long as the injunction sticks he can't do that.

The students learned something else about the law in the course of the events — the importance of having money for lawyers. The students couldn't help noticing how the *Gazette* was never hit with an injunction. The *Daily*, with assorted unrelated money problems, ran up a bill of \$2,000 in the DeVoe-Holbein affair.

And just in case the students missed something in their unexpected education about the law, they'll have the chance to do a little refresher course.

Recently the student paper at neighboring Concordia University ran a story about the school's athletic director and got hit with — you've guessed it — a temporary injunction. But more on that in a future issue.

Gord McIntosh is with The Canadian Press in Toronto.

The quixotic Tely

John Marshall's odyssey continues through a paper known for its banality, brilliance, and sometimes unbridled enthusiasm

by John Marshall

It's easy — too easy — to become misanthropic about the newspaper business; to become analytical, political, critical; to become obsessed and depressed with its failings and one's own frustrations working in it. I've been all of those, and will be again. Boringly so.

But there's another side. For with any kind of luck — an admittedly vital ingredient — anyone getting into the craft with the fortuitous afflictions of a burning curiosity, a hunger for learning, and a social conscience can look forward to a job that's definitely interesting, at times exciting, often demanding, sometimes movingly satisfying, and always educational. (It helps, too, to have an average intelligence, some nerve and ingenuity, and a flexible, fast, non-pedantic writing ability.)

No mention of money there. The best odds for top scale, if that's your driving force, is on the editing career ladder. Your administrator bosses can understand that one; even, maybe respect it. Not as much as they would if you were in accounting or advertising, but they can at least hope you're showing some signs of an affinity for flow-chart respectability. After all, a writer, a person who'll work odd hours in odd places doing odd things has got to be, at best, a mite disreputable; at worst, a closet radical or something.

Barring the first few months, the bulk of my newspapering that began in 1945 was primarily in editing. It might well have remained so, except that while on the Toronto *Telegram's* fascinating night desk — from Spring, 1957, into 1961 — I occasionally was unleashed as a reporter. And a number of times I got the breaks with the kind of stories and front-page play that give you the egotistical hankering for more of the same. But just as you have to buy tickets to get lucky in a lottery, you also often have to ante up something for a crack at the fur-lined press pot.

An example of what prompted a switch to the more footloose side of the desk arose out of a high school dropout's inferiority-compulsion. I would pick some subject — economics, philosophy, or whatever — as a year's self-teaching project. For 1959-60, it was Spanish. One no-action evening I was idly tapping out every *palabra* I could remember, and it aroused the curiosity of a senior editor, Laurie (McGoo) McKechnie, who often drifted around at nights. He thought I had a hot story going until I explained, adding that I had an interest in Latin American affairs. He drifted on with little comment. However, a couple of months later, he calmly asked, "How'd you like to go to South America?"

I was relieved from the night desk long enough to follow wonderful old Howard Green, Diefenbaker's minister of external affairs, on a no-news fancy-dress diplomat tour only the *Tory Tely* thought worth staffing. I even had to buy a tux, a piece of nostalgia that, I was told, every reporter should own. I managed to disguise it in the expense account.

However, just when I was going to have to struggle into it for the first time, for an event in Buenos Aires, southern Chile was battered by earthquakes and tidal waves. I never did wear that tux. However, I did have to buy a heavy sweater and borrow an overcoat when I was shifted into the *real* assignment in that early-winter tragedy on the southern tip of the hemisphere. I was the first North American reporter on the scene — thanks to the luck of home-study Spanish and a politically-motivated assignment.

At the beginning — ominously heavy earthquakes still echoing the horror of the real thing — all commercial and military plane space was reserved for relief workers and supplies, and private flying was effectively

halted by an embargo on the sale of aviation fuel. But — more luck. A young Chilean who did some work for the Canadian embassy knew a friend who had a friend who ... and I found myself heading south from Santiago in a battered little two-seat crop-duster, my feet resting on a patch I helped to make with flattened tin cans filling in the hole out of which the insecticides were dumped. Jammed behind my head were extra little drums of scrounged gasoline.

Actually, it's possible to become good-luck prone just as some people seem to be accident prone. It's done by developing the habit of talking to strangers. I can't count the leads that have arisen from casual encounters. In a Prince Albert hotel elevator, it was from a guy in winter bush gear who looked too beat to carry his rucksack. He agreed he could use a pick-me-up and accepted an invitation to my room. He turned out to be a fine and caring Indian Affairs front-liner (they aren't all paternal paper pushers). He and his pilot were over-nighting before returning to their Stony Rapids base near the Territories border after an exhausting many-stop swing of trouble shooting.

Now full time on the writing side of the desk, I had just wrapped up a murder case assignment and was about to start work on a series of features I had suggested that would take Torontonians into the lives of other kinds of Canadians. I was to live and work with such people as Newfoundland outport fishermen, Ontario lumbermen, a prairie farm family, and Indians. No, I told my new acquaintance, I hadn't arranged the Indian one yet.

So — the next day I was an invited hitchhiker jammed into a heavily loaded one-prop bush freighter for a trip 500 miles north to near Lake Athabasca. No room for baggage other than a "handbag" and the only one I could buy on a Saskatchewan Sunday was a cute little flower-patterned diaper



Reporter Marshall of the Telegram: With Canadian Red Cross officials in Chile, covering earthquake tragedy.

bag. (You can't always be lucky.) I still have that bag, as I do the warm memories of living with a family of seven in a tiny two-room house in an all-Indian community at Black Lake in one of the vast solitudes of Canada.

The resulting story about hunter-carpenter Mike Mackenzie and his brood attracted gratifying attention and — though I didn't need it — a lesson on how a reporter's efforts can be complemented by sensitive desk work. One of the letters saying nice things about the piece gave me credit where it wasn't due. It cited the cutline under a portrait I

had taken of Mike, haggard with the 35-below cold during a long day of hunting in which he bagged only two ptarmigan — after kneeling a long time in the snow until he'd lined them up for one frugal shot. The caption, "Survival is a patient genuflection in the snow," was written by veteran editor Bob Vezina, a guy inclined to make loud noises and kick desks.

At the *Telegram*, more often than not, there was a good balancing of the necessary tensions between most writers and most desk people, a recognition of one another's needs within an adver-

sarial push-pull process that taught lessons in both directions.

On the other hand, there was that time when the bright glow of initial good fortune on one assignment was badly tarnished by a *Tely* deskman. I'd been awakened at an ungodly hour of a mid-summer morning in 1971 and sent rushing off to the airport to head for Belfast and a new wave of blood-letting and arson. First good luck: miraculously perfect connections at New York and London. I arrived at the troubled city, dumped my bag at a hotel desk, and rushed in the direction of the ac-

tion. Second element of luck — I somehow immediately stumbled on the home, family, and friends of a young alleged terrorist who had been killed by an army bullet. Three times lucky: on the other side, crouching down with one of the army units involved, I found the soldier beside me was a Canadian, likely the only one serving with the British in Ireland. I ran back to a phone and — lucky again — won an instant and perfect connection through the notoriously impossible London exchange directly to the *Tely's* rewrite desk in time for the afternoon edition the same day I'd left home.

"Rewrite," said the no-nonsense voice I recognized thankfully as that of one of the fastest and best of the crack team of cool-headed experts.

"Hi," I said with some elation. "It's Marshall." Pause, adrenalin pumping as I scabbled at my notes. "Ok — dateline Belfast —"

He cut me off. "Look, I'm busy. Quit kidding." And he hung up on me. Hung up!

I'd always scoffed at movies that had actors doing double takes at inanimate phones, but that's what I did, dumbfounded. It took half an hour or more before I could get back through to the city desk. As usual there'd been a left-hand-right-hand foulup (a common fault in most newspapers). Nobody tells nobody nothin'. The rewrite man "knew" I was in Toronto, had seen me the night before. I still made the red line on the Final — but in a state of shock.

For the remainder of about five emotionally depressing days of immersion in the rabid stupidities of the human animal, "luck" (getting the story) was a matter of a near total avoidance of sleep, a necessary talent not that hard to acquire when the news keeps breaking.

Of course, aside from pushing your own ideas for satisfying assignments (though few papers have the flexibility of enough general reporters to encourage such valuable self-starting), good fortune for a writer is often the luck of the assigning draw. You happen to be the body available.

Publisher John Bassett once summoned me and, as I walked through his door, began rattling information into my poised notepad about a unique real estate deal being forged by a Torontonian in the Bahamas. He dismissed me with a brusque, "Guess you'll have to go down there."

"Gosh — that's too bad." I pretended melancholy. At that time I'd never been in the islands.

"Uh? What?" he barked. No time for facetiousness. I fled — into clearing the assignment with editor Doug Creighton, the former crack police reporter of double-mart luncheon fame. He accepted a request that I could add a couple of days of time owing in Nassau after completing the job. He capped that by ad libbing a bonus, apparently for some recent decent work I'd been doing, telling me I could put it on the expense account. Then he suggested I stay at the poshest hotel on the island.

That's the rare, undemanding, fun side of the business. But it's in the most demanding, even at times most tedious, assignments in which one learns the most — either in the techniques of leg-work, research, and writing or in general knowledge.

Often, the craft lessons are the kind that can't be taught in journalism school — as in the case of those learned as part of a team covering a commission probe of organized crime. We virtually opened a bureau in the commission's press rooms with our phonenumber, typewriters, and supplies. We learned how to choreograph alternating filing of columns of near verbatim running copy, working with a specially assigned rewrite man to help retain continuity. After the last deadline he joined us at the hearing to do the overnighter. One of the gimmicks we used to speed up filing and to assure accuracy was a small label-indexed book into which we entered thumbnail identification of the ever-expanding cast of often Runyonesque characters. It's a system that is still more efficient than terminal-accessible computer libraries.

It's good to be obsessed with similar methods of keeping track of information in heavy assignments, particularly when stories have to be dictated from raw notes. It helps to number pages of notes as they are taken and at the same time to note major points with page numbers on an index sheet. Cross indexing helps speed up filing, too, when references to a particular issue can be pulled together quickly from documents and from your notes of separate interviews.

A specialized form of learning came with the assignment to head something melodramatically called The Special Squad, Canada's, possibly North America's, first formalized team of what has come to be known as — equally melodramatically — investigative reporters. Much of what we did was the kind of thing later done by the Action Line type of column, primarily from readers' complaints. But ours was

a much broader mandate and we were not hampered by the necessity of producing daily. We had all the time we needed to do the job.

The results ranged from items wrapped up in a few paragraphs to others that were banner-line news, full-page exposes, or even in series form. Fraser Kelly, now a featured television newsmen; Frank Jones, a popular Toronto *Star* columnist; Don Obe, magazine editor now journalism school head, and I had to become acquainted with government acts and regulations, corporation and property registration — and the technicalities of libel and slander (you can slander a person while making enquiries about that person). We were after comen, art forgers, price fixers, bogus charities, and looking into everything from the drug scene to real estate scams and from the exploitation of orphans to that of policemen.

I once found myself in a meeting with an Ontario Provincial Police fraud squad inspector, later commissioner, James Erskine, and a Metro Toronto fraud squad detective sergeant, John Ross. We had discovered we were all separately working on leads to purchasers of counterfeit art and decided a little co-ordination would be helpful all around. (Two men went to jail, and a Special Squad promotion stunt in which readers could bring their paintings for expert assessment uncovered a cache of previously unknown David Milnes.)

But possibly the most educational and fascinating exercise of my 36 years in the craft was one that could only have developed at the *Telegram*, that quixotic place of banality and brilliance and sometimes unbridled enthusiasm. It was a pull-out-all-stops look in 1969 at Canadians' attitudes under the stresses of the ferment in Quebec. Called Canada 70, it rates a chapter, maybe a book, in itself. In fact, this operation, which at times crippled the newsroom because it used so many senior staffers, did become a book. Publisher Jack McClelland, a man also driven by enthusiasm, made it into a boxed set of six paperbacks called *The Challenge of Confederation*. The experience acquired by a lot of people was astoundingly wide ranging and included the logistics of troop movements, computer compilations, promotion methods to make interview contacts, scheduling, and even how to stage a reception.

It all began with a tip that the *Star* was planning a sensational production based on some kind of massive survey it was supposed to be doing in Quebec.

Bassett's orders: Beat 'em to it, and do it better.

Some industrial espionage revealed the *Star's* publication date was too close for us to be able to set up the kind of operation we wanted in Quebec and to beat them to the punch. So a quick fix, arising out of one of those inspiring luncheons at the Walker House Franz Josef Room. How about — Bassett was asked — if we do a survey of the "Quebec issue" all across Canada, province by province, running it as a series and leading up, with proper promotion of course, to an all-out Quebec blockbuster? We could wrap up an individual province, say British Columbia, in time to start the series well before the *Star* ran its Quebec-only effort. "Go ahead," he boomed.

It resulted in the drafting of a team of senior staffers headed by then political editor Fraser Kelly, supplemented by freelancers hired in various cities. Editor Hartley Steward set up shop in Montreal to directly oversee the Quebec effort which included the work of two *Le Devoir* staffers on loan to us, and that of a public-opinion survey firm of sociologists.

About 4,000 people across the country answered a 16-part questionnaire, about 500 of them in direct interviews. These included Pierre Trudeau, every federal cabinet minister, all but one premier (Wacky Bennett thought it was an eastern journalistic plot), 88 of 117 members of the Ontario legislature and 90 of the 108 Quebec ones, and nearly every mayor or reeve of municipalities of 20,000 or over. Teachers got involved and used our questionnaire in their classes, even had pupils doing shopping plaza polls with it. A Prairies farmers organization distributed it to its members.

As aide-de-camp, I was involved in the field work in six of the provinces and in the horrible job of tabulating computer results from the questionnaires (we had not invited expert technical advice). There was also the more delightful job of setting up receptions in our hotel suites (a quick way to get mixed groups — corporate lawyers to '60s hippies — into revealing debate). That was an idea proposed by Tony Emery, Vancouver Art Gallery head, to reporter Sheila Gormely, who was under the gun to produce the first report in the beat-the-*Star* series that ran from April into July. Emery helped out, as did many others across the country, including open-line hosts who turned over their shows to us. And sometimes the publicity meant our hotel switchboards were jammed as people tried to



Atop the CN Tower: In a later incarnation, still to be described in his Journeyman series, intrepid reporter Marshall was with the Globe and Mail.

participate in our survey.

Robert MacDonald, heading the Atlantic Provinces coverage and who was next in line to produce to our impossible deadlines, taught us all a lesson in transportation organizing. He was at the Halifax airport unable to get back to Toronto with all his material because commercial flights were grounded by bad weather. He found the crew of a charter plane from Hamilton who agreed to say to hell with the weather if he could fill the seats of their plane. Bob hustled up enough other waiting stragglers willing to take the risk — and got back in time.

When Kelly and I realized the whole unbelievable thing was going to drag into summer and threaten our family vacation plans, we asked Jack McClelland if he did not have — as was common then — a corporate country retreat to which we could take our families while we finished the book

work. He said yes. However, he had no such thing. His senior editor, Anna Szigethy (now Anna Porter and a publisher herself) had to hunt for something suitable. A former fishing lodge on an isolated Georgian Bay island became the final Canada 70 office for ourselves and Hartley Steward. This, too, is newspapering.

And the *Star's* great Quebec project? It was just another normal Regenstreif public opinion poll.

On Oct. 30, 1971, the *Tely* was killed. Again, luck was integral. I was one of those who had it. By that final day, when Kid Bastien's band played tailgate funeral jazz for the wake I arranged at Grossman's Tavern, I had already been told I had a job at Canada's most successful newspaper, the *Toronto Star*.

John Marshall now freelances out of Toronto.

Videotex: Rewrite or revolution?

*Reporters, editors, and publishers
sometimes seem paralyzed
by the new technology*

by Dick MacDonald

Precisely four Canadian daily newspapers had delegates at what was called the first international conference on videotex journalism, held in Toronto Jan. 20-21.

A few United States papers were represented and a raft of college and university journalism programs in both Canada and the United States sent people. Panelists came from both sides of the Atlantic to explain their early experiences in a technology that *Globe and Mail* publisher Roy Megarry once described as "a solution in search of a problem."

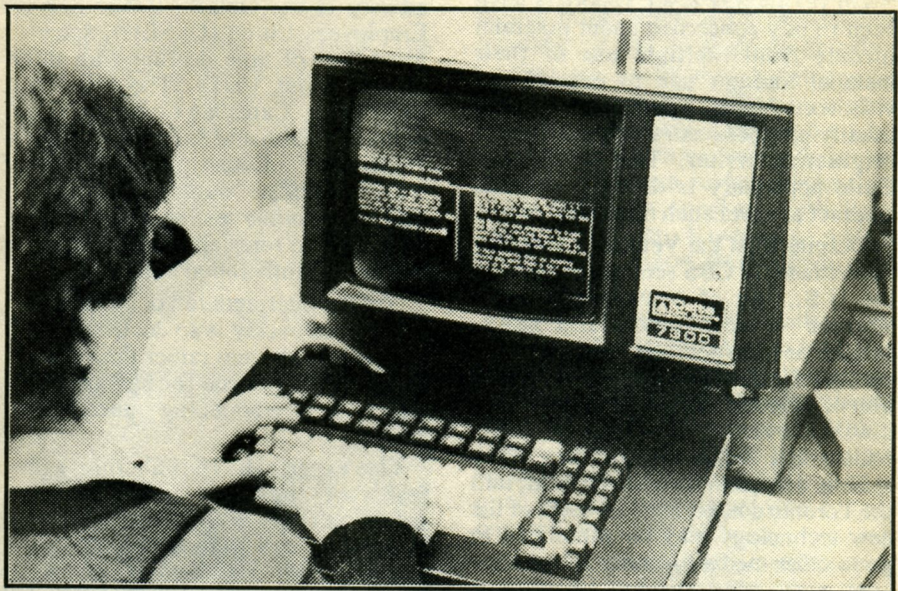
The series of panel discussions, preceded by a tour of videotex and teletext operations in Toronto, was co-sponsored by the University of Western Ontario's School of Journalism and its faculty of part-time and continuing education.

Journalism dean Peter Desbarats said "the premise of the conference is that videotex and teletext systems are bound to grow and proliferate in the near future, and that more and more journalists will find themselves working on these systems. It certainly isn't too soon for us to start asking whether this new medium promises a revolution in journalism or simply more of the same, rewritten for the small screen."

Given all that, how to explain the absence of Canadian newspapers — the very medium seen by many to be most vulnerable to screenprint information?

Disinterest? Apathy? Resistance? Ignorance? Or is it, as Desbarats suggested in a speech last year, that journalists and their editors and publishers by and large remain "paralyzed, rather than excited and challenged, by the immensity of the change bearing down upon them?"

Whatever the reason, the technology is not going to slink away. It is still in its



Westex News: The School of Journalism of the University of Western Ontario in London has its own Telidon-based news service. Operated by graduate students as an information provider to the Grassroots agribusiness videotex system, in its first year Westex electronically published 18,000 pages.

infancy, but surely journalists should become familiar with the principles and techniques — and with the possible consequences for the traditional gathering, writing, and disseminating of the news. (The Canadian papers officially registered for the conference were the *Ottawa Citizen*, *Montreal Gazette*, *Windsor Star* — all Southam dailies — and the *Toronto Sun*.)

Graham Clayton, editor of the BBC's Ceefax service, came closest to putting his finger on the intellectual block apparently shared by many print journalists.

"Don't get stuck in a newspaper rut," Clayton said. "Don't try to relate teletext to newspapers. It is different. Treat it differently, originally, innovatively. We can co-exist. Ceefax is not trying to rub out papers."

Indeed, if one point of view emerged

from the conference (and even trying to isolate it may be unfair, for the field is rife with contradictory opinions), it is that teletext and videotex will be *parts* of the media mix. Complementary, rather than substitutional, in other words, at least in the short term.

Videotex, the interactive, two-way system, as opposed to one-way teletext (lately referred to as "printed radio"), has had plenty of trials in North America and Europe and commercial operations gradually are being put in place. The Knight-Ridder newspaper group, for instance, has a system in Florida being closely watched for positive public response (paying subscribers) before launching it elsewhere in the U.S.

Knight-Ridder's Viewtron, as described by managing editor John Woolley, is prepared to call itself an

electronic newspaper, because it carries longer rather than shorter stories. Videotex, said Woolley, can provide "the immediacy of television and the depth of print ... and *that's* what is new and exciting."

Still, most viewdata services — including those of The Canadian Press and the CBC — strive for brevity: 20-word leads, and terse, event-oriented, inverted-pyramid writing, with a story word count of, say, 200. That style clearly does not lend itself to much thoughtful analysis nor, as Western's Henry Overduin commented, "great personal journalism."

On yet another level, reporters have been rightly concerned about potential income from multiple use of their material through sale to teletext and videotex systems. Syndication in print usually produces extra revenue for the originating writer. The Newspaper Guild apparently is drafting a model contract to cover such electronic reuse.

Despite what the Venture 1 videotex experiment by CBS seemed to show in the U.S., use of conventional news sources — newspapers and news-magazines, especially — may not necessarily decline with the introduction of videotex. David Weaver, of Indiana University's School of Journalism and author of *Videotex Journalism*, a seminal book in the field, told the Toronto conference that users of the new technology may be stimulated to go to other media for more substance.

Niels Barfod, of the Danish national news agency, who, like most people, thought that videotex would first penetrate homes with such commercial services as banking and shopping, forecast that newspapers will become smaller and fewer and that the imaginative ones will become information providers to the new systems.

Essentially, they could become what the late Martin Goodman of the *Toronto Star* saw as "news centers" for the public's information needs. (It is no coincidence that Torstar Corp. is a partner, with Southam Inc., in Infomart, the country's premier videotex technology player.)

The Toronto conference, in sum, surveyed the special opportunities and problems created for journalists by the new information systems. It may not have supplied many answers; indeed, Western's Desbarats noted that the rules have not yet been written for videotex journalism.

But a lot of questions got asked. And that's a good start. It is, after all, barely five years since the word Telidon was introduced to the language.

VDT hazards: Finding a study that fits

by Dave Silburt

Produce a study about video display terminals and people will, **A**) hail it because it agrees with them, **B**) deride it because it doesn't agree with them, or **C**) claim it supports them, whether it does or not.

Bob DeMatteo, a health and safety advisor at the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), spends a great deal of time dealing with information about VDTs. The latest is a study by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) in Hamilton, advocating shielding of VDTs. OPSEU wants legislation requiring rigorous testing and shielding of VDTs, to forestall health effects for workers. Motherhood stuff.

Yet the interpretation of "evidence" in the controversy is so doctrinaire that it serves to obscure rather than clarify. In fact, the evidence for serious health effects is a resounding, unequivocal maybe.

One expert, Dr. Hari Sharma, a professor of chemistry and a radiation safety officer at the University of Waterloo, was quoted some months ago in a *Globe and Mail* article, saying low-frequency electrical fields around VDTs can cause headaches and nausea. In an interview for *content*, Sharma repeated that VDT electrical fields can cause headaches, nausea and irritability. But right after that, he said, "Our findings are that if the VDTs have very low fields, then people are very happy working with them." He also said people using VDTs only a few hours a day — reporters, for instance — reported fewer problems than even non-VDT workers.

In a 1980 booklet written by DeMatteo for OPSEU, under a section headed Radiation Injury Among VDT Operators, birth defects among the offspring of VDT operators are listed. It said four of seven pregnant women working in the *Toronto Star's* advertising department gave birth to babies with congenital defects. They were using VDTs. The three with normal babies were not. In Gander, Nfld., three babies out of 31 born to VDT operators had defects. At an unnamed airport, there were seven spontaneous abortions out of 13 pregnancies among VDT users. And so on.

Of such data, Sharma said, "Since we don't have a very large amount of data, we tend to put it down to what we call the chance cluster." Such caveats don't appear in the yellow book by DeMatteo. What does appear is this: "In the absence of firm epidemiological evidence linking radiation from VDTs to health problems, we cannot make conclusive statements about a radiation hazard. *However, neither is there a scientific basis nor a medically reasonable rationale upon which to base a claim that VDTs are safe.*" (His emphasis.) The reverse onus here speaks of a dearth of evidence linking VDTs with anything more serious than eyestrain.

Later in the booklet, DeMatteo writes, "...it has been left to the trade unions to initiate and carry out credible scientific investigation in the absence of responsible government action."

Does DeMatteo want to see some solid epidemiological research — a statistical study showing once and for all whether there is a correlation between things like spontaneous abortions and VDTs? DeMatteo, who lays claim to no scientific or medical background, opines: "I don't think the controlled statistical study always gives you an accurate indication of what's going on. I don't have a great deal of faith in that kind of epidemiology; I would have more faith in doing actual biological experimentation on the effects of the video display terminal radiation on biological systems."

OPSEU wants legislation requiring shielding, and the CCOHS study, written by Dr. Karel Marha, supports the idea. Sharma, an expert, seems to agree — the bottom line of the interview with him was: shield the terminals. But do VDTs cause anything worse than headaches and eyestrain? The evidence does not establish a link. DeMatteo says he is in favor of the definitive epidemiological study — which in his considered opinion may not be conclusive — if it is done Canada-wide, and if he deems it well-designed. And in the unlikely event someone ever decides to foot the bill for that, options **A**, **B**, and **C** will remain.

Dave Silburt is a freelance writer based in Toronto.

There's more to the labor beat than covering strikes

by Katie FitzRandolph

In most Canadian newsrooms, the labor beat (if it exists at all) is focused almost exclusively on collective bargaining.

And even that regular renewal of contracts rarely attracts interest unless a work stoppage is involved or about to happen. Certainly, a dramatic strike is a hot news story, but the effect of this one-dimensional approach from the media is to make the labor movement an invisible thread in the fabric of the community the rest of the time.

With a third of the Canadian workforce organized into unions, there has to be more there. And there is.

The very fact that unions represent working people means they have a special insight into all kinds of workplaces. From the public sector perspective, this means that virtually any change in public policy has its "union" angle. Often that angle is the insider's view of what the change will mean.

A decision to close an institution (be it medical, psychiatric, corrections, or research) will be a dollars-and-cents decision made at the political level. The people who work in the institution will see it from its human perspective.

Sometimes the union is called for a reaction. More often, it isn't. Almost always a story is available.

- A patient dies in a nursing home. Does the staff have any insight into the problems? Has the union there been complaining about short-staffing or the hiring of poorly-qualified staff? Have there been warnings which went unheeded?

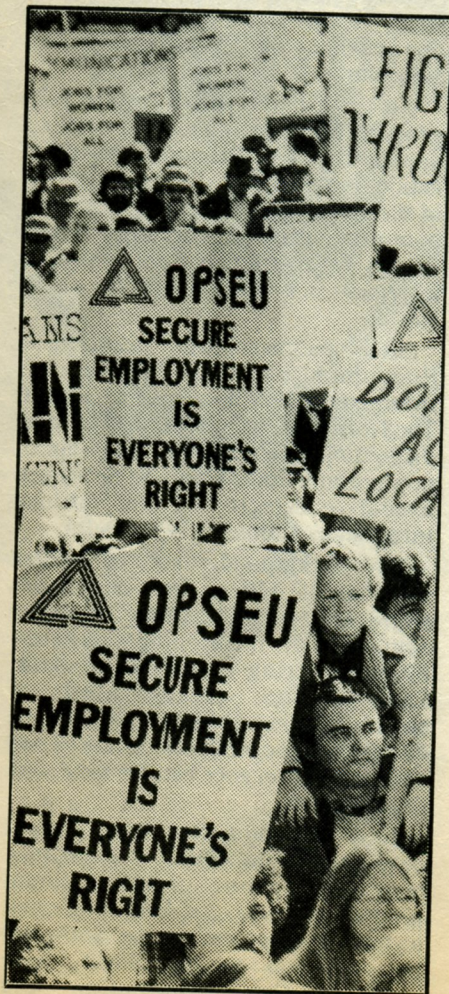
- There's a ruckus in a jail or penitentiary. Are the security rules appropriate? Is staff training up to the proper standard? Are more part-timers filling in? Have stress levels become intolerable?

- Forest fires are particularly bad this year. Is it entirely the result of the weather? Has a change in campsite policy contributed to more fires being started? Have budget cuts limited the number of people available for fire-fighting duty?

- There's a major snag in the distribution of welfare or other government cheques. Is this the result of a change in bureaucratic procedures? Is it a question of rising caseloads? What is behind it?

The examples could continue. The point is that the people on the inside often have a much clearer idea of why problems arise than anybody else does.

The political level sets policy; senior administration follows its orders. But the front-line staff — union members — are the ones who have to deal with it. Often legislation forbids them talking directly to reporters, but there are no such restrictions on their union spokespersons.



A quick telephone call may produce a mass of information, including briefs, reports, or a history of unsuccessful efforts to bargain solutions to the very problems which have just erupted. And if the information isn't immediately available, it can be acquired quickly.

That the media look to unions for pickets and protests tends to blind them to all the other activities of the labor movement. Reporters regularly are assigned to dine on rubber chicken and cover luncheon speakers with Rotarians, Optimists, Kiwanians, and so forth. Well, union locals have guest speakers, too.

Not all of them will be of sufficiently broad interest to attract news attention, true. But a presentation on occupational health and safety will be more relevant than a speech on the most recent Middle East crisis given by a yard-goods salesman with the sole qualification of once having visited Israel (and I really covered one of those!).

Unions, to be sure, can't expect newsrooms to be psychic. If we don't send out notices, we can't expect reporters to show up on spec. But we are fighting an assumption that says anything told the Kinsmen is newsworthy, and anything told a labor gathering is simply more union propaganda.

Union members live in the community, too. Union locals are active in United Way campaigns. They sponsor children's sports teams. They give scholarships to students.

Look behind the union jacket and you'll find a citizen, often one who is actively involved in dealing with a community issue, be it inadequate housing, high unemployment, or care for the handicapped.

What it boils down to is: Don't wait for a strike to give us a call.

Katie FitzRandolph is public relations officer for the Ontario Public Service Employees Union in Toronto. She has spent 15 years working in newsrooms in Vancouver, Regina, Winnipeg, and Ottawa.

Bridging global gaps

*The typical journalist of the North
may never truly understand
the realities of the South*

by Dick MacDonald

Barbara Ward told us 19 years ago that unbalanced power and disproportionate wealth among nations were the obstacles to world order and to the very survival of man.

The differences and disproportions between various parts of the world community, she said, "are so great that agreed policies of co-operation run into reefs of hostility and envy."

She went on: "If mankind is to achieve political, social, and moral institutions to match his economic and technological drives, the disparities must be lessened."

It was Barbara Ward who adopted Buckminster Fuller's Spaceship Earth concept and helped make it part of our language and, to a rather lesser degree, part of our thinking.

Lady Jackson is dead now, but her special blend of idealism and realism live on among those who labor especially hard to close the gaps between North and South, gaps which are at once practical and philosophical in a very fundamental sense.

Journalists are part of that gap-closing endeavor, inasmuch as they are part of the information and education process in both the developed and developing countries. Which is why 50 or so of them gathered in London March 8-11 for Encounter 84, a conference sponsored by the School of Journalism of the University of Western Ontario and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

It was the first Encounter conference held by Western since 1979, and like its predecessors its primary benefit comes not in the short term of guest speakers and panels and exchanges among participants.

Rather, it is in what might be called the ripple effect. That comes, in part, from stories and programs which may be generated more or less immediately

by the discussions and from the collection and distillation of background information for later use.

The issues addressed are of such urgency that journalists simply cannot ignore them, nor continue to treat them as so many man-bit-dog stories. The issues demand thorough knowledge, to be sure, but to treat questions basic to the human condition also requires sensitivity, compassion, and empathy.

The typical journalist of the North will probably never be able to truly understand what it is like to live in a country where hunger is a way of life — let alone be able to report on it, as some fine and thoughtful Third World writers are doing.

Nor is that journalist likely to fully grasp the feelings of cultural deprivation and loss of a sense of national sovereignty — shared by many in the South — wrought by the same communications technology which brings multiple-channel satellite television into the livingrooms of the North.

Such sentiments were pervasive at Encounter 84, whose theme was Information, Economics, and Power: The North-South Dimension. The same dichotomies were evident, for instance, in a presentation by Dr. N. Seshagiri, executive director of the National Informatics Centre in New Delhi.

In a background paper, he pointed out that of 420 million telephones world-wide in 1980, barely seven per cent were in developing countries. Such a glaring disparity, he said, "shows the urgent need of communication infrastructure in the developing countries since good communication goes hand in hand with development."

It is axiomatic that technological development has altered, in *qualitative* terms, the nature of international production, trade, and finance. Central to that development, in the North and by extension to the South, have been modern information and

telecommunications systems.

How those systems affect peoples is a concern of Rita Cruise O'Brien, of the London School of Economics and, only incidentally, a founding member of the United Kingdom's Social Democratic Party.

She reminded the Encounter participants that technology has tended to precede policy, and wondered whether that is either correct or just. As well, she said, "we must confront questions of centralization, especially in the information field, and especially when we are talking about the information-rich and the information-poor countries."

Palagummi Sainath had similar worries; his focus is on transnational news media and their effects on developing countries.

He was blunt. The western media have not been neutral, he said, but rather have been protecting their own national interests.

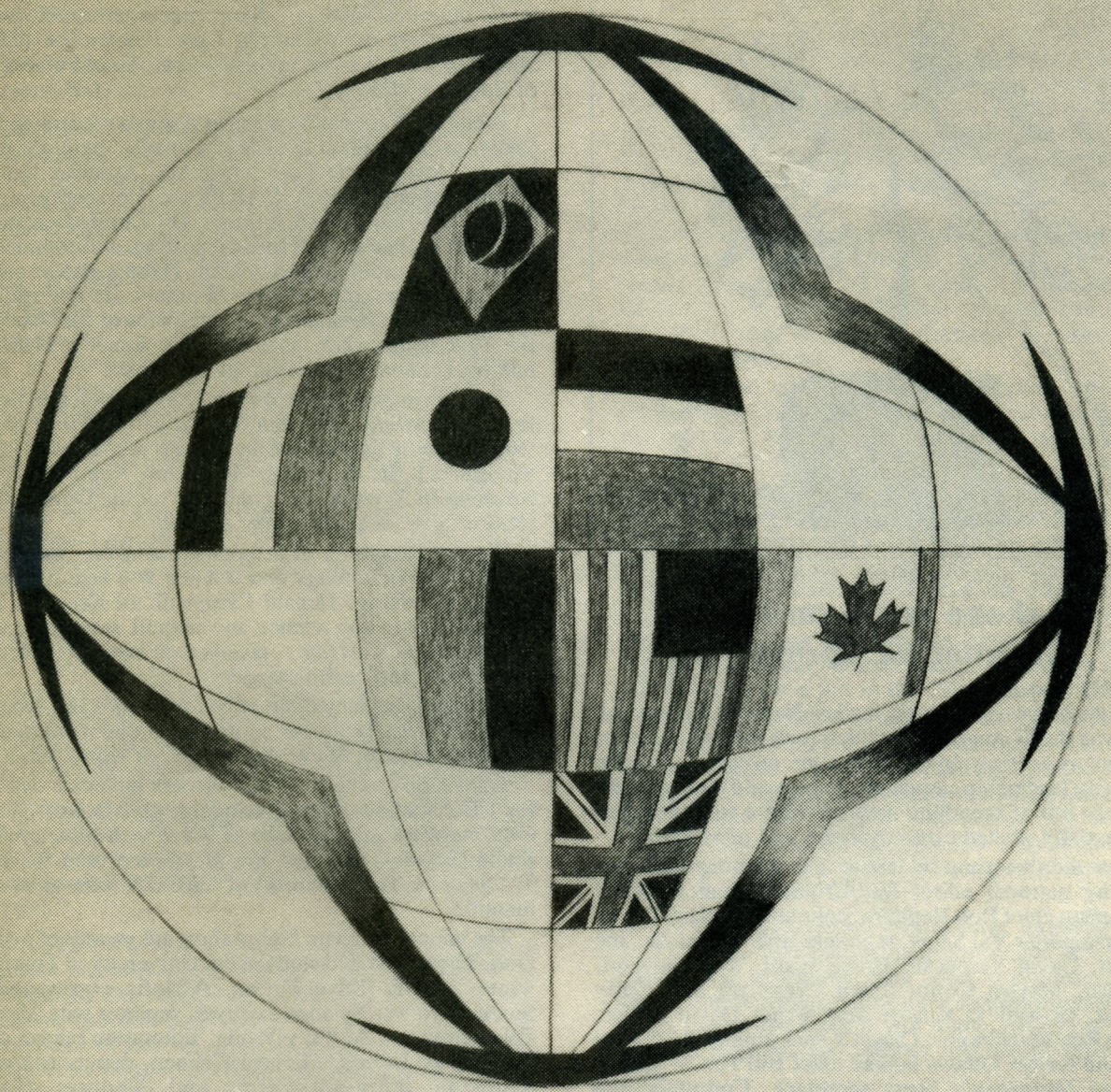
Sainath is deputy editor of the *Blitz* weekly newsmagazine and foreign editor of *The Daily* in Bombay. He argued that for too long the North, through its mainstream journalism, has "been setting the agenda for the Third World."

Information does not exist in a vacuum, he suggested, but flows in and through political realities.

Although challenged later by a few conference delegates, Sainath was firm: "We speak often of colonial powers, but have the media not been strongly colonialist, in terms of planting ideas, of spreading shared values?"

That sort of question makes many people in the North, among them journalists, uncomfortable. Arguably, it is a question that must be confronted if we are to accept that truth, the elusive object of journalism, is not white and middle-class.

Bernard Wood, director of Canada's North-South Institute, also put forward



BARRY ORETSKY

views which might cause some discomfort, especially when he suggested that this country seems to have "mixed objectives" in its international activities.

Too many of those activities, he said, "are linked to political rationales" — which may come as something of a surprise to those Canadians who see themselves as impartial, humanitarian citizens of the world.

Wood also said, without hesitation but with some annoyance, that CIDA, usually looked on as an autonomous

agency, "operates as a department of government." Clearly, he said, that situation must change. There were nods of agreement around the Encounter roundtable; it is not known whether all the heads of the CIDA representatives also nodded.

It was Wood's candor, and that of other conference participants, bankers and economists included, which proved the value of Encounter 84. Everything was on the record, including an observation by William Bateman, executive vice-president and group

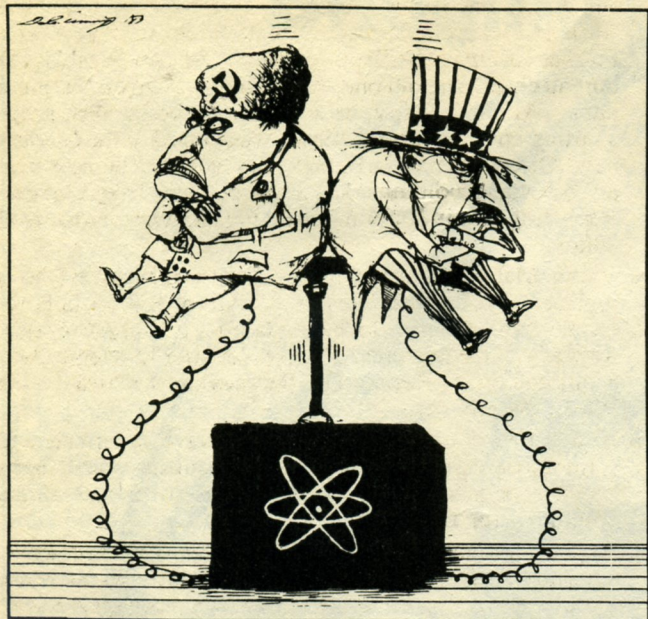
executive, corporate and government banking, of the Bank of Montreal.

Bateman assured the conference that "the international debt problem is, for the moment, under control . . . there are signs that progress could continue."

Ironically, five days later the *Globe and Mail* carried a report from the New York Times Service, which began: "Some U.S. bankers are no longer as optimistic that the Latin American debt crisis is working itself out."

Spaceship Earth spins on.

Short takes



Dale Cummings' award-winning cartoon

If these are awards, it must be Spring

One of the biggest winners in the last National Newspaper Awards was the *Toronto Star*, which took the top prize for spot news reporting in its massive coverage of the Conservative leadership campaign. Judges said the *Star* "did an excellent job of breathing new life into a story that had been essentially picked clean by radio and television."

The *Star* didn't scrimp on talent. The winning team was directed by national editor Ian Urquhart, and included Ottawa bureau chief Bob Hepburn, columnist Richard Gwyn and senior reporter Val Sears, reporters Bob McKenzie, Joe O'Donnell, David Vienneau, Bruce Ward, Ross Howard, Dan Smith, Martin Cohn, Trish Crawford and Kelly McParland, as well as *Sunday Star* writer David Miller, columnist Roy MacGregor, Queen's Park bureau chief Alan Christie and former Ottawa bureau chief Bill Fox — who is now Brian Mulroney's press secretary. Computer and communications co-ordination by Nicolaas van Rijn. Production by then Sunday editor, now city editor Lou Clancy, senior news editor David Ellis and news editor Haroon Siddiqui.

Globe and Mail writer Robert Martin won for sports writing in his coverage of the America's Cup yacht races, and the *Globe's* John Bentley Mays won for critical writing; Oakland Ross took a citation of merit for enterprise reporting for articles on the fighting in Nicaragua. The big prize for enterprise reporting went to John Walker of Southam News, who did a Dan Rather — hiking into Afghanistan wearing a burnoose, to report on the fighting there.

For feature writing, Bill McGuire of the *London Free Press* won for his story of his own experiences as a boy with polio. And for editorial writing, the prize went to Terry Moore of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, for writing on the French language issue.

Prize for spot news photography went to Chris Mikula of the *Ottawa Citizen* for his shot of Finance Minister Marc

Lalonde's budget. Feature photography went to the *Toronto Sun's* Veronica Milne, and the champ in cartooning was Dale Cummings of the *Winnipeg Free Press*. The champion verbal cartoonist — columnist — was Allan Fotheringham, of *Southam News*.

While the National Newspaper Awards are among the best known of journalism awards in Canada, there are scads of others. Among the newest are the Atlantic Journalism Awards, established in 1982 by the University of King's College in Halifax and Imperial Oil Limited. Awards are given for spot news, enterprise reporting, and commentary in newspapers, radio, and television. There's also an award for the best magazine article. Winners in the individual categories and the name of the recipient of the Journalist of the Year award were announced at a dinner in Halifax, too late for *content's* deadlines for this issue.

The Canadian Science Writers' Association also has given its annual awards. Stephen Strauss of the *Globe and Mail* won for newspaper science and natural resources writing; Joe Sinasac of the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record* and Josie Szcasiek of *Newsience*, published by the Ontario Science Centre, also took newspaper awards.

Wayne Campbell, of *Science Dimension*, won both the science and technology and science and health awards for magazine writing. Donald Campbell, of *Reader's Digest*, won the award for science and natural resources, and Pat Ohlendorf, of *Maclean's*, received an honorable mention in the science and health category.

The single print medium prize for science and society was given to Lydia Dotto for an article in *Quest* magazine and Christina Spencer of the *Ottawa Citizen* won a junior award.

Television and radio award winners included: two awards for CBC Radio's science program, *Quirks and Quarks*; a CBC network special; CBC-TV's *The Nature of Things*; Radio-Canada's *Aujourd'hui la science*; and the Atlantic TV System. Terry Meleski of CBC-TV won an honorable mention.

The annual Southam Fellowships are awards of a different kind. Those who will study at the University of Toronto next winter are: E. Kaye Fulton, Atlantic correspondent of *Southam News*; Yolande Lecuyer, reporter with *Montreal's* *Telemetropole*; Geoffrey White, Edmonton bureau chief of the *Calgary Herald*; Michael Cobden, deputy editor of the *Kingston Whig-Standard*; and Thomas Hopkins, departments editor of *Maclean's* in Toronto.

REGINA

- Daphne Dramham left the *Regina Leader Post* to join CP in Vancouver. Patricia Sarjeant left the *Regina Leader Post* to go to the *Calgary Herald*. Rudy Luukko left the *Regina Leader Post* news desk to go to the *Calgary Herald* news desk. Janet Steffenhagen left the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* to join CP in Ottawa. Alison Hare went to the *Regina Leader Post* from CP in Ottawa.
- Mike Hornbrook, legislative reporter for *CKCK* radio in Regina, went to CBC radio in Regina as an agriculture reporter. Leigh Morrow, an open-line host on *CKCK*, went to CBC in Regina. *CKCK* sports director Ron Barnet fled to join *CKNW* in Vancouver as a sports announcer. Peter Varley, formerly of *CKX* in Brandon, Manitoba, took Hornbrook's place at *CKCK*. Bill Parker of *CKX* joined radio *CJME* as morning announcer.

OTTAWA

- Other journalists to move into PR include two new people in the communications department at the National Union of Provincial Government Employees (NUPGE). They are former Edmonton freelancer Sydney Sharpe, now a NUPGE communications officer, and former Ottawa freelance writer and broadcaster — and former CIJ director — Donna Balkan, who is special projects officer.
- Dave Blaikie, who was a reporter at the Toronto *Star's* Ottawa bureau, took a job as a labor reporter for CP in Ottawa. Former Ottawa freelance broadcaster Doreen Millen, known for her art commentaries on *CBO*, is now co-host of CBC's *Information Radio* in Winnipeg.

SAINT JOHN

- John Brasill, formerly associate producer of CBC's *Information Morning* in Saint John, is now producer of that show in Charlottetown. Montreal freelancer Katherine Tomlin replaces him. Beth Gaines, co-host of the Saint John morning show, is now co-host of the CBC supper hour show in Windsor, Ont. Margot Brewer of CBC radio in Fredericton moved to television as a consumer reporter for CBC news in Fredericton. And Mark Tunney and David Meagher, both of the Saint John *Telegraph-Journal*, have changed places. Tunney now works out of the Saint John newsroom; Meagher replaces him as Chatham correspondent.

WINNIPEG

- Carol Partridge, of *CJOB*, became the first female president of the Winnipeg Press Club. It will be a momentous event when the election of a woman press club president does not call for a public mention of the fact she is female. Vice-presidents are Joan Elson and King Kearns.
- Tom Denton, a founding partner of the Winnipeg *Sun* and its first publisher, has left the tabloid daily, unloading his financial interest in it to the Quebecor group, the Montreal-based newspaper chain that took over the *Sun* last year.
- From the *You Win A Few, You Lose A Few* department: Broadcast journalism lost Michael Balagus (*CKY-TV*) to the Manitoba Department of Labor, where Balagus was appointed communications director. But it regained the contributions of Barbara Mills. She left her two-year stint as PR director for the Manitoba Theatre Centre to do public affairs programming at *CKY-TV*.

TORONTO

- Many changes at Canada's National Newsmagazine. Senior writer Linda Diebel left *Maclean's* to return to the *Montreal Gazette*. Former *Maclean's* staffer Ernest Hillen is now an assistant editor at the Toronto *Sun*. Colin McKenzie fled *Maclean's* to become Metro Editor at the *Globe and Mail*. Senior writer Linda McQuaig is now a senior reporter at the *Globe*. Meanwhile, *Globe* veteran Arthur Johnson went from the *Globe* to a senior writer position at *Maclean's*. *Maclean's* also took on freelancer Bob Miller as a senior writer, and added Mark Nichols, who will share Canadian news editor's duties with Malcolm Gray. Copy editor Heather Birchall was to move to the *Financial Post* as a news desk editor. Staff writer Carol Bruman left for CTV's *Canada A.M.* And what, you ask, is her spouse, Ross Laver, up to? Why, he's left the *Globe* and gone to — wait for it — *Maclean's*. *Maclean's* snapped up Toronto *Star* veteran Patricia Hluchy, after a brief

stint in the netherworld of freelancing. And senior writer Val Ross became associate entertainment editor.

- At the *Globe and Mail*, in addition to McKenzie and McQuaig: Freelancer Caitlin Kelly is now on staff, and Christie McLaren returned from the Winnipeg *Free Press*. Former columnist William Johnson is the new Washington bureau chief. The old one, John King, was given "a senior post." Michael Valpy, as a reward for doing such a rip-snorting column out of Ottawa, was posted to the *Globe's* new African bureau in Harare, Zimbabwe. The new man on the Ottawa column is Jeff Simpson, back from London. Replacing him in London is John Fraser, who was national editor.
- Victor Malarek returned to Toronto from Montreal, to be replaced by Lawrence Martin. Margot Gibb-Clark returned from Quebec to be replaced by Graham Fraser, formerly of the *Montreal Gazette*. Jennifer Lewington was promoted from Report On Business in Ottawa to the Washington bureau.
- And Toronto city council doesn't have alderman and former mayor John Sewell to kick around anymore. That's because he's kicking them around as municipal affairs columnist for the *Globe*.
- At the Toronto *Star*, Gary Lautens was named editor emeritus; Ray Timson was to take over his duties but retain the title managing editor. The assistant managing editor, Phil McLeod, became deputy ME of the morning paper. Mary Deanne Shears moved from city editor to assistant managing editor, Lou Clancy took over as city editor, travel editor Gerry Hall became *Sunday Star* editor, and foreign news editor Andrew Szende defected to the federal government, for a job in the Privy Council Office.
- Reporters Rick Brennan and John Kessel of the Toronto *Star* are now reporters Rick Brennan and John Kessel of the Ottawa *Citizen*. The *Star* picked up Denise Harrington from the *Citizen*, Judy Nyman from the Hamilton *Spectator*, and Brian "Slapper" McAndrew, formerly of the Windsor *Star*. And the Windsor *Star* hired a new chief for its Essex County bureau, Brad Honeywell, formerly of the *Orillia Packet and Times*.
- At The People's Network, Bob Bishop, formerly a reporter for *CBZ-TV*, Fredericton, is senior editor at CBC Radio News. Fran Reynolds, who used to produce *The Food Show*, is now producing *For Your Information*, which used to be called the *Four-to-Six Show*, which is hosted by Shelagh Rogers, who used to host *Mostly Music*, in Ottawa.
- The FM program, *Sunday Magazine*, was scrapped, and the money saved used to add coverage in Yellowknife and Sudbury, and nationally.
- Joseph Anthony Volpe, brother of slain mobster Paul Volpe, was fined \$500 for ballkicking CBC cameraman Dan McIvor at the Volpe funeral.
- And journalism has sustained a few other casualties, too. Veteran newsman Bill Fox, who was the Toronto *Star's* Washington correspondent, took a job as Brian Mulroney's press secretary. Canadian Press Queen's Park bureau chief, Joan Walters, signed on as press officer for Ontario Premier Bill Davis.
- First Choice pay-TV president Don MacPherson left the pay-TV business to return to the CBC as head of sports for the English network. His replacement is Fred Klinkhammer, who used to be vice-president and general manager of *CITY-TV* and then president of Cablenet, a Toronto-based cable company operating systems in B.C., Saskatchewan, and Alberta, as well as Ontario.

Borden Spears remembered

The School of Journalism at the University of Western Ontario is co-publisher, with Fitzhenry & Whiteside, of *Borden Spears: Reporter, Editor, Critic*.

Compiled and edited by journalist-educator Dick MacDonald, the 224-page book (\$12.95) contains a posthumous profile, 100 columns Spears wrote during his years as ombudsman for the *Toronto Star*, and extracts of speeches he gave as a member of the Royal Commission on Newspapers.

Foreword is by Peter Desbarats, dean at Western, where Spears was distinguished visiting editor at the time of his death in March, 1983.

Editing to suit

We all know that papers direct or slant stories for their particular audiences. Radio and television, to be sure, do the same, but let's stay with newspapers for this exercise.

An example at hand is an article by Margaret Munro of *Southam News*, published earlier this year.

The *Sault Ste. Marie Star* ran the piece — an exclusive obtained under the federal access to information act — exactly as filed.

This was Munro's lead:

Ottawa — Environment Canada has started a war with Canada's nuclear industry by recommending sweeping, multi-million-dollar controls to reduce water pollution from nuclear power reactors.

Compare that approach to the ones used by the *Ottawa Citizen* and the *Hamilton Spectator*.

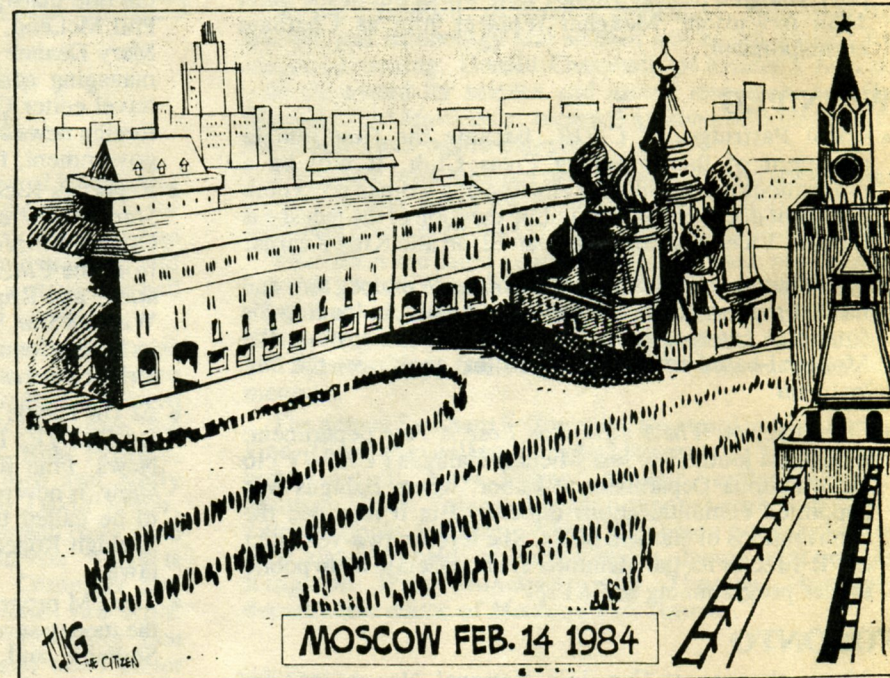
The *Citizen*, with a heavy readership in the federal bureaucracy, went deeper into the story to produce this lead:

The Atomic Energy Control Board is "too lax" and ill-prepared to protect the environment from adverse effects of nuclear power, according to Environment Canada documents.

The *Spectator* probed deeper in the story to offer this lead:

Ontario Hydro and the rest of Canada's nuclear industry is fighting mad at Environment Canada proposals for sweeping, multi-million-dollar controls to reduce water pollution and radiation from nuclear power reactors.

Subtle distinctions, perhaps, but indicative at least of local and regional judgments.



Now you see it, now you don't

An observant reader sent along copies of these cartoons by Allen King in the *Ottawa Citizen* of Feb. 14, curious about an obvious change between the first and final editions that day.

Editor Russell Mills, queried about the alteration, attributed the change — which he initiated — to a question of taste.

Yuri Andropov, the Soviet leader, was being buried that day in Moscow's Red Square. Of the first illustration, Mills said, "we all blow taste sometimes."

The cartoon, he said, was "basically a joke, with poor timing." And cartoonist King told *content* he "wasn't terribly upset ... there was no important principle involved."

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You're now on the 23rd page of the most recent incarnation of **content**, Canada's national bi-monthly magazine for journalists. We hope you like what you've seen; we think it's more vigorous, better presented graphically, with a wider variety of stories.

Humber College, as most people know by now, no longer can provide assistance to **content**. But a group of writers and editors has embarked on a rescue mission to keep the magazine alive and healthy.

Through the generosity of a non-journalist who cares about the quality of Canadian journalism, short-term funding has provided breathing space for reorganization and restructuring. It's the long-term that's important, though. And that's where you can help.

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