

# content

for Canadian journalists

\$2.50

May/June, 1988

## Guns, guts and unity Colombia media musts

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ETHICS — How would you act in these situations? See page 9



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# content

for Canadian journalists

Established 1970

MAY/JUNE  
1988

content is published  
six times yearly by  
Friends of Content Inc.  
36 Charkay Street  
Nepean, Ontario K2E 5N4

## Directors

June Callwood, Toronto  
Kevin Cox, Calgary  
Katie FitzRandolph, Toronto  
Daniel Johnson, Calgary  
Carole MacDonald, Ottawa  
John Marshall, Toronto  
Gordon McIntosh, Ottawa  
Susan Ormiston, Halifax  
John Spears, Toronto  
David Waters, Montreal  
Anthony Westell, Ottawa

Business Manager:  
Carole MacDonald

ISSN 0045-835X

Second Class Mail  
Registration No. 6824

## Subscriptions:

\$15 per year

\$25 two years

\$35 three years

## Foreign:

U.S.A. — \$20 (Cdn) per year

Overseas — \$25 (Cdn) per year

Advertising rates available on  
request, and Content is listed in  
*Canadian Advertising Rates & Data*.

Advertising: Mary Walsh  
(416) 221-5898

Editorial: (613) 727-6907

We gratefully acknowledge  
assistance for publication  
of this issue from

*Maclean's*,

Canada's weekly newsmagazine.

(Content is listed in the Canadian Magazine Index of Micromedia Limited and gradually all issues, dating back to No. 1, October, 1970, will be available in microform. Contact: Micromedia Limited, Information Access, 158 Pearl Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5H 1L3.)

(Content is indexed in the *Canadian Periodical Index*, c/o 444 Front St. West, Toronto, Ont. M5V 2S9.)

Content is a member of the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association.

(This issue released for distribution  
in June, 1988.)

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# Yes! The show goes on

by John Marshall  
Chairman, Friends of Content

**T**he best news for Friends of Content since 1984 (when Dick MacDonald, content's founding editor, agreed to return to the voluntary post) is that the faculty of Carleton University's School of Journalism has offered to take over the job he did so remarkably well until his sudden death in February.

As Canada's only print publication devoted solely to critical observation of the media and to working for improvement in journalism, this is a show that had to go on.

There was never any question but that it would. However, in the wake of the shock of their editor's death, when members of the board boldly assured enquiring readers we would continue to publish, it was with considerable trepidation. For in spite of the increasing recognition by a growing body of advertisers that *content* is a productive medium, there was little we could offer any aspiring editor other than an honorarium minutely out of proportion to a mountain of unreasonable demands on time and energy. And the job required someone ideally like Dick — with wide-ranging experience in journalism, an encyclopedic acquaintance with people in the business and in academia, and an obsession with the need for higher standards of journalistic ethics, craftsmanship and professionalism.

A tall order. But we think it can be filled through the proposal we have accepted from Anthony (Tony) Westell, dean of the School of Journalism of Carleton University. (See his own statement.)

Tony is establishing an editorial committee at Carleton. A member of the faculty will become *content* editor, and likely a second one will act as a managing editor (a desirable division of the functions Dick had to handle on his own).

Friends of Content Inc., the non-profit corporation chartered to rescue the magazine when it was about to fold in 1984, will retain ownership. We will continue to be responsible for the business administration and as in the past

will still be a sounding board for the editors.

Carole MacDonald, Dick's wife, will continue to be business manager, coordinating production and other matters from our Ottawa office. Since her husband's unexpected collapse and death, she has been doing much more, including editorial administration and even hands-on copy and assigning work.

Mary Walsh, our advertising person, will retain the job which she has been performing so well and with increasing success. This issue has a record number of advertisers, making our third consecutive 40-pager possible. More reading — it might be pointed out — for the same price you paid for our first 24-pager in May of 1984.

And if you've bought this issue on the newsstand, where sales have been increasing, or if you check your subscription label now and find you're over- or near-due, we hope you'll whip off a subscription cheque (rates on contents page). As Dick has said in the past, we lack the staff to do a commercial-magazine hounding job. We prefer to spend the money on your behalf in the editorial budget.

Most of our readers — like those of us on the board — are, have been, or will be working journalists. And like us, you might have knee-jerk reservations about editorial functions for this kind of publication being granted to a school of journalism; a symptom of a fear that the publication will become solely academically oriented.

Tony Westell has become one of Canada's most respected journalism academics. But it takes little thinking back to remember that he also had a long and equally-respected career as a news person beginning in 1942 in the effective United Kingdom apprenticeship system with the *Exeter Express and Echo*. He worked for a number of British papers as reporter, political correspondent, columnist and editorial writer, and (starting in 1956) for the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* where he made his mark as a Canadian political writer. He has all the attributes of a

hard-nosed news person combined with a thoughtful, analytical approach to the needs of quality journalism.

This conforms with what Dick MacDonald and the Friends of Content have always seen as this publication's role: that it should include a wide range of published material to meet our objectives — from academic research reports and philosophical observations, to investigative exposes and how-to texts. In fact, at the beginning of our ownership, we unsuccessfully sought some kind of affiliation with a journalism school because in addition we felt that *content* could have an influential and helpful function as a teaching tool. That will now be the case.

However, *content* will definitely not become a student publication, nor will it be an academic journal. Present general policies will not change. Freelance contributions will continue to be solicited from across the country to retain the publication's national voice. Responding once to a complaint — by a non-subscriber — that it was just a Toronto-written voice, we did a breakdown of more than two years' of articles. We established that the weight of *content*'s content was from outside Toronto and about matters outside of Toronto. And it is not going to become an Ottawa voice.

In fact, Carleton is eager to get cooperation from other centres in the shaping of the magazine's coverage. Lindsay Crysler, director of journalism at Concordia University, Montreal, and Michael Cobden, who is taking over as journalism director at University of King's College, Halifax, have already participated in initial planning. While their participation will help guarantee retention and expansion of our national voice, we also expect, however, that the research resources and the pool of faculty and student-body talent at Carleton will add an exciting new dimension to this magazine.

It should be pointed out that Tony opened initial, informal negotiations about the proposal that Carleton become involved with *content* by stressing: "My priorities are these:

# Partners Again

by Anthony Westell

I'm delighted for several reasons that we at Carleton will be able to take on the editing of *content*.

First, I think that Dick MacDonald would have liked it this way. At the time of his death he was a graduate student and a teaching assistant here, and he hoped on graduation to join our faculty and to bring the magazine with him.

Second, Carole MacDonald, who has done a remarkable job of keeping the magazine going since his death, already works in this university, and it will be possible for her to continue to play an active role in *content*.

Third, Carleton and *content* have been partners before. When we produced the late, lamented *Carleton Journalism Review*, *content* distributed it as a supplement to our mutual benefit.

We have no intention of turning *content* into the old *CJR*,

but we can add to *content* some of what was good in *CJR*.

Fourth, *content* and this school are in the same line of business — helping to raise the standards of journalism by instructive criticism.

Finally, *content* is coming to Carleton at an exciting time for the school. On the professional side, our Masters program has just received the highest rating by the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies, and we are adding new courses and more students.

On the academic side, we are proposing an MA in mass communications, and now the university has invited us to propose a Doctorate program in the area of media studies — the first in Canada.

*Content* will be part of this ferment and we hope to be as good for it as it will be good for us.

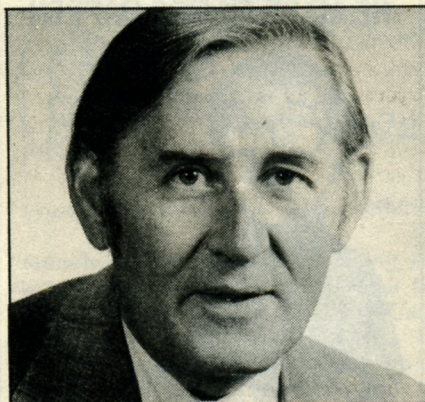
First, that *content* must continue publishing; second, that Carleton be in some way involved."

The smiling rejoinder was to the effect that he had his priorities in the right order.

But in fact Friends of Content are very proud on behalf of our late editor who succeeded in raising the standards of this publication to the extent that one of the continent's most highly-regarded journalism schools would welcome an affiliation. Consequently, the decision to accept the offer was an immediate and unanimous one, as were decisions to expand the magazine's board by one and to elect Tony to fill that position. His name on our masthead, starting this issue, adds significantly to our credibility.

The directors were also unanimous in electing Carole to fill the vacancy left by Dick's death. "Content," she said, "was very, very special to Dick. He felt about it as though it was his child." We are pleased that she wants to continue to play a role in helping to make Dick's legacy to Canadian journalism a healthy one. And Tony has asked her to be on Carleton's proposed editorial committee.

To any Irate Reader who may be considering taking pen in hand (or cursor on screen) about anything in this issue, the Carleton editors-to-be are not your target. Nor is it their fault it is behind schedule. It is the catch-up editorial product of Friends of Content. There has been some copy editing and proof reading assistance from Tony and his colleagues, help that they also volunteered for the last issue. They also have sat in on a Friends of Content's editorial conference for the next issue, and



Anthony Westell

they will be taking over the full editorial function in September.

Meanwhile, on other fronts, we apologize for delays in communications and for missing coverage of some developments in the field in the past two months or so. We hope you understand. It is also possible that there are persons who have not received replies to queries made verbally or even in writing. Please phone or write to our Ottawa office, or phone John Marshall, (416) 438-8706, Toronto.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now — a brief, first-person indulgence. I was out of the country and out of reach by phone or mail from mid February to mid May. My first knowledge of the untimely death of the man I had long known and for whom I had developed an awed admiration and close friendship in the past four *content* years was when I skimmed through a pile of mail and saw his picture on the March/April cover. Before immediately going to Ottawa to start working with Carole to help produce this issue,

I prepared myself by going through my *content* filing cabinet.

It was familiar material, dating back to our incorporation days, but feeling as though I was actually working with Dick — as I reviewed the files — I gained a new perspective on just how much work he had done. He had been much more than editor. He had made a point of keeping me and others informed at all times of the magazine's affairs. Here were the promotion bulletins he had composed, the articles he had written, the optimistic financial estimates (usually right on) and the reports, the progress letters, the various contract negotiations, the plans for surveys, seminars, some communications with contributors, and personal letters of his hopes for the magazine and for himself.

All of these close-to-obsessive intensities were in addition to his other activities: full-time teaching, serving on panels of judges, editing a book, organizing conferences.

Dick also had to fight a severe handicap. He was an alcoholic and a diabetic. And he was brilliant. Very stressful combinations. When he suffered from the assaults of his alcoholism, which aggravated or was aggravated by his diabetic condition, it was as though he had two minds. One could be, not so much terribly confused — as he suffered the mental, spiritual and raw physical agonies of his addiction — but, rather, slowed down, like a record being played at the wrong speed. The other was the rational one, fully cognizant of reality even in the midst of the worst kind of body-paralyzing and intellect-confusing attacks. Consequently, he could be laden with

guilt by the knowledge of what he was doing to himself, to those who loved him, and to his work.

As many others have done in our profession, and as others should, he found alleviation for varying lengths of time from various forms of treatment for his alcoholism. Because of his valued contributions in any area in which he labored, he also was regularly given sympathetic support by employers and colleagues.

One of his greatest disappointments

(and my most difficult responsibility as chairman of *content's* board) was when his stellar efforts at *content* won this publication a unique \$10,000 grant from the Gannett Foundation of the U.S. The lucid part of Dick's mind the evening of the presentation sadly accepted my judgment that the other part of him — the alcohol-handicapped body and psyche could not participate in what was to be one of his finest hours, the acceptance ceremony. It was no joy to have to intercept him as he sat

disconsolately outside the reception room and to have to take his place. And I was afraid my friend and colleague would not forgive me. But, to my knowledge, he never questioned the decision. Our relationship, if anything, became more trusting.

I always was amazed — and remain so — at how this man overcame his handicap to produce so much that was so valuable to our craft. Much of the credit, must go to his supportive wife, Carole. (30)

## Dick's influence will continue

**D**ick MacDonald's name has left the masthead of this magazine, but his name and his ideals are going to be kept alive in Canadian journalism.

A memorial student-aid fund is being established at the University of Western Ontario, and in Montreal, where he was founding editor of *content*, there will be an annual prize given in his name at Concordia University.

"Dick was very close to this school in many ways," said Peter Desbarats, dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at Western. "He had been one of our valued adjunct professors, and he was a regular attendant at our Encounter conferences. And of course I knew him personally, going back to the 60s in Montreal."

The details of the Western fund have not been established, but Desbarats is recommending that it be used at the discretion of the dean and a faculty committee to help students whose attendance is at risk because of some financial problem.

"Every year, almost invariably, we have one or two who run into a financial crisis through no fault of their own. This fund would allow us to assist them quickly and quietly. It could make the difference that would keep someone on course towards a valued future contribution to Canadian journalism. I'm sure Dick would like the fund used for something like that."

Lindsay Cryslar, journalism director at Concordia, said members of faculty there are setting up an annual Dick MacDonald Prize for an essay or article on the subject of journalism ethics or responsibilities. "It is our hope," he said, "that the winner will be of a calibre that will warrant publication, possibly in *content*. The main idea is to encourage others to follow the trail which Dick has blazed for us all, and to perpetuate the memory of his pioneering."



Cryslar stresses that he and his staff do not want to interfere with support of the Western fund, and in fact they are making a contribution to it on behalf of the Concordia school. They are establishing the Concordia prize themselves, but will welcome outside support, particularly from the friends and colleagues out of Dick's past in the Montreal area.

"Dick and his work were greatly admired by hundreds of friends, and even mere acquaintances... We are all slightly in awe of how much he achieved with his dedication and commitment and energy while we were standing on the sidelines thinking about it."

One of the Montreal journalists who echoes the sentiment is Clark Davey, publisher of the *Gazette*. A week prior to his death, Dick had been talking to Davey about the book he was planning as his thesis on media criticism in his graduate studies at Carleton University. "Dick and I had a good many differences over the years about journal-

ism," said Davey, "but I never once had occasion to question his motives or his integrity. And many of us admired from afar his persistent battle to conquer his problems. His accomplishments were often the more remarkable for that struggle."

Sid Tafler, president of the Periodical Writers Association of Canada, said Dick's "contribution to elevating the standards of Canadian journalism is beyond measure. He was the most active and consistent watchdog of a trade that needs a pack of Dobermans in every city."

Two organizations, the Media Club of Ottawa and the Centre for Investigative Journalism, were among the many who paid tribute to Dick — and officers of both had special regrets, because he was to have participated as a speaker at their meetings last March.

A final insight into the field of media criticism in which Dick MacDonald specialized: It is from Barrie Zwicker, a fellow journalist, a co-author and co-editor, and a colleague in various capacities over 18 years....

Media criticism being so financially unrewarding, these two were often in debt. But by "some miracle of staggered misfortune," Zwicker recalls, when one faced a financial crisis, "the other always had almost exactly the required number of dollars to spare — a grand or \$500. After a time, we had pre-typed a standard promissory note."

Journalists and others now can pay off a different kind of obligation to Dick. Donations to the Dick MacDonald Memorial Fund can be sent in care of Peter Desbarats, Graduate School of Journalism, University of Western Ontario, London, Ont. N6A 3K7.

Support for the Dick MacDonald Prize can be sent care of Lindsay Cryslar, Journalism Department, Concordia University, 7141 Sherbrooke St. W., Montreal, Que., H4B 1R6. (30)

# Life itself at stake

*Colombian media find strength in unity  
and in guns when fight for free press  
is fatally more than an academic issue.*

by Merrill Collett

**A**lthough it takes a Canadian journalist only a few hours by jet to get here, the South American nation of Columbia is really worlds away from the peaceful pursuit of news in Ottawa. Reporters in Columbia cover the hemisphere's most dangerous beat.

Life itself is as much an issue as are wages and working conditions for journalists. About 30 have been shot down in the last decade. Most of those killed had crossed swords with the country's violent marijuana and cocaine traffickers, casualties in Columbia's bloody war with the drug lords. But Colombian journalists also have to worry about political assassins, as well as the drug hit-men.

A human rights panel that visited Colombia in March concluded that there were 1,651 political killings last year. Some 137 paramilitary groups are active in the country, according to the government, while seven guerrilla organizations battle the army and the police. Nor does the violence stop there. Political and criminal killings have created what social scientists call a "culture of violence." In 1986 11,000 Colombians were slain in a country of 28 million, making homicide the leading cause of death for men from age 15 to 44. Life has a very low price; hired killers charge as little as \$40.

The carnage has turned the country into a free-fire zone, and foreign correspondents invariably feel more fear in Colombia than they do in El Salvador or Nicaragua, where the lines of conflict are clearly drawn. "In Colombia you never know where it's coming from," said Guy Gugliotta, veteran Latin America correspondent for The Miami Herald.

Everyone knew (where it came from) when Guillero Cano, the dean of the nation's press, was slain. Cano's family-owned newspaper, second largest in the capital city of Bogota, is an unwavering critic of the drug "mafia." In early December 1986 *El Espectador*



launched a campaign supporting the extradition of drug traffickers to the United States. A few days later Cano was shot down outside his office.

Outraged Colombian journalists geared up to take on the traffickers. *El Espectador* joined with other newspapers and with TV and radio stations in a coordinated campaign against the so-called Medellin cocaine cartel.

The anti-drug offensive involved publishing across the country on the same day in February last year an exhaustive four-part series on the cartel, which, the series said, controls 80 per cent of the cocaine consumed in the United States and earns \$8 billion annually. That joint effort was followed with an investigative piece that ran in 19 papers and was carried on TV and radio detailing the death of respected anti-narcotics officer Col. Jaime Ramirez, who staged the 1984 raid on the gigantic cocaine laboratory known as "Tranquilandia." There was no retaliation, although attorneys for the Medellin cartel have told investigators the drug lords resent that the press has robbed them of their respectability!

The Colombian media are a powerful force when united. The country has a large and well-developed news industry. There are about 4,000 journalists working in 28 daily and 100 weekly newspapers, 10 news magazines, 10

TV newscasts and 440 AM radio stations. With so many news outlets, competition is fierce, and the fierce competition pushes Colombian journalism to a level of excellence unknown in much of Latin America.

Some journalists have had to rely on more than media unity to survive. Juan Gomez, editor of the Medellin newspaper *El Colombiano*, went so far as to shoot it out with 12 cartel gunmen who assaulted his home in November. Gomez escaped uninjured and went on to be elected mayor of Medellin in March.

The March mayoral elections also put in office another journalist-turned-politician, Andres Pastrana. Former anchorman for *TV Hoy*, Pastrana was elected as mayor of Bogota after he was rescued in January from drug cartel captors who intended to use him as a bargaining chip with the government. His kidnapping earned Pastrana widespread public sympathy and is credited with boosting him to a come-from-behind victory.

If journalists have gone on the offensive against the drug cartel, they find it hard to fight off the threat from a more shadowy enemy — right-wing death squads. The new danger emerged in mid-August when a death list named nine of Colombia's best-known reporters and newspaper columnists, along with 25 human rights workers, political dissidents, artists and attorneys.

The list had obscure origins: it was released by Marxist guerrillas who said they found it on a captured military intelligence officer. Whatever the source of the list it gained credibility with the subsequent murders of two of the non-journalists named — internationally respected human rights advocate Dr. Hector Abad Gomez, on August 25, and Colombia's leading leftist politician, Jaime Pardo Leal, on October 11.

Political killings have risen dramatically in Colombia ever since November



Colleague slain, journalists take grief and protests to streets

1985, when the army retook Bogota's Palace of Justice from M-19 guerrillas. Over 100 people died in the shoot-out. Since then guerrillas and some 500 leaders of Pardo's Patriotic Union (UP) party have been slain. It's widely believed the slayings — and the death list — are part of an ongoing "dirty war" against leftists and vocal critics of Colombia's armed forces and right-wing death squads.

The Patriotic Union was created four years ago by the country's largest guerrilla group, the Soviet-line Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, to run candidates in local and national elections. It has become the most successful leftist party in Colombian history, and there are fears on the right it will open the way to a communist government. UP leaders say right-wingers are fighting back by aligning with the military in an Argentine-style dirty war against the left.

In 1986, Amnesty International accused Colombian authorities of complicity in 600 deaths during the first half of that year, and former Attorney General Carlos Jimenez charged that security forces had mounted a campaign of "official violence." The military has systematically blocked any follow-up investigation.

Antonio Caballero, until recently an editor of the influential Bogota news-weekly *Semana*, believes the killing of human rights advocate Abad marked a new stage in political violence. "The assassination of Hector Abad Gomez was the first case of a killing of a per-

son who was categorized...as being 'on the periphery of subversion,'" said Caballero.

He and other well-known journalists are apparently located on that periphery as well. Caballero's name appeared on the August death list. He is now in exile in Spain. Five other journalists on the list have also fled the country, joining the more than 100 university professors, medical doctors, authors and artists who have been forced to leave in the last few months due to repeated threats.

The exodus became news when Daniel Samper Pizano, a prize-winning investigative reporter and columnist for the prominent Bogota daily *El Tiempo*, left for Madrid on October 13, the day murdered leftist leader Jaime Pardo was buried.

Samper was not named in the August death list, but he had received frequent threatening phone calls and telegrams following his report of a shady deal involving former Justice Minister Jose Manuel Arias Carrizosa. Arias Carrizosa had already become an embarrassment to the government due to his open support for peasant "self-defense" groups created by the army, and he was forced to resign.

The government did not exactly spring to Samper's defense. President Virgilio Barco's close advisor Gustavo Vasco Munoz called Samper a "moral assassin" and a coward for leaving the country.

The Barco government promised police protection for the journalists

whose names appeared on the August death list, but the rising tide of political violence has swamped the offices of the state security service. Seventy percent of its 2,000 agents are now assigned to personal protection, and few are available for investigative work.

Colombian courts are equally overworked and undermanned. The antiquated judicial system was already in crisis in 1975, when former President Alforso Lopez Michelson proposed a sweeping set of reforms, but the reforms were declared unconstitutional.

Since then Colombia's cocaine kings have waged a systematic campaign of legal manoeuvres, bribery and murder that has worn down judges and clogged the courts. Barco's effort to set up a special tribunal to investigate major political murders was struck down. The government has vowed to increase the number of judges and strengthen the will of the courts to investigate political crimes. But many believe the government lacks the will to protect Colombians — and Colombian journalists — from the current wave of violence.

One of these journalists, a correspondent for *Noticiero de las Siete* (News at Seven), said there was one solution. "I'm going to buy a gun." ☐

*Merrill Collett, a freelance specialist on Latin America based in Caracas, Venezuela, is contributing correspondent for many leading US and UK dailies and periodicals.*



# Catch-up journalism

by John Marshall

**C**ourageous Colombian journalists, many of whom have been murdered by drug dealers and right-wing terrorists, have received little past help in type or on air from the news industry to the north. This applies in particular to the blinkered U.S. media. Though its flag-waving apologists delight in saying Americans have the greatest press in the world, in relation to Latin American affairs it has regularly proved itself worthy of the epithet from an un-named CBC newsperson (reported by the *Globe and Mail's* Michele Landsberg in 1986): "The voluntary *Tass*."

The evidence — in connection with our Colombian colleagues — relates to White House and Central Intelligence Agency policies in Panama and to slavish press propagation of their propaganda (the vaunted *New York Times* leading the way).

While Nancy (star-guided) Reagan says to the world's greatest street-drugs supermarket, "Say no," her husband has been saying yes to the CIA, which, it has now been established, helped finance its anti-democratic war against the Nicaraguan government by dealing in drugs. And the biggest and most efficient drug operatives were those of Colombia's murderous Medellin Cartel. That's been big news since Carlos Lehder, identified as one of its overlords, was finally netted and the story could be covered without initiative or expense. But bigger news was the fact that Panama's dictator, General Manuel Antonio Noriega, had been indicted for being involved with the drug dealers. He was part of a network that helped make them so powerful they once offered to pay off Colombia's \$19 billion foreign debt — for their own kind of free-trade deal.

The U.S. media — and, generally speaking, the Canadian media, which regurgitates so much U.S.-manufactured material — made Noriega the big story also only when it was spoon-fed to them by a U.S. government. Washington had changed its mind about having this man and his military as friends; not because of his drug dealing, but because he was no longer co-operating with the Pentagon, CIA and Reagan-rightists' hemispheric policy directions. And — greatest sin — he was said to have sold arms to the Sandanistas to help defeat Reagan's Contra mercenaries.

Yet, as the *New York Times* Mexican bureau chief Larry Rohter says — now — there was strong evidence in the early 70s that Panamanian military were profiting from drug dealing and the arms trade. The *Toronto Star* let Rohter go on at some length in its pages, pinning the blame on five U.S. administrations for long-running Panamanian faults being ignored. But where was the famous investigative press?

Project Censored, a 13-year-old media research watchdog at Sonoma State University, California, annually



lists the 10 best censored stories. One in 1987 was the increasing centralization of don't-rock-the-boat media ownership and its connections to other Establishment sectors. And that could well be related to another on the 1987 list. The evidence pointing to large-scale Contra/CIA drugs/guns smuggling.

Revelations first surfaced in 1986 — not from investigative reporters, but from a probing inter-faith legal foundation, the Christic Institute, Washington. Project Censored found: "Despite the extraordinary allegations and supporting evidence, the major U.S. media did not commit the resources necessary to explore (its) charges... few even made significant note of Attorney General Edwin Meese's efforts to stop a Contra/drug connection investigation."

And freelancer Ken Silverstein notes in the May/June *Columbia Journalism Review*: "The way the American media have covered Panama over the past several years demonstrates once again the degree to which the press allows the administration to set the nation's foreign news agenda."

There were obvious reasons why Washington ignored long-time anti-Noriega pleas from Panama, but Silverstein finds no explanation for the lackluster media performance. For example, a team of foreign observers that included a former U.S. congressman, contacted AP and UPI about their

convictions that Noriega fixed the 1984 Panama elections, but the news services — on which Canadian also leans so heavily — weren't interested.

Silverstein surveyed the major U.S. newspapers and found a similar lack of initiative — or was it a matter of policy? But after the Washington press-releasing began, there was a change. Seymour Hersh finally told *New York Times* readers the old news about the observers charges. "Such catch-up reporting was only too typical of a press that ignored an important story until the administration gave it the go-ahead."

Meanwhile, their ganster enemies supported by CIA and the then U.S.-supported Panamanian militarists, Colombian journalists were dying. And it's no help to have the late-noted Panamanian Connection covered the way the *New York Times* does it.

It had two stories April 6 that would not have passed a first-year college journalism class. One, a "special" from Panama is headlined, "Noriega Is Reported 'Leaning Heavily' on Cubans." Who says so? Unnamed "diplomats and Panamanian sources," "people in Panama's banking sector," "many Panamanians," "rumors." Only one source is named — in a final paragraph which is about a totally different subject.

The other "special" from Panama, an analysis of alleged resistance by the Pentagon of an alleged push by the U.S. State Department for stronger action against Noriega, runs for 18 inches authoritatively describing all sorts of "reports" about the subject. In the second-last paragraph, an actual person is finally named (and it's obviously a news-desk add-all out of Washington) — and that official denies the basis of the whole unattributed story!

It doesn't make all of us in the powerfully complacent northern media look any better to our fellows in Colombia when a 64-inch *Toronto Star* feature on the Carlos Lehder case reports that the Medellin Cartel is accused of murdering a justice minister, 14 supreme court justices, 43 other judges, and "countless lawyers and bureaucrats," but makes no mention of the many journalists who have died fighting for a free press. ☐

John Marshall, a Toronto writer, is chairman of Friends of Content Inc.

# Ethics — no easy answers

*A functional code for the priesthood?  
A study fad whose time has come?  
A necessity for professionalism?*

by Carman Cumming

One of the more interesting recent books on journalistic ethics is by Tom Goldstein, an American journalist who worked for The Associated Press and the New York Times. Well written and rich in anecdote, the book, called *The News at Any Cost*, leaves simmering in one's mind a couple of curious points: When Goldstein broke into journalism he casually fabricated stories, and when he studied journalism later at Columbia, he got little guidance in ethical matters.

Journalistic ethics are not detached from wider social values — ideals like honesty, faithfulness, respect for the integrity of others. It is hard to accept that any adult going into journalism

would not understand the simple duty to be truthful. It should not have been necessary to learn such things from a journalism teacher. (I have known some journalists and journalism students who *made up* stories, but I don't think I have ever met one who didn't *know* it was wrong to do so.)

But there's a healthy prod here, a challenge to consider whether Canadian journalism teachers, or training editors, are analysing or inculcating ethics as well as they could. The prod comes at a time when several schools, including Carleton, are strengthening professional training at the graduate level, and are considering what elements of their programs should be improved. It also comes at a time when

the study of ethics is faddish, and open to the accusation that professionals who advocate ethical codes may be more interested in their own welfare than that of their clients (or victims). But that is not a reason to ignore the matter.

At Carleton, the study of ethics is approached in two quite different ways. The first takes the subject from the top, looking at the most elevated, abstract principles of ethics. (What is the "good" act, or the "good" society? Does the "good" lie in the act itself, or in the consequences? Is the individual overlooked in the search for the "greatest good for the greatest number"?)

The second approach starts at the working level and moves up through three earlier stages of ethical thinking before arriving at that rarefied level. And while the method is by no means infallible, it has a certain appeal, if only in reminding students that ethical values are indeed rooted in their own lives and actions. The progression goes more or less like this:

1. At the first level, students analyse a number of short case studies in ethical decision-making. What, for instance, do you do if your editor tells you to tape an interview secretly? Should you object? What do you do if the mayor, at an informal coffee session, makes a blatantly racist remark? Should you report it? What do you do if police ask you for the sources of the feature you wrote on prostitution? Do you go along?

This amounts to an exercise in anticipation — of getting students to imagine in advance the problems they may face, and how they should deal with them.

2. At second level, students attempt to draw patterns out of the case studies to define the general guidelines of the trade — in effect, the *de facto* codes of ethics laws as:

- *Protect your sources;*
- *Admit error;*
- *Give a fair hearing to people you don't agree with.*

These guidelines are of course not universally followed, and all of them have exceptions. But their definition recog-

## Something to live up to

A *de facto* code of journalistic ethics as outlined by the writer would mean that you:

- Admit error.
- Protect your sources.
- Don't accept favors, or appear to accept favors.
- Don't let anybody else make your news judgments.
- Stay away from the pack as much as you can.
- Don't gratuitously harm bystanders.
- Don't harm *anyone* unless you're sure you must.
- Print and be damned. (That is, you are very cautious about suppressing things, even though there'll be times when you'll find it essential to do so.)
- Don't lie or steal or tap phones *except in extraordinary circumstances of a kind that justify what amounts to civil disobedience.* (When you do lie or steal or tap phones, explain to readers what you've done and why — and then take your lumps, including going to jail if necessary. You should recognize that your action may damage journalism, by strengthening the impression that journalists lie and cheat and steal. On the other hand, it may make a hero of you and enhance journalism. But it should not be done lightly.)
- Where loyalty to your employer is concerned, are as faithful as you can be without betraying the public trust.
- Don't lose your sense of humanity.
- Don't use your clout as a journalist to intimidate.
- Don't plagiarize.
- Don't smear by innuendo.
- Live up to commitments. (This may apply to everyone, but it has special meaning for journalists comparable to the self-discipline that makes a doctor turn out in the middle of the night, or an actress persist in seeing that the show goes on. Journalists deal with many people in many odd situations, and must carry about with them a reputation for reliability.)
- Respect, finally, the *informing function* — the obligation to supply people with the information you think they need to respond intelligently to their environment.

nizes that there is indeed a degree of consensus among Western journalists on what constitutes proper professional conduct, a set of more or less agreed values defining where the journalists fit in society and, by implication, how they ought to contribute.

3. In turn, this exercise leads to a more challenging effort to get a clear view of the ideas that shape the professional consensus. In Canada, that distinctive ethical outlook certainly reflects a kind of imprecise liberal-humanist vision of the world, a vision that is part of the conscious or unconscious thinking of most Western journalists.

While its roots are not easy to trace, there is also in the Western journalistic consensus a strong element of what almost amounts to class struggle. That is, there is a fairly widespread (perhaps mostly theoretical) resistance to political/economic elites who are assumed to be representing the masses.

This element was very much to the forefront in Canadian journalism in the late Sixties and early Seventies, and owes much to Marxism, though some of those who subscribe to the view would not concede this origin. It is very much a factor in some professional organizations which encourage the view that journalism is the enemy of power elites, and which in so doing

perhaps fail to recognize the extent to which the journalists themselves have become a power elite.

In any event, these various compelling ideas come together in a vision — stated or unstated — of what society ought to be, and what the journalist ought to be doing in it. In that sense the consensus is strongly *functional*. It focusses on the journalist's function, and ties ethical decision-making tightly to it. At its core is a belief that an effective information system is needed for the smooth functioning of a pluralistic democratic society, and that the "good" of journalistic acts must be judged on how well they contribute to that effectiveness.

As a central ethical principle — a kind of sky-hook for journalistic ethics — this idea has great appeal. It sets up the informing function as a clean analogue to the doctor's healing function. That is (so the reasoning goes), it would be unthinkable for doctors to make decisions on any other basis than the patient's welfare. Even if the doctors happened to work for a company, or for the government, the professional decisions would still be independent and based on their best professional perceptions. Similarly the journalists, if they respect the informing function, would base their decisions on what they think the audience needs in order

to be able to respond intelligently to what is going on. (Note that I speak of a *need* to know, not a *right* to know.)

No one suggests, of course, that journalists in Western society have as much independence of action as doctors. But to the extent they claim professional status, they must earn it by a regard for effective discharge of function. The three cardinal elements on which a claim to professional status must be based are: independence of action, motivation based on respect for function, and specialized knowledge that offers some assurance the practi-

On the other hand, they may also inspire creation of a new aristocracy or a new priesthood — a group of people who believe they know what is best for the rest of the world, and act accordingly.

Thus a paradox: One element of training in the ethics of journalism must lie in creating a healthy distrust of professional ethics — at least to the extent that such ethics are self-protective, or tempt us into priestly roles of prescribing who may be admitted to the profession, and how they must perform. The challenge seems to be to take the job seriously, without taking *ourselves* seriously. (50)

*Carman Cumming is a professor of journalism at Carleton University.*

## What would You do?

The following short cases have been used at Carleton University as a device for anticipating ethical dilemmas a journalist faces. To compare reactions, Carleton asks working journalists to cast their votes as well.

In some cases you may feel a need for more information. You're asked nevertheless to make the best decision possible on the basis of what you know.

Some cases have legal dimensions, but for purposes of this exercise you should think only of the ethical dilemma.

Instructors who use the set of cases would appreciate it if working journalists, students and journalism instructors

would enter their answers on these pages or separate sheet and send them in to Ethics c/o Content. We realize this won't provide a representative sample, but it may give an indication of the views of professionally oriented groups. If there's a significant response, we'll report in a future issue on a comparison of the various groups. We also welcome comment on the way this exercise is framed, and how study of ethics ought to be approached in journalism schools.

Please indicate to which group you belong: journalist, journalism student, journalism instructor, other.

**Case 1:** You're covering in provincial court the case of a 20-year-old man identified as a schizophrenic, with past problems of drug and alcohol abuse, charged with assault on two Ottawa women. He is also identified as a member of the Caughnawaga Indian tribe, who is now living in Ottawa. Do you include that last point in your story?

y      n

**Case 2:** You're the only reporter on duty at a Vancouver radio station on Saturday afternoon. Police call you to say that a serious disturbance with

racial overtones is developing in a particular immigrant community. They ask you to keep the news off the air for an hour, to avoid attracting more people to the disturbance. Do you comply?

y      n

**Case 3:** You're covering a national convention of the NDP party. A secret caucus of disgruntled western delegates is in progress. You happen to find a delegate ID card and realize you could penetrate the caucus. Do you do so?

y      n

**Case 4:** You're a Guild shop steward and learn a member of your union has been formally reprimanded by his managing editor because he used the threat of an exposure story to get a car repair bill lowered. The union member concedes that he did indeed make the threat, but insists it wasn't unethical because the size of the bill seemed to justify a story. He says you should support a union grievance. Do you do so?

y      n

**Case 5:** As a newspaper reporter, you're asked by your city editor to call

a dating service, without identifying yourself as a journalist, to find out if it's legitimate or a prostitution service. Do you accept the assignment without protest?

y n

**Case 6:** You're covering an embassy hostage-taking incident for a radio station. One diplomat from the embassy manages to break out of the building, wounded, and takes cover where you and police can see him in bushes beside the embassy. He's hidden from the hostage-takers and they apparently don't realize he's escaped. You're filing live to the station. Do you mention this incident?

y n

**Case 7:** You're working for a small daily and are told you can if you wish take two working days to accept a trip sponsored by General Motors to Detroit to see the unveiling of their new cars, and write a story on it. The trip covers air fare, hotel and food for you and a spouse/friend. You'd like to go, but have some reservations about the acceptance of hospitality. Do you accept?

y n

**Case 8:** You're covering a national conference when a reporter for a newspaper in another city approaches you, says she's missed the whole day's deliberations and asks if you can give her a briefing on what's been happening. Do you do so?

y n

**Case 9:** You and three other reporters have been interviewing a cabinet minister in a public lounge. After the minister leaves, you notice he has left a file behind, on a couch. You're tempted to glance through it, for possible story material. Do you do so?

y n

**Case 10:** You're covering Parliament and are told by a politician that a political opponent was convicted of armed robbery as a teen-ager, some 23 years ago, and served time in jail. He never told his constituents about his criminal past. You ask the accused politician if the story is true and he confirms it, but says you shouldn't print anything on it since he has paid his debt to society. Do you print anything on it?

y n

**Case 11:** You're covering medicine for the *Toronto Star* and you get a call from the Canadian Medical Association asking if you will write a brief for them, anonymously, to be presented to the federal government. It's an area you know well, the money is large and you can do it in spare time. Do you accept?

y n

**Case 12:** You're reporting for a TV station and when you come back from an interview with a cabinet minister, your camera person says that in getting background shots she accidentally filmed a good deal of correspondence on the minister's desk, and that with the new stop-frame technology you can read the letters. You do so and pick up some important stuff. Do you use it?

y n

**Case 13:** You're told by a reliable source in the city water department that a neighboring municipality has allowed a serious water contamination problem to go unchecked. The source directs you to a second person, in the water department of the neighboring municipality, who confirms the account, on condition you won't reveal her name. You write the story, pegged to unnamed sources. Two days later two police officers visit you and say they want to lay charges but can't do so, because documentation is lacking. They say they need to know the names of your sources, and if you won't provide them, the gross malfeasance may go unpunished. Do you tell them the sources' names?

y n

**Case 14:** You're city editor of a daily newspaper and are called by the local exhibition association and asked to serve as PR adviser to its planning committee, for a fee of \$2,000. You'll be required to attend one meeting and to be available in case your specialized advice is needed. Do you accept?

y n

**Case 15:** You're working for a radio station and are on duty alone when a hostage-taking incident is reported from a local embassy. It occurs to you that you might call the embassy to see if you can get in touch with the hostage-takers. Do you do so?

y n

**Case 16:** You're working for a daily and are asked to go through the garbage bags in the yard of a local printing company, just before provincial budget day, to see if they contain any of the budget material the company has been printing under contract. Do you accept the assignment without protest?

y n

**Case 17:** You're covering an election campaign, flying with the prime minister, and late one evening he comes to the back of the plane to let down his hair and have a couple of drinks. No one specifies that it's off-record, but you realize everyone, including the PM, assumes it is. The PM makes an injudicious and very derogatory comment about another politician. Do you report it?

y n

**Case 18:** You've been granted an interview by the leader of a revolutionary group, on condition you not reveal his identity or whereabouts. During the interview the leader says the group plans to detonate a bomb in a public square next Saturday. You later tell police about the plan, and they insist on knowing who the source is, and where he can be found. Do you reveal it?

y n

**Case 19:** You're a Washington correspondent for a Canadian paper, and you find out by accident that one of our embassies abroad is secretly sheltering a number of people hostile to an authoritarian regime. You want to write the story, but Canadian diplomats urge you to hold off, lest you endanger the people concerned. Do you do so?

y n

**Case 20:** You're a Guild rep on a newspaper, and are approached by the head of another newspaper union who says the paper is planning to run a disgusting picture of the international leader of his union. The picture shows the union leader with an arm up, as though giving a Nazi salute. Your colleague says his union plans to walk out unless the picture is pulled, and asks your help. You agree the picture is grossly offensive. Do you agree to try to get your union behind the protest?

y n

# J-school Ethics . . . cont'd

by Nick Russell

**E**thics IS being taught in Journalism school. Rumors of its death — or miscarriage — are vastly exaggerated. And so Cam Sylvester is way off base to fault journalism schools for failing their mandate in this regard (*content*, March/April 1988).

Ethics might be defined as guiding principles for behavior, and teaching ethics might include helping young journalists to spot difficulties before being trapped by them and keeping them to develop criteria to do so. Teaching ethics certainly does not involve imposing values on students, but instead sensitizing them so they develop and use their own values.

At the same time, hopefully, they will learn to recognize the limitations: As hired hands, few journalists have complete control over what they do and how they do it.

Ethical behavior might include, for instance, avoiding preconceptions when starting to research a story, not selecting data for a story to match one's own beliefs, resisting generalising from the particular to the specific, and avoiding anonymous sources. But, unfortunately, Mr. Sylvester himself clearly demonstrates all those pitfalls: He's never encountered ethics in J-school, he talks to an anonymous student or two and a couple of schools where specific ethics classes are not offered, and — gee whiz — how come J-schools don't teach ethics?

"Students do discuss ethics at journalism schools, of course," he says, "but not in classes dedicated to ethics....moral issues tend to be put aside, left for class discussions run on an ad hoc basis."

Wrong.

I used to teach ethics — in classes heavily disguised under the title "Media Ethics" — right under his nose in J-school at Vancouver Community College. And I now teach two full-blown classes in ethics at the University of Regina J-school.

"JOURNALISM 266, 267: Ethics: The Journalists' Rights and Responsibilities."

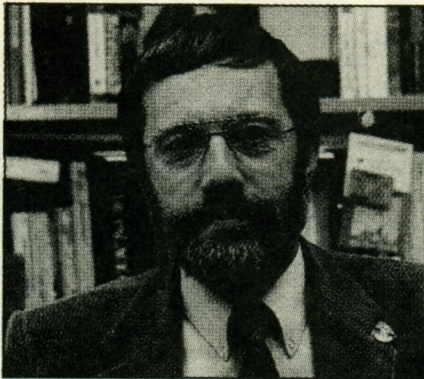
And the Concordia University calendar lists "JOUR C446 Ethics and Responsibility in Journalism."

And the University of Western Ontario J-school has a similar listing.

And *content's* John Marshall and

*Sources'* Barrie Zwicker both taught a class at Ryerson called Ethics and Law, which was a compulsory course while it lasted.

So much for there being no classes dedicated to ethics. Perhaps Mr. Sylvester is confused because some J-grads are wary about discussing ethics in the newsroom, or even in the press club. The alumni of the schools of hard knocks still dominate in many newsrooms across Canada: Young J-grads have strong survival instincts and recognize that the Hard Knockers have an



Nick Russell

extra special sneer reserved for youngsters who cavil about ethics.

Even more to the point, J-grads recognize a deadline just as well as the oldtimers — and they know that 10 minutes to the hour is not the time to start an abstract debate in a radio newsroom.

The neophyte newsie also realistically recognizes that, just as some cynic once defined news as "What your City Editor says it is," so ethics, too, may well be what the editor says it is. If the writer wants to pay the rent. It may, for instance, surprise Mr. Sylvester to learn that in the University of Regina Journalism Ethics classes we make extensive use of the puritanical Lawrence Kohlberg — but that wouldn't cut much ice in the newsroom. Just imagine the tyro reporter telling her ancient editor that Kohlberg figures she should push her views to a higher stage of post-conventional morality!

In addition to required classes on journalism ethics, many students also take classes in Logic and Philosophy. But the advantage of the in-house ethics

classes is, of course, that they can be media specific. Thus, instead of discussing the ethics of euthanasia or disarmament, the class can examine issues like these:

\* Are reporters people, too? Can they vote? Run for office? Put signs on their lawns? Do PR for United Way?

\* When should we name names?

\* How much privacy should people have? Is someone's garbage- can ever fair game?

\* Codes of Ethics: Are they worth the terminals they're written on?

\* When are we being manipulated by news sources?

\* When should we suppress information?

\* What effect do Program Length Commercials have on media credibility?

\* Is cheque-book journalism acceptable? How about brass cheques?

\* Who's watching the watchdogs? Should the public have access to the media? Are Press Councils toothless?

However, there may be a danger that such classes become nothing more than mere case-studies: "This is what reporter Ethel Kugelschreiber did in this situation: What SHOULD she have done?" So it will help if such studies are closely linked to study of the role of the media in society. For instance, should the media merely reflect the mores of their audience, or lead them? Do the media have a responsibility merely to reflect to world, or to build a better world? Where do the rights of individuals end and where does the good of the public begin? How is freedom of the press to be interpreted under the Canadian constitution? How can the needs of society be balanced against the needs of media shareholders? Just how important are accuracy, fairness and credibility?

Thus, by understanding the larger context and having a grasp on the values and issues involved, young reporters can face the pitfalls of journalism with some equanimity, while avoiding becoming either the newsroom preacher or the resident wimp. ☺

*Nick Russell, associate professor of Journalism at the University of Regina, has been a frequent content writer, and was Western Contributing Editor for several years.*

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## INCO

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# Press jump through Olympic hoops 'Wow! What a (slanted) show'

by Kevin Cox

The Olympics offer athletes a chance to strive for excellence against the best in the world. If the Games in Calgary were any indication, the sports ritual is also offering the media a chance to reach new levels of cynicism, jingoism and good old-fashioned boosterism.

To the newcomer to the world of international sport, the Olympics are a rather baffling phenomenon. For several years leading up to the Games, the media both inside and outside the host city delighted in stressing the commercialization of the event and the political problems of the Games organizing committee. Olympic committee chairman Bill Pratt once told a reporter that *Herald* Olympic reporter Crosbie Cotton was the biggest problem the Games faced. Other reporters were subjected to tirades from committee officials when coverage displeased the people in charge.

But once the Games descended on the city, the discouraging words quickly disappeared. The warm, fuzziness that was inspired by an Olympic torch run that started as a promotion for a gasoline company took on mystical proportions. The *Herald* saluted the opening ceremonies with the headline "Wow! What a Show". The final word on the Games was a 1/4-page headline "Perfect". Those who dared criticize the extravaganza were accused of being unpatriotic and unappreciative of the

efforts of the more than 10,000 volunteers involved in the Games. Calgary *Sun* columnist Mary Jane Kletke made some mild criticisms of the way the show was put together and the *Sun* switchboard lit up with complaints. *Globe and Mail* columnist Steve Brunt asked why such things as inflatable dinosaurs and "insipid soft-drink selling anthems" were included in the ceremony. He also asked in a column "why clutter up such a potentially magical time with such a lot of (no slight to the participants) junk."

The response to that column was immediate. The *Globe* became public enemy number one in Calgary. The *Globe's* Calgary bureau received 60 phone calls complaining about the column. A few disgruntled callers cancelled subscriptions. A flood of letters followed in which Mr. Brunt was variously described as a twisted man and a would-be saboteur of the Games. "If Mr. Brunt's comments are an indication of his feelings of Canadian pride or lack thereof at welcoming the world's athletes to Calgary, perhaps he should have stayed home and watched it on ABC," Calgarian Beverley Bendell wrote in a letter to the editor.

While the *Herald* senior editors were cautioning reporters about boosting the Games too much, the *Globe* reporters were getting messages from the home office about being too negative. Neither newspaper changed its slant. The

*Herald*, which had run several stories about the wind and dust problems at the ski jumps and the cancellations at the downhill site and the tragic death of a team doctor at Nakiska, concluded on the final day that the Games were "PERFECT" in huge type. Brunt concluded in the *Globe* that the Games were "essentially dull." The host city's main newspaper did not escape the hypersensitivity of the hometown crowd. Readers wrote to the editor that the paper shouldn't have published stories about United States political scandals when so many U.S. tourists were in town. The readers also didn't like the *Herald* dwelling on such things as figure skater Brian Orser finishing second to American Brian Boitano. The readers wanted the *Herald* to celebrate Orser's medal win, not lament his second place finish.

The Calgary readers would have been shocked to see the coverage of U.S. athletes by the American press, never known for its compassion for losers. The falls of speedskater Dan Jansen, coming only a few hours after his sister's death were considered national tragedies. When biathlete Josh Thompson failed to crack the top 10 in his event, a Minneapolis writer penned: "Josh Thompson was supposed to be shooting for gold yesterday. The way he was shooting he couldn't have won a teddy bear at the state fair." ▶

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Led by ABC-TV, who paid \$430 million for the rights to televise the Games and lost big bucks doing it, the U.S. media concentrated their efforts on their heroes. When the U.S. athletes won, publications such as the *U.S.A. Today* trumpeted the news with huge headlines. Speedskater Bonnie Blair was America's sweetheart and literally hundreds of journalists packed press conferences she attended. Later, when the U.S. skaters were in the distance events only a few American journalists appeared, with most writers ignoring the triple gold medal win of Dutch skater Yvonne Von Gennip and the double distance win of Swede Tomas Gustafson. The U.S. hockey team got similar treatment, with ABC even cutting off coverage of the team's games as the squad fell out of medal contention. The same thing happened to the Canadian hockey team, who attracted over a hundred hockey writers for practices before their game with the Soviets. After a 5-0 loss to the Soviets, the number of journalists following the team declined by about 75 per cent and even some of the Canadian die-hards took to watching the medal round matches on television.

U.S. figure skater Debbie Thomas wasn't a story after she trailed media darling Katarina Witt and Canadian

Elizabeth Manley in the final competition. It was obvious that outside of British plasterer turned ski jumper Eddie 'The Eagle' Edwards, losers were not going to be the big news of the Games.

The Games, which are supposed to promote international understanding, are also a major forum for patriotic sentiments, as journalists make the competitions into an "us versus them" event.

A study done for UNESCO after the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Games found the United States media to be the most nationalistic in the world. That report, chaired by Michael Real of San Diego University found that 79 per cent of the U.S. media coverage of the Los Angeles Games centred on U.S. athletes. Nations such as Australia centred only about 44 per cent of their coverage on their own athletes and teams, while Mexican coverage only touched on their own representatives 17 per cent of the time. A similar study of the 1984 Sarajevo Winter Games found the U.S. media focused on their own athletes in 73 per cent of the reporting.

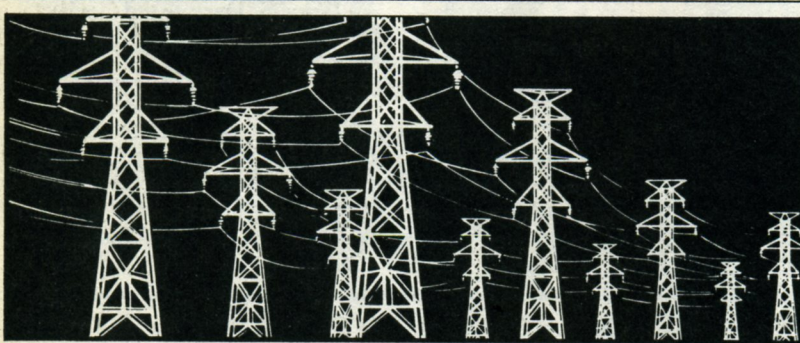
It is difficult to duplicate the UNESCO study, which involved 19 researchers from around the world. No Canadians were involved, nor were the Canadian media surveyed.

But a quick column inch survey of the *Globe and Mail* and the *Calgary Herald* showed that Canadian athletes and teams did not dominate coverage. That may well have been because Canadian teams did not win medals and the five individual medals collected fell below media expectations. But the *Globe and Mail* devoted about 25 per cent of its coverage to Canadian teams and athletes, while other stories taking up big chunks of space were on Witt and Edwards and the medal winners such as Pirmin Zurbriggen and Bonnie Blair. The *Herald* also steered away from the Canadians, with about 40 per cent of the space being devoted to local fortunes while the rest of the coverage looked at the rest of the world. The *Herald* also did a major feature on the Soviets, who went out of their way to be friendly and approachable at some venues.

While it is relatively easy to analyze the performance of various press outlets, it is much harder to detect trends in the electronic coverage of the Games, which reaches close to 2 billion people. It is television which provides the immediate coverage of the event, and it was television which built up the battle of the Brians on the figure skating ice and the showdown between Witt and Thomas that never really took place. With the high price tags of coverage, television is demanding more confrontations and conflicts. That sentiment doesn't exactly promote international understanding but it does boost ratings.

This begs the question of whether the media outlets are giving Olympic viewers what they want to see. The UNESCO study concluded that British and American audiences appreciated the antagonism of the Olympics. "Our reports found audience satisfaction (in British and American surveys, for example) in this 'us against the world' antagonism as much as in international friendship." The high ratings ABC got for its nights of U.S. athletes taking on the world is also an indication of the nationalistic fervor stirred by this international sports festival. Sports psychologists can argue conference after conference about the effect of all this attention and conflict on athletes. But little attention has been paid to the journalistic psyche that promotes the superficial conflicts and leads media people to take some of the worst sins of the profession to their highest level. ☐

*Kevin Cox is a Globe and Mail bureau chief, a founder of the Ontario Reporters' Association and a director of Friends of Content Inc.*



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A WORLD OF CANADIAN TECHNOLOGY



# Broadcasters air beefs and biases

by Fred James Ross

**M**ore than 50 radio and TV journalists from across Atlantic Canada recently gathered in Truro, NS for the annual Radio Television News Director Association (RTNDA) convention.

Three issues — free trade, AIDS and women in the media — captured the expertise, interest and at times, the ire of participants during the day-long session.

Sandy Archibald, president-elect of the Atlantic Provinces Chamber of Commerce, got a panel discussion and debate on free trade underway with two words about providing balanced coverage of free trade — “Tough problem.” The difficulty, he thought, lay in covering what was essentially an economic issue that had become a political one. “Free trade is generally portrayed as black or white,” he said, “but there are all kinds of shades of gray.”

It was those shades of gray that formed the basis of discussion. Although Archibald and co-speakers Ryland Marshall, former vice-president of Stanfield's, a textile company, and a member of the Private Sector Advisory Panel on Adjustment, and Jim Walsh, U.S. consul general in Halifax, said that in varying degrees they were all in favor of free trade.

Journalists, during the question and answer period, hit hard on the ‘unanswered’ questions: Are consumers going to get a better price? Business keeps harping on the ‘fundamental economic advantage’ but exactly what is

this fundamental economic advantage? Free trade may be ‘good’ for Canada but is it good for Atlantic Canada?

The next session, “Covering AIDS — A Sensible Approach”, provided more information, much of which was lost in the heat of battle as journalists took on Dr. W.F. Schlech, a member of the national advisory committee on AIDS and associate professor of medicine at Dalhousie University. He charged that the media's role was to entertain (“to find an issue that provides the biggest bang for your buck”), and spent most of the question and answer period being put in his place.

Amid the din, however, Schlech argued that both single-source reporting and the use of “outrageous quotes” (often from non-experts), was distorting facts and feeding the public fear. His co-panelist, Madeline Comeau, executive director of the Metro Area Committee on AIDS, urged reporters to avoid language that associated the disease with moral failings. Her biggest beefs were “promiscuous” and “casual sex.”

Participants, after discussing the concerns of panelists and counterbalancing those with the role of reporting news, raised an issue of their own: Should it be reported that an individual has died of AIDS? Is this a necessary or relevant fact? Does it inform or merely titillate? And on that issue there was no ire, only a variety of opinion.

The final panel discussion of the day, “Women in the Media — A Status

Report”, expected to be the most controversial, turned out to be an exchange of shared experiences and general agreement that at senior levels women in the media are not making inroads.

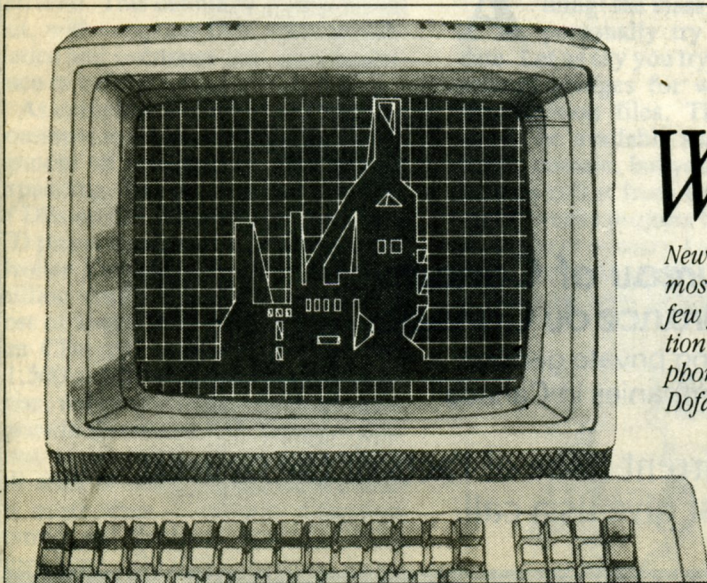
Susan Marjetti, news supervisor with C-100 (a Halifax FM station) said her “greatest problem” was co-workers. Her authority as news supervisor was not always accepted by male colleagues, she said, and ideas proposed by her were pooh-poohed while the same idea by a male colleague was enthusiastically endorsed.

The obstacles that prevent women from breaking into upper management ranks are similar to those that lead to the neglect of women's issues and the presentation of traditional female stereotypes. “I have never heard a male colleague suggest a story on child care. They may support it but they don't forward it,” said Halifax's CBC-TV anchorwoman Susan Ormiston.

Issues of concern to women, and women themselves, were not reflected accurately in newscasts, agreed Debi Forsyth-Smith, president of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Despite the fact that women were a majority in this country only 21 percent of newscasts featured women interviewees — and they appear as non-experts, she said.

The call for better coverage and better representation came through. ☐

*Fred James Ross is the pen name of a Nova Scotian writer.*



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# You, too, can scrap paper — how to build data base

*Personalized 'Info Globe' possible,  
index 11-volume work on one floppy —  
and content gives you search program*

by Daniel Johnson

**W**ithin a year I expect to have virtually no paper files. I have been clipping for about 20 years and am now giving it up. The only paper files I will need are for things like original letters received, hard to find reference pieces, personal papers, and articles clipped from *Playboy*. Everything else will be on computer database(DB) — commercial or my own.

Until recently the only DBs available to the public were electronic equivalents of clippings, like InfoGlobe. Such services are good because you don't have to clip it yourself, but bad because, unless your request is tightly focussed, you will be inundated with tangential material. With a personal DB your *particular* needs are satisfied without denying yourself wider DB scope.

A filing cabinet is a DB of clips and notes in files usually organized in alphabetical order. The value of a DB is measured in its ability to score the widest possible range of information in the simplest way allowing for efficient retrieval. This definition sounds trivial but, with computer DBs, takes on subtleties and overtones you must experience to believe.

As computer and related technology continues to advance rapidly, the development of commercial DBs is also expanding. You can now buy a variety of DBs on CD-ROM and run them on a CD player through your computer. The Grolier Encyclopedia (20 volumes, 9 million words) is available on CD at a cost of about \$500 (The equipment to run CDs on computer costs between \$1,500 and \$2,000). There are, no surprise, rather specialized database management systems on CD. Tetragon Systems of Montreal offers Home Base (all sorts of demographic information on more than 7 million Canadian homes) and Business Base (covering more than 500,000 Canadian businesses) for \$3,000 each. The Univer-

sity of Toronto's Faculty of Medicine uses CD-ROM to store its huge chemical DB. The system is run on an IBM XT personal computer.

Commercial DBs are also coming via other media. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, for example, is more than a dictionary. It is also a history of the English language reaching back to the middle of the eleventh century. But the 12-volume set now costs more than \$1,700. The University of Waterloo is preparing an electronic version of the dictionary as a DB that will be available to a wider audience at lower cost using optical disc readers. More people than ever before will have ready access to the 21,000 pages, 660 million words and two million quotations.

## The Case for a Personal DB

**A**ll commercial DBs lack one thing: the mass of facts that you personally try to keep up-to-date. Let us say you try to keep track of several bridges for which you need specification files. That information would be available somewhere in the public domain, but you possibly would have to cull it from lists of bridges or public works projects from all over the province or country. Instead, when you have your information you simply put it into your own personal DB where it

is easily and readily retrievable. You can also ensure the accuracy of the numbers.

Or, as a political reporter, you gather a large amount of information about your subjects and potential subjects including unused quotes that may be of is not just one of keeping track of all the information, but of updating it. Your people move around, divorce, remarry and have more children, change jobs. There are also clarifying, contradicting and new quotes to be compared to the originals. The problem is always to make sure you get them together in a readily retrievable way when you need them.

DBs, supplied by the computer industry are geared primarily to the business user — lists of customers, inventory, that kind of thing. Potential applications for journalists, researchers and writers are equally great but not important enough for the manufacturers to mention. We will now remedy that.

**D**Bs are made up of individual records which, in turn, are made up of fields. A name, address and phone number would be a record; each of those items a field within the record. Such a DB would actually have five fields, the address also including province and postal code. It helps to think of a DB as a table made up of individual columns. You can sort the DB in a variety of ways. The order of the records could be indexed by name, province or postal code, then listed that way.

dBase III+, for example, lets you set up a maximum of one billion records totaling two billion bytes. Within those limitations you can have 128 fields which would allow you to keep track of 128 different nuances of widget in an inventory system. This is very powerful from a business user's point of view but this power, can be put to a writer's use in other ways. Instead of widgets, a



writer keeps track of individual words as well as *groups* of words, either in sentences, phrases or jottings.

This task, using notebooks and files, is time consuming, tedious and, when the search is on — intimidating. For a computer, with a simply designed system, it is a title. dBase II allows a total record width of 1,000 characters; dBase III+, 4,000. That is about 175 and 725 words respectively. Paradox allows total record widths of 4,000 characters. This means that you can organize extensive notes, paragraphs and even small articles as individual records. The only limitation is that it may be broken up into several fields.

The nature of computer information processing limits each field to 255 characters. For reasons I will explain shortly, I always make my text fields 250 characters wide at most. For dBase II this means four fields named (say) Note1, Note2, etc. and eight fields for dBase III+ or Paradox similarly named. It's helpful to use a consistent system for naming fields so that, when working with different DBs, you do not need to stop a search to look up field names.

### An Act of Creation

**T**he Will and Ariel Durant *Story of Civilization* series, nearly 50 years in preparation, is made up of almost five million words in 11 volumes. I read this series, made detailed notes, then put those notes into a DB that makes it possible for me to find — in a matter of a few minutes — at least one historical reference for any contemporary journalistic event. I also have ready access to the origins of numerous terms, words, philosophies; first examples of traditions; and many other historical anecdotes. The DB itself has 2,500 records; occupies just over half a floppy disk (200K bytes) and, when printed out, 110 double spaced pages. That is only the raw material. What I can do with the material is priceless. It is a unique, customized resource.

My Durant DB has one field 79 characters wide. I did this so that a record would fit across the screen when being displayed and would only take up one line when being printed out. In my design I wanted it to be only notes about where information was so that I could search for key words or phrases and then, from those records, know

precisely where to go in the volumes for further information. I find, for example: "Dutch press was the first free press 7-480". I go to volume 7, p. 480 for more information. This record, incidentally, was only typed once when I originally entered it into the DB. After that I exported it to WordStar and compiled the written report. To refer to it here I went into the WordStar file, picked out that record, exported it to a holding file, then imported it to this document.

### Your DB

**W**hen creating a DB try to anticipate your needs. If you are making a DB of quotations of various topics, for example, you would probably have as the first field "topic" (say 20 characters wide); next "note1" (50-250); "Speaker" (30) and perhaps a last field for your "Comments" (again, up to 250). The width you choose for the text fields depends on your experience with the types of quotes you intend to collect and the length of commentary you expect to make.

If we use the maximum numbers suggested above we would have a DB with four fields and records of 550 characters. You do not need to worry, however, that new needs will develop later making your DB useless. If it turns out you need to add one more field (after you've entered a thousand records), no problem. DBs can be easily restructured and the old information placed in the new structure. The basic limitations are that you can make fields wider but cannot narrow them without losing information.

Here is where we discover that WordStar is, conclusively, the best word processor for writers. This DB of quotations could not be created in text by another word processor. WordPerfect, a popular business package, allows the creation of text to a right margin of 250. If you limit yourself to this width, you can create text data in WordPerfect and export it to dBase or Paradox.

You can enter data into a DB one of two ways. The obvious way is to use the DB package itself and enter the fields and records one by one. Or, more flexibly, you can create the text in WordStar. You set the document up in WordStar's nondocument mode which has, for all intents and purposes, no

right margins. You can enter text to 250, 1000 or 4000 characters before you hit return. This is why I make my fields 250 characters wide. I can easily see where my field limits are (250,500,750, etc.) so that I don't cut words in the middle or, if I am finished with one field, can easily find the beginning of the next.

A record 4,000 characters wide represents about 700 words. This means that you can store the majority of your stories in, at most, a record or two. They will be readily accessible if you want to reuse part or all of one; or if you need information or quotes from an old story. Although they will probably be written in standard word processor mode you can, if you're using WordStar, re-open it in nondocument mode, reformat the text to give you long strings of text until you reach each hard carriage return. You then go through it and make sure that at the field break points (250,500 etc.) you are not truncating words. You then save the file (now in nondocument mode) and export it to your already created DB in dBase II, III+, or Paradox.

Using your own DB this way you can easily search and pluck from work you have done in the past. In how many stories have you referred to topic X? Do a search and you will not only know how many times, but in which particular stories. Want to dig up a good quote or reference from the past? Just use a key word or phrase and you'll find it in seconds.

### Searching dBase

**A** DB of text will probably hold, when you're done, thousands or even hundreds of thousands of words. 100,000 words, for example, would fill a 200-page book. With a book you can look in the index. What do you do with a personal DB? dBase III+ has FIND or SEEK commands but they only work on indexed files. Obviously, we cannot index text records so we must create our own search program. The search function I have developed below will search one field for one term. You can create this or any other program file.

You do not search your original file but copy it to a file you name SEARCH.dbf. In this program "S1" is the term or phrase you're looking for and is limited (in line 5 of dBase III+)

to 20 characters. You can change this. The field is "F1", and is (in line 6) limited to 10 characters. When you run this program you will be prompted (lines 7 to 13) for the search term and field name; the next line clears the screen and line 16 says, on the screen, the term you're looking for.

The heart of the search is in lines 14 to 23. The computer looks in each designated field for the term. If it is not there, it marks that record for deletion and goes on to the next. It repeats this until the end of file (EOF) is reached, then goes back to the beginning and PACKS — deletes all marked records. At line 25 the system says the term is found in . . . goes to the bottom of the file and reports the number as the number of records in which your term has been found. Then the file pointer returns to the top of the file and begins to display them on screen, fifteen at a time. You can then take your search.dbf (which is a subset of your main file) and rename it if you wish to keep it. The line numbers noted above will be different for dBase II which has 28 lines.

**Text Search for dBase III + (dBase II)**

```

1 SET TALK OFF
2 CLOSE ALL
3 CLEAR
4 USE SEARCH
5 S1=space(20) []
6 F1=space(10) []
7 ACCEPT 'Search term' TO S1
8 S1=ltrim(rtrim(S1)) []
9 ACCEPT "Field" TO F1
10 F1=ltrim(rtrim(F1)) []
11 CLEAR [ERASE]
12 @ 5, 28 SAY "Searching for . . ."
13 @ 7, 35 SAY S1
14 DO WHILE .NOT. EOF() [DO WHILE .NOT. EOF]
15 s__11 = upper(substr(S1,1,1))+lower(substr(S1,2,1en(S1)-1)) [IF S1 $(&F1)]
16 IF upper(S1) $(&F1) .or. lower(S1) $(&F1) .or. s__11 $(&F1) []
17 SKIP
18 ELSE
19 DELETE
20 SKIP
21 ENDIF
22 ENDDO
23 PACK
24 CLEAR [ERASE]
25 @ 1,5 SAY "The term . . ."
26 @ 3, 1 SAY S1
27 @ 6, 1 SAY "is found in . . ."
    
```

```

28 GO BOTTOM
29 ?recno() [DISP #]
30 @ 8, 15 SAY "record(s)"
31 GO TOP
32 DISPLAY ALL
33 CLOSE ALL [CLEAR]
34 RETURN
    
```

(The lines are numbered here only for ease of reference not for inclusion in program. Line 15 and 16 should be done as one line.)

This program was written for dBase III+. For dBase II look at the square brackets on some lines. If the brackets are empty, delete that line; otherwise replace that line with the square bracket contents. The main change is in simplifying lines 15 and 16, the search itself. In III+ the program checks for upper and lower case. You may ask to find, for example, the term "politics". It will also find "Politics" if the word begins a sentence or is part of the title of a book or article.

In dBase II the lines would become: "if S1 \$(F1)". (If you don't want to search for upper/lower case — it takes about three times as long to do a search — make the line for III+: "IF S1 \$(&F1)". Here it is not looking for upper or lower case so you would use the strategy of dropping the first letter and looking for "olitic" which would not only find capitalized examples, but also references to the "body politic". You would not have to do that for capitalized terms like Mulroneu. In both search programs you also increase your flexibility by considering other ways your term may appear. If you are looking for references to China, for example, you would enter "Chin" which would also find Chinese. And it's best to drop the "s" from some terms. "olitics" will find just that; "olitic" would also find political, and so on.

To increase your program's power you can search for more than one term in more than one field. In this program lines 7 and 9 ACCEPT search terms and field names and place them in memory variables S1 and F1. You can have the program ACCEPT more than one search term or field or both. To adapt the search lines you use the .OR. statement so that the program will not delete a record if term 1 or term 2 is in the field. Correspondingly, you could have the program search for the term in Field1 .AND. Field2. And so on. It is not necessary for you to have to learn dBase programming to do a search. Both programs, as presented here, are standalone and will find one search term in one field both designated by the user in dBase II or III+.

**A**lthough less powerful overall, Paradox is much easier to use. We do not need to program a search utility because Paradox has its own. At the opening menu you hit ASK, then enter the file name to search. A table appears and you type FIND in the left column and return. You're then in the field(s) and you type in the terms or phrases wanted in the appropriate fields.

In the first field type in the word you want but you must use wild cards. Type in ".ocean." and it will find all instances with small or capital letters. By placing two dots together "." you increase the range of selection for text use. (Normally, in business usage, the fields are smaller and contain only a few words or a single number.) "Ocean." will also find "oceanography". ".art" will find "start", "wart", etc. ".art.." will find "dart-player".

Another wild card is the "@" which stands for only one character. Thus "@art" will only find "cart", "dart", etc. LIKE will find inexact matches. You can spell a word incorrectly and it will find similar words for you. The only stipulation is that the first letter of the word must be correct. You cannot use wild cards in this application.

Paradox passes through the DB once for each search term. If you are looking for three terms — say politics, economy and business — Paradox would do a search first for politics; go back to the beginning and search for economy, then do it once more for business. The records are copied into a file called ANSWER and, unless you specify, records are not duplicated. A record that contains the term politics will not be reproduced again if, on the second pass, it is also found to contain the term economy. If you wish to keep this new DB you must rename it, otherwise the next time you do a search the retrieved records would be put in the ANSWER file, the first one being automatically erased.

**Import and Export**

**S**ome of the material in this article was written months ago for other purposes. The bit of search pro-

gram code, for example, was originally written as part of the original program in WordStar in nondocument mode. I then gave it a .prg extension and it became a dBase command file. For this article I made a copy of the program, opened it in WordStar, blocked out the section reproduced above and exported it to ThinkTank (an outline organizer) where I prepared the outline for this article. When I began to write, I exported the ThinkTank outline to a WordStar holding file. When I reached the relevant part of this article, I imported it for use here. It has only been written once. If *content* were on an MS.DOS system, it would not have to be rekeyed there either, but would go straight into the typesetting process.

When I was learning Paradox I made my notes in SideKick, a background note program. When I was finished, I exported the SideKick notes to WordStar. I was working with a friend who had Paradox, but no word processor. I took my notes from WordStar and exported them to Paradox as a DB. All he needed to do was be able to open the file and he had access to the notes on how to work the software.

## DB and Word Processor in Tandem

**d**Base and word processors can work within each other. When in WordStar, you hit R at the opening menu and you are prompted to run a DOS command. You can then run dBase and, after you quit and are back at the `c>`, hit any key to go back to WordStar. While in WordPerfect you hit `Ctrl-F1` which puts you at the `c>`; you can run dBase and, when back at `c>`, type `exit` to get back into WordPerfect. You cannot do the same with Paradox because the program is too big to fit in memory (my system has 640k).

You can also use your word processor to write and edit command files (.prg). You do this by adding a command to `config.db`, your configuration file: `tedit=ws` for WordStar, `tedit=wp` for WordPerfect, or whatever command your word processor uses. When you wish to `MODI COMM` you will, through dBase, boot up the word processor and use all your familiar editing commands. When you are finished editing, you automatically go back to dBase where you can run the command file you have just created.

## Choosing a DB Program

**F**or writers, good, accessible text DBs can be created with dBASE II or III+ and Paradox. The choice depends on your current and anticipated — needs, system, word processor and level of interest. If we assume that your current and future needs will be for extensive text processing in a DB then any of these three will serve you. The main difference is that each has different system requirements.

dBASE II began in CP/M and took up 55k on 136k, single sided disks. In MS.DOS dBASE II takes up about 120k on 362k, double sided disks leaving the user about 240k usable space making it a good DB system even with only one drive. dBASE III+, on the other hand, has about 440k of program files on two disks. The first disk is the system disk with about 75k of free space on it. Once the system is loaded it must be replaced with a second disk that must remain in the drive. To operate dBASE III+ you must have two drives and, while it will run on a machine with 256k memory, 384k is better as a minimum. Paradox has 11 disks and requires a hard drive.

When choosing a DB you must buy to serve your current system, but must also consider the future. Fortunately the compatibility of these DBs is so great that I routinely create files in one and use them in the others. The only files I have never been able to re-use, and fortunately there are only a few of them, are those created under my original CP/M dBASE 2.3b.

You will also want compatibility with a word processor. dBASE and Paradox are not only compatible with those discussed here but also with the majority of major packages.

Storage may also be a key factor. A byte is, for our purposes, the same as a space in our records. dBASE stores each record and uses one more byte as a place holder to indicate when a record should be deleted. So my 79-character-wide DB needs 80 bytes for each record. 1,000-record DB needs 80,000 bytes (80K) on disks with a capacity of 362,496 bytes (80K would be about 15,000 words). Paradox can take up considerably more disk space than dBASE. I took one file of 500 records which took up 375K in dBase and converted it to Paradox where it

occupied 512K — 36% more. The larger the file, the higher the ratio. A small dBASE file of 4,577 bytes, for example, took up 5,356 bytes in Paradox — only 17% more. But, as you would be using Paradox with a hard drive, this extra storage becomes a problem only when you are backing up to a floppy. A full floppy can hold more than 60,000 words so, for most users, storage should never be a problem.

Now a key question: level of interest. If you intend or think you may become very involved with your software projects, then dBASE is the most powerful. If, on the other hand, you wish to just use the systems as outlined here, then Paradox is the easiest to use. But, you say, my current system won't support Paradox? No problem. Use dBASE until such time that you upgrade. All your datafiles can be easily transferred. And, of course, once you get into dBASE you might not want to switch. Let me point out, though, so you're not fooled — dBASE programming is very difficult. It is only for those with the patience of Job and many free hours to spend hacking.

## What is Knowledge?

**F**rancis Bacon did not actually say "knowledge is power" but instead wrote, in a fragment, that ". . . *ipsa scientia potestas est*" — knowledge itself is power. I could have found the inaccurate quote in one of several reference books. The additional information came from my Durant DB (I knew it was in there, somewhere) and was retrieved, using Paradox, in less than thirty seconds. For comparison I did the same search using dBASE III+. Looking for "knowledge" without upper and lower case, took 1:45; looking for "knowledge" in both upper and lower case 4:30 (all hard drive times).

What you, as a journalist, are searching for is not power or knowledge *per se*, but rather reliable information as quickly as possible. In that role a computer DB will serve you well. As a tool, the limits of a DB are about the same as that of your imagination. (30)

*Daniel Johnson is a Calgary freelance writer whose work includes computer training manuals. He is a regular contributor to content and a member of its board of directors.*

# 'Women, go for the brass ring'

by Kay Rex



Gladys Taylor

springing up...recreational vehicles were 'in'.

As a young girl Taylor yearned to be an author and promised herself she'd write her first book by the time she was 30. However by then she had a husband, three children and a house to look after. She was 35 by the time her novel, *Pine Roots*, came out in 1955, winning the Ryerson Press fiction award. Three years later, there was a second Ryerson award for her novel, *The King Tree*.

In the meantime, living in Quebec, she was writing book reviews for the *Sherbrooke Record*, and learning about typesetting and layout by putting out the book page.

The know-how she'd accumulated over the years served her well on her venture into publishing — now she's

the owner of a million-dollar family publishing firm.

And she's back writing books.

When, at 60, failing health caused her to take a holiday in Australia, she came home and wrote *Alone In The Australian Outback* which chronicles her experiences driving the perimeter of Australia. "I had been on the road 55 days, driven 11,000 miles, lost 15 pounds and felt 20 years younger."

For about the last 10 years Taylor has lived in Irricana, a Prairie town on the outskirts of Calgary, where she and her children started and run the *Rocky View Five Village Weekly*, the *Wheel and Deal*, *Carstairs Courier*, and the *Airdrie Advance*.

Her latest book, *Alone In The Boardroom*, is a personal account of how divorce forced her to turn her life around.

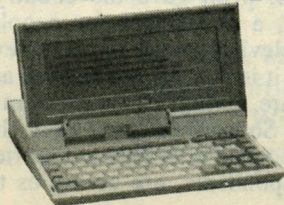
She urges women to be strong, "to go for the brass ring" if they have her kind of take-a-chance temperament.

Now 70, Taylor is heading back to Australia this year where her outback book is being made into a movie.

And how does she feel about it all? Perhaps she says it best when talking about the drive around Australia. That was when she discovered she was "now no stranger to that aging woman, Gladys Taylor. I knew... she still had a lot to offer. And — perhaps best of all — I sort of liked the old girl!" 50

Kay Rex, a Toronto author and former Globe and Mail reporter, was a founding director of Friends of Content Inc.

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# Peter 'thoroughly disillusioned'

*Trueman says TV news is slicker and shallower, a sort of information Musak, less and less for serious viewers — he opts for print.*

After 20 years in television news, "thoroughly disillusioned with the whole process," Global's anchorman, Peter Trueman, is returning to print journalism as a freelancer. He began in print 34 years ago, switching to the CBC where he became executive producer of the National. The 53-year-old, who leaves the anchor desk at the end of June and finishes his respected commentaries at the end of July, is no airhead news reader. He's earned his spurs — and the right to make aspersions — with assignments that

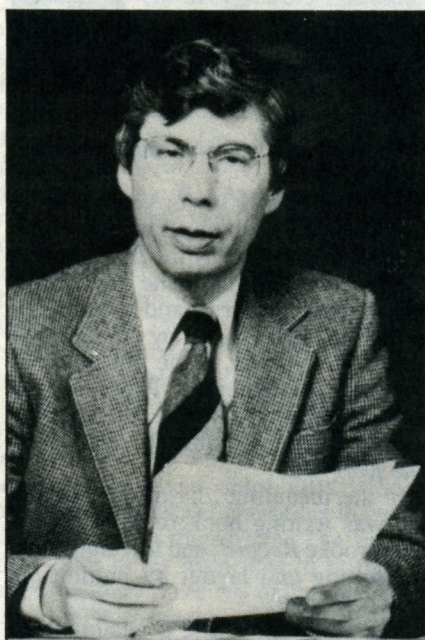
have included Parliament Hill, Viet Nam, and eight years in New York and Washington. Last year, vocally restive in TV journalism, he signalled his decision to quit, and though he has said in another context that "society is not kind to turncoats," he has become increasingly, publicly critical of the media in general, TV in particular. What follows are extracts from two lengthy addresses, one to the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada at Ottawa, the other at Queen's University. *content*, welcomes readers' comments.

Against my better judgment, my wife and I went to see *Broadcast News*, the Hollywood film about the Washington bureau of one of the big U.S. networks. I'd read Peter Mansbridge's comments on the movie in the *Toronto Star*, and expected that it would be an overblown, exaggerated account of the war between the TV news airheads and those in TV news who still have some pretensions to journalism. It was not. The damned movie was practically a documentary of what goes on, at least in the private networks. If Peter Mansbridge and the CBC have managed to stay out of the gutter, God bless them, but I'm not sure I believe it entirely.

The airhead anchor who is the central figure in *Broadcast News* is an accurate reflection of many of his real life colleagues. As a matter of fact, he's smarter than some of the anchormen I've run into, because the guy in the movie KNOWS that he doesn't know anything.

Linda Ellerbee is the American anchor person who coined the word "twinkie" for the Barbies and Kens of TV news. "You've seen them on television," she writes in her book, *And So It Goes*, "you've seen them on television acting the news, modeling and fracturing the news, while you wonder whether they've read the news — or if they've blow-dried their brains too."

Ms. Ellerbee is herself no "twinkie" as the book and the following comment on the print competition makes clear. I quote: "Print reporters like to look down on TV and TV reporters," she writes, "at least until they are offered jobs in TV. I'm not sure why this is; after all, in 1983, the year that TV gave



Peter Trueman

the country *Vietnam: A Television History*, a 13-part series on public television and an outstanding piece of journalism, print gave the country *USA Today*, a newspaper for people who find television news too complex."

But it is not just the airhead anchors who are giving TV journalism a bad name. Some of the good guys, the people who paid their dues as reporters and correspondents, are giving us trouble too.

It stands to reason that in a society which by and large determines value by checking the price tag, there is a certain temptation for anchor people to take not just the news seriously, but themselves as well.

If you pay a man a million dollars a year — that's about \$550 an hour, incidentally — that man is entitled to be confused about the proper behaviour towards a vice-president who makes only \$55 an hour. What is there in the way pecking order is determined in this increasing mendacious North American society which would suggest to him that a man who makes one tenth what he does might possibly be 10 times more important? Why wouldn't Dan Rather figure he had a right, perhaps even a duty, to tell off George Bush. It was one of Rather's fellow Texans, after all, John Nance Garner, who once said with soul-satisfying crudity that the vice-presidency wasn't worth "a bucket of warm spit."

Tony Atherton, the TV critic for the *Ottawa Citizen*, suggested recently, after watching the U.S. network coverage of Super Tuesday, in the American South, that the three major U.S. anchors — Dan Rather, Peter Jennings, and Tom Brokaw — had managed to convey not animosity towards the presidential candidates, just condescension.

"The anchors know," Mr. Atherton wrote, "that when the politicians entered the presidential race they stopped playing politics and started playing television. And television is the anchors' game."

He went on to quote from a recent article in the *Washington Journalism Review* which referred to the network triumvirate as the "800-pound anchors". The logic for that description apparently is that like the proverbial 800-pound gorilla, you call 800-pound anchors "sir".

"The networks," Mr. Atherton con-



cluded in the *Citizen*, "have gone out of their way to give their anchors a strong presence, to put them in the calm centre of any news whirlwind and to keep them there. TV sitcoms may not last longer than the blink of a Nielsen family's eye, but anchors are groomed for endurance. Continuity is the next best thing to credibility."

"But the quest for stability has its fallout. The networks have created monsters."

I agree with Mr. Atherton's assessment of the situation in the United States. I do NOT agree with the suggestion he makes that it isn't happening and couldn't happen here. I don't think there is any doubt that we in Canada are headed in exactly the same direction.

In the introduction to a book called *The Newsmongers* last year I confessed that my dourest conviction was that North American journalism had peaked and was now headed downhill. I said I didn't know exactly when the golden age was, or even if we'd had one, but I was pretty sure we were past it, and that we would not, for example, see the likes of a Blair Fraser, once Ottawa editor of *Maclean's Magazine*, in the capital again. I said I missed his scholarly approach, his intellect and the vigor of his writing. I said I also

missed his civility.

Not everyone familiar with the Ottawa scene 20 years ago would agree with that sentimental judgment about Blair, of course. And after the book appeared, I discovered that one of the *Globe and Mail's* Ottawa reporters, Graham Fraser, Blair's son, was among those ready to quibble, if not about his father, then about the current state of Canadian journalism.

Graham stopped me in a National Press Building corridor one day to thank me for the nice things I'd said about Blair, but to disagree with my suggestion that we'd never see his kind again. Graham felt that the *Globe's* Ottawa columnist, Jeffrey Simpson, was a worthy successor to his father. The implication was that I was being far too hard on the current crop.

Graham may have been right. I'm 53 years old and as I've already mentioned I have made a living in this business since 1954, that is, for slightly more than a third of a century. I've been in daily news too long, and in television too long as well. I am jaded, and occasionally I give in to cynicism.


In my more rational moments, I must admit that there were things wrong with the media 20 years ago, when I came back to Ottawa after eight years in New York and Washington. There

were things wrong with it 30 odd years ago, when I got into the business, and there have been things wrong with it since the Parliamentary Press Gallery was founded. There never was a golden age of journalism in this country. At best, in all the ages, there were golden people...

My position on muck-raking is quite straightforward. I am not prepared to debate it with young reporters, journalism professors, bosses or members of the public who think they know how I should do my job better than I do. If my employer ever wants someone to hide in bushes to see whether or not one of our political leaders is having extramarital affairs with someone who is not his or her spouse, he'd better hire some other reporter.

Any journalistic obligation I may once have felt to convey that sort of tripe to the general public has long since been overtaken by the obligations I feel as a member of the human race. I would rather be a lousy journalist than a self-appointed diety.

While we're on the subject of what I won't do, let me add that I will not conduct an interview as if it is an interrogation. I will not lead an interviewer up the garden path and then spring an ambush for him. I don't think there's anything wrong with tough questions,



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but I do not think that an interview should be a confrontation. I say that not simply because I'm sick of bad manners, but because I believe it is counter-productive journalistically. A reporter requests interviews in my view to elicit information, and that's the last thing he's going to get if he attacks the person who might give it to him. A lot of TV interviews these days seem staged not for information but to provide an entertaining spectacle....

What upsets me most about the new wave of journalists, I suppose, is that I suspect many of them feel they must function in news stories in the same self-indulgent way omniscient authors used to function in some 19th-century novels. That is, they don't even try to keep themselves out of it. The theory seems to be that since we all agree it is impossible for anyone to be unbiased, that is to overcome the influences of one's environment, it is only honest to let one's biases hang out in full view of the reader or viewer. But whether truly unbiased reporting is possible or not, surely the journalist has a continuing obligation to be as fair and accurate as possible.

And if hard news reporters indulge their biases, give in to them, we're in grave danger of crossing the line from analysis into criticism. It's bad enough that commentators are so critical of the political process. When reporters begin to think that they too have a critical function, it seems to me that public life must begin to be intolerable.

My father is fond of quoting Sam Johnson to me on the subject of criticism. "The ignorant," Dr. Johnson wrote in his semi-weekly, the *Rambler*, "always imagine themselves giving some proof of delicacy, when they refuse to be pleased." There are too many reporters these days, who imagine they are giving some proof of delicacy by refusing to be pleased on the front pages.

If they feel duty bound to unburden themselves of opinions, they should in my view, offer to write editorials, or perhaps become television critics. That last is almost a license to advertise superior intellect....

\* \* \* \* \*

I think it is fair to say that if Canadians believe they are governed solely by groups of politicians in Ottawa, the provincial capitals and the municipalities, they are only partly right.

Increasingly, it seems to me, Canadians are directed not by governments

alone, but by a symbiotic and increasingly tormented relationship between politics and journalism, in which politicians and journalists live attached to one another, as each other's tenants, each contributing to the other's support, perhaps even being vital to it.

That description of the relationship between politicians and the media would also serve as a reasonable definition of a marriage. And as in most marriages governed more by lust than love, the partners in this one have discovered that the pleasures of the flesh are not enough, and the union is in serious trouble.

I hope you don't think it presumptuous of me, as a newsman, to suggest that the dubious breed of which I am a part — unelected and unprofessional — has become part and parcel of the business of government in this and other democratic countries. But I don't think I exaggerate or overestimate the media's role in the shaping of public policy, and I assure you I report it not so much with pride as with considerable misgiving.

It would be hard to say which marriage partner is most to blame for the fact that the relationship has turned sour. But as one who has been misled and bamboozled by politicians of all stripes for more than 30 years, I'm not about to admit that it's all the media's fault. I've had to listen to self-serving tripe, and outright lies for too long to think the media is to blame for everything.

But it takes two to kill off a marriage and we have done our share of the damage. Frustrated by our inability to uncover a Canadian Watergate, we indulged in nit-picking....

\* \* \* \* \*

Nowadays, the people who can hardly wait for the National Press Club bar to open on a Saturday morning are more likely to be associate members than journalists. Reporters are not ladies and gentlemen perhaps by the standards of yore, but they are decent and responsible citizens, much better educated and more dedicated than the oafs and political dillettantes who shared space in the Press Gallery a hundred years ago.

They do not deliberately write slanted stories, to favor one political party or another. They are human, of course, and favor some politicians, as people, over others. And some see themselves as a kind of unofficial opposition, no matter what the political persuasion of the government of the

day.

I think that is wrong because of the implication it contains that reporters should be judgmental. If they think of themselves as unofficial opposition, they cannot of course, be even-handed in their coverage of government...any government.

And if they behave like the real opposition, the elected opposition, they soon appear to believe that the government is incapable of doing anything right. Any government expenditure is therefore wrong, because we all know that governments are spendthrift. Any decision to cut spending is therefore wrong, because governments always cut the wrong things. Anything that governments do to take some of the incredible pressure off its senior ministers — give them government aircraft, for example, or permit them to travel first class — is wrong because the man in the street can't have it or do it.

In fact any perk that a prime minister takes, because he is Prime Minister, is automatically wrong because it means he thinks he's better than the rest of us. It would never, ever occur to a Canadian, that a prime minister might just be better than some of us at least. The Canadian's instinct when he sees someone on a pedestal is to kick him the hell off it, as soon as possible.

The opposition mind-set, whether it is official or unofficial, is to the effect that governments are inept, incompetent, lazy, self-indulgent, sleazy, dishonest, short-sighted, politically motivated, stupid, arrogant, selfish and catatonic. I would be much happier if the news media left opposition to the opposition parties and got on with the business of communicating information. Because it seems to me that we are not minding that business very well.

In my view, one of the most important recent books about television and this so-called information society we live in is Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. Its thesis is that television, by the way it has developed, if not its nature, is an entertainment medium. The book suggests that if it is not already too late, we should not surrender politics, education, religion and journalism to it....

Considering its genesis, its not surprising that the book suggests that television is best for its consumers when it is least pretentious, that is, when it is showing junk entertainment.

"It (TV) serves us most ill," Mr. Postman writes, "when it co-opts serious modes of discourse — news, politics, science, education, commerce, religion — and turns them into entertainment packages. We would all be

better off if television got worse, not better."

Translated into specific program terms, what this means is that *The A-Team* and *Cheers* are no threat to our mental health. On the other hand, *60 Minutes*, *Eye-Witness News*, *Sesame Street*, and even a sit-com like the *Cosby Show*, to the extent that its social messages are taken seriously, are dangerous as hell.

The sugar coating becomes everything. It may make the pill easier to swallow, but in the process, it destroys any medicinal value the pill might have — utterly....

As we become slicker and shallower, then, there is less and less for the serious news viewer to grab a hold of, and more and more opportunity for the absent-minded majority to use the news as a security blanket, a sort of information Musak. When even those who watch TV news to learn something cannot inform themselves adequately, it seems to me, we're in serious trouble.

Surely there is only one thing more dangerous than an uninformed society, and that is an uninformed society which doesn't know it, which insists that this is the age of information, and which blithely assumes we are all get-

ting the benefits of its availability....

The general public reacts emotionally now to almost everything, and in my view you can blame television news for most of it. I'm not talking now about the "Eyewitness" stuff that Postman says is dangerous, but the TV news like my own which really tries....

Increasingly, I am afraid, we're beginning to deal with most issues in a shallow and emotional way. We react, and governments react — particularly when we are this close to an election — on the basis of images, not facts, and not on society's demonstrable needs.

There will be no rational debate on free trade, for example. The lines have already been drawn between those opposed and those in favor and the shape of the debate has been chiseled in stone....

Free trade is an issue which cries out for intelligent debate, but its obvious to me that at a time when the means of communication have become awesome, our neglect of them is going to be awesome as well. What we're going to have is a lot of emotion and a lot of name calling, and the outcome will be decided by those who can come up with the most heart-rending images and the most memorable lyrics.

We're not going to have a debate on

Meech Lake, which the non francophone populace by and large neither understands nor cares about. We're not going to have a proper debate on defence, either. The debate at the moment is merely an occasional exchange of school-yard salvos between an older generation whose emotional response to defence issues hasn't changed since World War II and a younger generation which seems to think that war will go away if we wave enough placards at it.

We're not having a rational debate on immigration either. What discussion we've had has tended to be between red-necked bigots who want to keep all immigrants away as long as there is a single solitary white Canadian who doesn't have a job, and the rosy-breasted pushovers who take every sob story they've ever heard at face value. Benoit Bouchard knew he was losing the argument in Quebec about deporting Turkish refugee claimants when one tear-stained little boy appeared on television and said in French, "I want to stay in Montreal."

When that happened, Mr. Bouchard threw in the sponge, and put deportation orders on hold....

I think I have glimpsed the future and I must say I don't like it much. 30

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# Getting it right at Saturday Night

by Ron Verzuh

As sure as death and taxes Conrad Black will turn *Saturday Night (SN)* into a right-wing rag. That's what the critics said when the Toronto financier bought the century-old magazine last year. With the May 1988 issue they might smugly quip 'we told you so'.

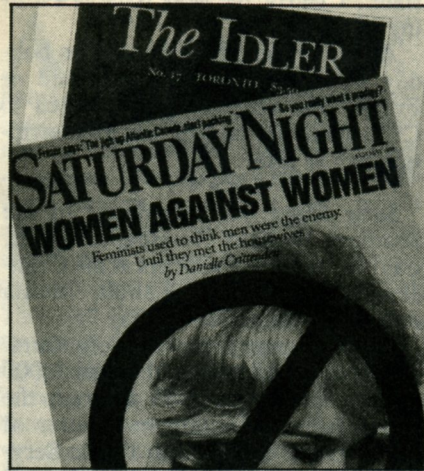
In 1973, "Citizen Black," as the *Globe* christened him, wrote to the ultra-conservative *National Review* editor William F. Buckley outlining a makeover of *SN* in the *Review's* image. The plan was scuppered no doubt partly because it was tough to find editorial talent to staff a right-wing *SN*. Now it seems there is a ready supply of neo-conservative journalism to fill the glossy pages of the once-heralded jewel of Canadian magazine publishing. One source is an obscure Toronto magazine called *The Idler*.

When Black bought *SN* he quickly quelled rumors that it was for political ends. Although *Fortune* magazine said he had taken as his model Australian press baron Rupert Murdoch, Black insisted that he simply wanted to own a pretty presence on the Canadian intellectual's coffee table. The rumors were further muted when he hired his friend the respected *Globe and Mail* London correspondent John Fraser to replace Robert Fulford.

Fulford quit as editor shortly after the Black purchase after almost 20 years at the helm of Canada's most high brow magazine, and his untimely departure should have sounded the alarm. But when Fraser took over in October 1987 nothing changed.

Then in the spring Fraser gloated about an excerpt from former Liberal cabinet minister Don Jamieson's candid diary, revealing that Pierre Trudeau had acted too harshly when he invoked the War Measures Act in October 1970. It was anti-Trudeau which put it right in keeping with the politics of *SN's* Conservative owner, but it was also a journalistic coup. Thus it could hardly be considered a sign that the right had invaded *SN's* editorial room. The May issue, however, was a horse of a different color.

The cover was an unimaginative photo treatment of a woman and child in a red circle with a slash through it, suggesting that the family was somehow under attack. The nine-page story



by Danielle Crittenden, called *REAL Women Don't Eat Crow*, totally missed the cutting edge of the current debate between feminists and the muffin lobby: the issue of choice. Feminists want it; *REAL Women* don't.

The poorly edited article — Ontario Housing Minister Chaviva Hosek was still "on her way into David Peterson's cabinet," a post she has held for months — fuelled rumors that Fraser and his crew are scrambling to meet monthly deadlines. But being a bona fide anti-feminist treatment, it also confirmed that *SN* had a new political agenda.

Crittenden is a frequent contributor to *The Idler*, which is described by editor David Warren as a right-wing alternative magazine whose closest left-wing equivalent might be the staid *Canadian Forum*. He called it "politely conservative," in a rebuke of the Ontario Arts Council and Canada Council after they turned down his requests for funding. When the councils snubbed him, Toronto *Sun* columnist Barbara Amiel, Canada's arch-right-winger and loudest anti-feminist, came to the magazine's defence.

It might have been that the councils viewed *The Idler* as more financially secure than most other literary magazines. After all, Warren was bailed out to the tune of \$250,000 by Toronto furniture manufacturer Manny Drukier a few years ago when all seemed lost. Drukier even provided the magazine with fancy new digs above a British-style pub also called *The Idler*. But that point somehow got lost in the debate.

*The Idler* came on the scene about five years ago because Warren could

not find a publication which was "high brow but not academic," "where you could exhibit a sense of humor," and "which had a literary atmosphere" akin to Samuel Johnson's own journal of the same name.

In an early editorial, Warren also noted that he wanted a magazine that was "political, but not blinkered." Would it have a point of view? Yes, but "what it is, the reader must discern. It will take the length of many numbers to expound it."

It was a tall order, but *The Idler* seemed to deliver. Early reviews were excellent. The *Globe*: "the wittiest, best-edited magazine to appear in years." The *Washington Post*: "prematurely wise and preternaturally arch." *Maclean's*: "the best literary magazine this country has ever had." "Punch and Private Eye rolled into one," said *Marketing*. And by and by, the point of view did become discernable . . . sort of.

Warren had told the Toronto *Sun* that he wanted to "give a voice to Canada's right-leaning intellectuals," and to that end he published lengthy, well-written features on everything from South Africa and free trade to the education system and the evils of Stalinism.

The writing was of a higher quality than is usual for small magazines. The design was clean. And the *Idler* personals section provided some of the best and funniest reading in the book. It was also unabashedly right-wing. Crittenden, who is the stepdaughter of former *Sun* editor Peter Worthington, is tarred with that brush. By publishing her indictment of feminism, so is *SN*.

But the Crittenden piece isn't all that meets the critical reader's eye in the May *SN*. It also contains a piece by Stephen Hopkins, the editor of *Western Report*, a right-wing magazine which is identified in the *REAL Women* piece as one of the "appointments of the active right."

There is also *Fraser's Diary* wherein he argues that the best way to handle the "Atlantic Canada problem" is to cut loose the whole lot of them. "Most are not trained for work, yet must somehow be housed and fed — preferably in well-organized camp allotments where welfare and disability payments can be easily delivered and redeemed."

It was tongue-in-cheek a la the great

British satirist Jonathan Swift (had Fraser been reading back issues of *The Idler*?). Yet one wonders if Maritimers will get much of a chuckle out of Fraser's cruel portrayal. Again, it was a shot at the Liberals, this time for subsidizing the have-not provinces.

Finally, a piece of economic analysis by *SN* associate editor David Frum concludes that a "free-trade deal will help erase any lingering traces of the old branch-plant economy." It's the kind of polished argument that Frum has been honing in *The Idler* since its early days. His defence of religious fundamentalism and a stinging critique of pay equity come immediately to mind.

Frum, 27, is the son of CBC broadcaster Barbara Frum. His father is a wealthy businessman. Neither parent holds strong conservative views, but David took the opposite political road. A recent *Ottawa Citizen* profile of Barbara notes that David displays a "ferocious, unbending conservatism."

That unbending conservatism, along with considerable editorial skills, is what Frum brings to the high post of *SN* associate editor. Apparently, he now has the green light to try his brand of Buckleyan journalism on a bigger audience (*SN*'s circulation is estimated

at 130,000; *The Idler* has under 10,000 subscribers).

When Black bought *SN* last summer, the *Globe* noted that he "doesn't see much point in owning a newspaper if you can't use it to get your point of view across and influence affairs of state." Clearly, the May issue is a testing of the waters.

As for Fraser, either he was on holiday when the issue went to bed or Frum, who recently got engaged to Crittenden, has bought him a subscription to *The Idler*.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Song Sheet*, the newsletter of the Southern Ontario Newspaper Guild, was one of the big winners at the Canadian Association of Labour Media awards in Vancouver on May 7.

The four-pager, run by volunteers, won four certificates in the over 2,000 circulation category. *Un-fettered*, the delightfully irreverent newsletter of Local 558 of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, took top honors in the volunteer category (under 2,000 circ.).

In the union local category (paid staff), the Steelworkers' *Steel Shots* won two awards (best news and best overall), sharing the limelight with *The Mixer*, a tabloid published by the hotel

and restaurant workers union (best layout and design and best features).

*The Public Employee*, *The Facts* and *The Leader*, from the Canadian Union of Public Employees, were judged the best overall publications in the national and provincial category (paid staff). *The Leader*, a monthly tabloid, also won for best layout and design.

*On The Level*, the carpenters' union tabloid, also took two awards (best news and best one-person operation) and *The Fisherman* walked away with an award (best features) and an honorable mention (news).

*The Fisherman* is a perennial winner and was once the source of much embarrassment for former Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) president Dennis McDermott.

When the awards began a decade ago, someone jokingly suggested that they be called CALMies. It would not have sat well with the anti-communist labor leadership, least of all McDermott. When the paper won the top award in the early years, the red-faced McDermott had to present it to the communist-backed *Fisherman* in front of the CLC convention delegation. (S)

Ron Verzuh is an Ottawa writer who specializes in alternative media.

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# Scene in passing

## GET THE PICTURE

A chap described wryly as a "Toronto businessman and collector" in a *Globe and Mail* report paid Sotheby's a record \$297,000, plus tax, for a Krieghoff. He wanted to add it to the 200 other Krieghoffs he has tucked away. All ye who labor in the vineyards of the Lord — of Fleet, that is, will be pleased to know your labors are not in vain. It was Ken Thomson.

## ANOTHER HOBBIEIST

Another businessman and collector Conrad Black (*Saturday Night*, Britain's *Daily Telegraph*, something called *The Reveille* in Missouri, and a flock of other non-Krieghoff collectibles including 49 U.S. newspapers and free "shoppers" bought by his Hollinger inc. in the past 18 months) reported first-quarter operating profit of \$9.1 million, up nearly 50 per cent from last year. Jobs at the *Telegraph*? Down to 1,300 from 3,000 two years ago.

## THE BIG PICTURE

A Toronto collector and businessman reported that after a two-year spree of collecting (42 items of various types in various countries, none of them picturesque *habitant* calendar art) he'd take a breather — maybe. There'd been record spending, though somehow net profit climbed 30 per cent (keeps a fellow ahead of a Canadian fivish inflation rate) by the collector's International Thomson Organization. There was a whopping 62 per cent jump in operating profits of its information and publishing group. No report of any similar increase in newsroom pay scales.

International Thomson's doing rather well, but it added some new talent. Lord Thomson's 30-year-old son — who's coming up in the business and the collecting world fast — was named a director. He'll bring fresh ideas from the Hudson's Bay Co. where he's president of one of the stores divisions. Hudson's Bay lost \$78.5 million in 1987 down from a profit of \$33 million.

## THE BUSY BEE

Said Torstar chairperson Beland Honderich just the other day as revenue went up 15 per cent and profits 23, "We're very conscious of the need to expand." Among other items collected last year: the *Barrie Banner/Advance*. A \$400-million, takeover of a U.S. magazine outfit fell through. About 18 years ago to a Senate committee, and 7 years ago to the Kent commission, Bee (as others in the *Toronto Star* hive call him) warned about the danger of growing chain ownership. The last time was just before he scooped up the main weeklies that were competing with the *Star's* Toronto-area chain.

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## Letter to the Editor

Editor:

With reference to John Schmied's article on our Cabbagetown studio in the March/April issue of *content*, I would like to correct a few points of fact.

While I can't argue that the facade of 509 Parliament St. is a local beauty spot, it's far from being the ugliest building on the street. Indeed with a recent cleaning and the installation of two glass showcases for photos of *CBL* Radio personalities, it's quite presentable. The staff was also a little put out to learn that they worked in an area filled with old desks and dusty office dividers. Most of the furniture and equipment has been purchased new within the past 3 years and we are now almost completely computerized. This open concept for a studio has proved so successful in fact that broadcasters from many parts of the world have vis-

ited the premises to study our approach to local/regional production.

A couple of minor points: *Sunday Morning* does not originate from *CBL* — it's a network program from Jarvis Street; and the new Broadcast Centre will amalgamate 25 locations, not 13. Don't quite know where Mr. Schmied got the spelling of my name or the title, but that's not important.

Kel Lack  
Director of Radio  
Ontario Region

*Tuffy, the airways' most intrusive celebrity, must have got into content's communications flow. But we still think it was a warm piece about a unique operation. The Sunday Morning goof was an editing one. As for your name, we're in a jam — door jamb. That's how you spell the name on your office door.*

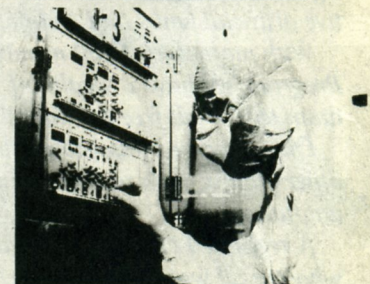
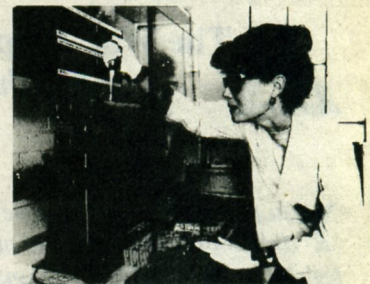
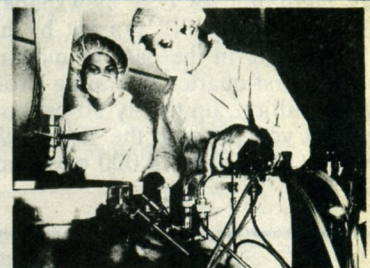
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# Ethical traps for the freelancer

by Barbara Florio Graham

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## Second of two parts

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Business writer Diane Francis, in a *Maclean's* column, said "Hanson parlayed that little lie into the truth." But a lie it remains.

A U.S. publication suggested vanity-press authors could get away with making up promo blurbs from celebrities because the latter, happy with the publicity, wouldn't make a fuss.

We've been told recently that Larry Speakes' book, in which he admits that he wrote quotes attributed to President Reagan, was itself ghost-written, that Fredelle Maynard wrote Dr. Joyce Brothers' syndicated column, and that John F. Kennedy accepted a Pulitzer Prize for *Profiles in Courage* which should have gone to the book's actual author, Ted Sorenson.

A further area of ethical contention concerns the relationship between freelance writer and editor. Most of us have encountered an editor who resents our asking for a written contract, insisting that his or her word should be sufficient. But trust must flow in both directions. Experienced freelancers realize that assigning editors may not have final authority when an invoice is sent to accounting. And too many of us have learned on the evening news that an editor who just issued an assignment has been laid off when a new publisher took over.

Even a signed and dated contract cannot guarantee payment if the publisher chooses to default. However, PWAC recently recovered more than \$15,000 owed to its members by *Science & Technology Dimensions Magazine*, after it was sold by the National Research Council to a private owner. Fees owed to individual writers ranged from \$100 to \$5,000.

Less successful has been the battle of several authors against book publishers who have defaulted on royalty payments. One small firm in Montreal folded when several authors filed suit against it, only to have the owners resurface in a western province under another name.

Not all defaulting publishers are one-person, fly-by-night operations. At least one, otherwise respected house continued to publish bestsellers even as they assured the Canada Council all their royalty obligations to authors were being covered, when in fact they were not.

I realize I've just touched on some of the ethical concerns facing the freelance writer. Without union protection and government regulations, we venture into a minefield every time we boot our computers.

Nobody said it would be easy. 30

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*Barbara Florio Graham, author of Five Fast Steps to Better Writing, has written for U.S. and Canadian newspapers and magazines.*

## MISSING INFORMATION

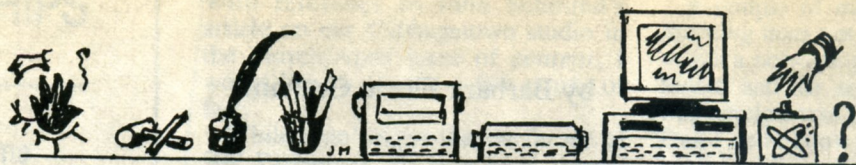
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# Future Schlock — but it makes news



by Tim Lougheed

Just when you thought technological miracles cease, or at least taper off, how exciting it is to discover in Stewart Brand's *The Media Lab* (New York: Viking-Penguin, 1987) that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has cultivated a facility dedicated to exploring the future of the mass media.

This is no mere think tank, but an active "media lab" filled with prototypes of machines that are as intriguing today as a console combining a VCR, stereo television and a CD player would have been a century ago.

In the media lab, personal computers monitor on-line news services, gener-

ating an individualized newspaper based on the reader's selected interests. Computers are likewise taught to scan television shows, recording only those conforming to the viewer preferences. The two can even be combined, allowing a television viewer to stop the action and check a current magazine reference to a star of one of the shows.

This kind of sophisticated hardware has been emerging from a university environment since the 1960s, but the research does not stagger along on the usual spare diet of academic grants. At the heart of the \$45-million facility are about 100 major corporate sponsors from the United States and Japan

including every name one might expect to see attached to a new photographic, printing, electronic, publishing or broadcasting venture.

If all this appears to be exciting, why haven't we heard much about it until now? Brand answers that question in his book, though certainly not in the way he had intended.

The mandate and the potential of the media lab are so encompassing as to be overwhelming, and they clearly overwhelmed this author. Brand, best known as the author of the counter-culture classic, *The Whole Earth Catalogue*, spent a sabbatical at MIT considering the lab's activity over a period of months, and talking with virtually everyone who works there.

What should have been a comprehensive study of the place turned out to be an awkward array of images and ideas concerning media, technology and the role of the individual. Brand's style — which ranges from idiosyncratic to bizarre — consistently triumphs over the substance of what he is trying to describe.

This would be amusing were it not so frustrating. In a book about the next generation of communications technology, the author appears to have scrambled his own signals.

Often the scrambling takes place in loving detail. Over 20 pages of the book are nothing more than transcriptions of taped interviews. In one case he justifies leaving the information in that form — right down to the grunted "Mm hm's" of the interviewer — because it consisted of a "metalogue", a dialogue serving as a combined demonstration and explanation.

In other places the scrambling stems from simple clumsiness. For example, an agency is referred to first by its acronym, which may not be defined for several pages. While this may seem picky, such oversights point to sloppy editing on that high tech media marvel, the word processor. Repeated often

*"Don't keep forever on the public road, going only where others have gone. Leave the beaten track occasionally and dive into the woods. You will be certain to find something you have never seen before. Of course, it will be a little thing, but do not ignore it. Follow it up, explore all around it: one discovery will lead to another, and before you know it you will have something worth thinking about to occupy your mind. All really big discoveries are the results of thought."*

Alexander Graham Bell

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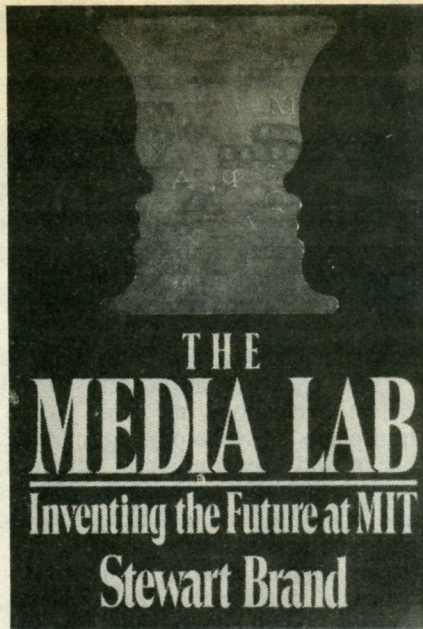
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enough, these details progress from distracting to annoying, taking away from what could have been a fascinating look at a unique research institute. Yet if this is informative writing, it is the Craft at its most eccentric; it is closer to science fiction posing as critical analysis.

Indeed, Brand acknowledges his out and out awe for science fiction writers, calling them the most important philosophers of the twentieth century. That may be where the book's problems begin, for rather than considering what is, Brand appears all too eager to judge according to what could be.

That attitude becomes a recipe for disaster in a commentary on technology and the state of modern society. One cogent passage reveals this difficulty both in Brand's thinking and that of the researchers he observed.

"Communications technologies converge at the world and at the individual. The Media Lab assumes that if it helps



take care of the individual, computer-augmented individuals will take better care of the world. The Lab would cure the pathologies of communications technology not with economics or politics but with technology."

In other words, the given solution to problems engendered by technology is simple: more technology. This is far from the counter-culture movement which saw young people reject modern society and its inventions for a simpler life farming on communes.

Nevertheless, Brand seems to have found something interesting. Let us hope someone from our poor archaic media goes to see the Media Lab — see it as it is — in order to provide a balanced assessment of its threat as well as its promise. (30)

*Tim Lougheed is a science writer for Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario, and a regular content contributor.*

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# A successful scientific look westward

by Bob Morrow

Last year, with great trepidation, the Canadian Science Writers' Association (CSWA) decided to stage its first annual general meeting and seminar in Vancouver. The event, held April 30-May 3, surpassed all expectations and provided a strong anchor for science-writing in B.C.

More than 100 registered for CSWA '88 at Simon Fraser University — more, in fact, than have attended annual conferences in Ontario. In some sessions, it was standing room only.

The decision in May, 1987 to hold a Vancouver conference caused a lot of executive anguish during the year, says president Bud Riley, a freelance Toronto broadcaster.

But a hard-working Vancouver committee led by BCTV science journalist Lorraine Graves pulled it off with steadfast support from Toronto. A \$1,500 Science Culture Canada grant solved many of the money worries.

The conference demonstrated two things: There's keen interest in science west of the Rockies.

Frank Oberle, minister of state for science and technology, led off an over-

flowing session (on a Sunday morning) with an appeal to science-writers to support Science Culture Canada efforts to explain the importance of science and its applications to Canada's future in an increasingly competitive world.

in Western Canada and, surprising perhaps to many Eastern Canadian journalists, a wealth of top-flight scientists

Other speakers ranged across many fields: Archeology, medicine (AIDS, transplants), psychology, agricultural, ocean and environmental sciences, geology, robotics, computers, physics and chemistry, radiopharmaceuticals, and food irradiation.

Newspaper awards went to Ron Lowman, *Toronto Star*; Zena Olijnyk, *Regina Leader-Post*; Jack Miller, *Toronto Star*; Sylvie Gourde and Ivan Lamontagne, *La Presse*, Montreal; honorable mention, Stephen Strauss.

Magazines: Adrian Forsyth, Ed Struzik and Harry Thurston, all for *Equinox* magazine articles; honorable mention, Yanik Villedieu, *L'Actualite*.

Television: Francine Charron and Solange Gagnon, Radio Canada; Mike Poole, CBC; Eileen Thalenberg, CBC;

honorable mention, Lorraine Graves, BCTV.

Radio: two awards to CBC's *Quirks and Quarks* team, Anita Gordon, Jay Ingram and Penny Park, with Aladin Jarrah participating in one; an award to Jean Lalonde, Radio Canada, and junior award, Anne McIlroy, *Ottawa Citizen*.

Lorraine Graves and Sid Katz, both of Vancouver, were elected to the board of directors of CSWA at the annual general meeting. The next annual conference will be held in Ottawa.

A Media Impact Study carried out in the 1970s for the Ministry of Science and Technology indicated that newspaper and magazine readers hungered for science news, but that editors hadn't got the message. Could it be that 10 years later Canadians are waking up to the fact that science and technology permeate their lives and that, to an increasing extent, their future depends on them? (30)

*Bob Morrow is past president of the Canadian Science Writers' Association.*



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Out on the East Coast, the drama which is the struggle over the government-backed, financially-strapped *Le Matin* continues. **Senator Jean-Maurice Simard**, former lieutenant in the Hatfield Cabinet replaced *Le Matin*'s publisher, **Adelin Blanchard**, and the paper's board of directors subsequently resigned. Simard announced in April that the paper had paid off its debt of \$350,000. *Le Matin*, which had been losing a reported \$1,500 a day, is the French-language daily which is backed by the New Brunswick and Ottawa governments through a \$6-million trust fund.

*Le Matin* and its rival, *l'Acadie Nouvelle*, of Caraquet, New Brunswick, which itself staggered into existence with money it raised by selling shares in the company, both emerged following the demise in Sept. 1982 of the Moncton-based *l'Evangeline*. *Le Matin* sells about 7,000 copies a day.

Simard emerged the victor in the March power struggle when the then-*Le Matin* officials asked the New Brunswick government for \$10,000 a week until it could complete a merger with *l'Acadie Nouvelle*. Premier Frank McKenna refused the request saying, "I think it is philosophically wrong for us (the government) to be directly involved with the operations of the press in New Brunswick."

Simard opposed the merger, as did the board of trustees which administer the trust fund, as well as *Le Matin*'s 56 employees, who feared for their jobs. The board of directors favored the move as did Assumption Mutual Life of Moncton, which holds a financial interest in *Le Matin*. Simard won the fight when the board of trustees, which has a 58 per cent interest in the Moncton-based tabloid, backed his position.

The Toronto *Sun* has a new photo editor in **Hugh Wesley**, with new assistants in **Mike Peake** and **Dean McNulty**. Hugh and Mike were both photographers, while Dean comes from the sports department where he was an assistant editor. Up on Parliament Hill, **Tim Naumetz** works in the Ottawa Bureau, Tim comes from Canadian Press.

At the London *Free Press*, the former assistant managing editor, features, **Tony Bembridge**, is now assistant managing editor on the news side. Tony replaces **John Vormittag** who moves in to the sports editor's chair. **David Ward** is now managing editor after working as managing editor, production.

New Saturday editor **Emilie Smith** comes from her job as editor of the Saturday supplement *Encounter* magazine, and replacing her is former *Encounter* magazine copy editor **Carol Kehoe**.

The Windsor *Star* reports two departures and a leave of absence. Gone to the Montreal *News* as assistant news editor is former desk man **Terry England**. Copy editor **Larry**

**O'Connor** has left to teach journalism in North Bay. **Sandra Precop** is teaching at Western University's graduate journalism program for six weeks.

The Edmonton *Journal* signs **Sherry Aikenhead** and **Kathleen Engman** on as general assignment reporters.

New arrivals at the Toronto *Star* include copy editor **Brian Gorman**, who comes from the Victoria *Times-Colonist*. **Cortland Shakespeare** is a new designer in the art department, and was previously art director at the *Financial Post*, as is **Kristine Leszczynski**, who worked as a freelancer before coming to Number One Yonge St. Leaving the art department is designer **Therese Shechter** who moves to the *Financial Times of Canada* as art director.

Returning to the *Star* (he was there in 1984-85) as a copy editor for the *New in Homes* section is **Peter Bailey**, after a stint at the Hamilton *Spectator* as special sections editor.

**Gordon Barthos**, 37, *Star* deputy foreign editor will open the paper's Middle East bureau in Jerusalem this summer. It's the *Star*'s sixth foreign bureau. It has five in Canada.

**Linda Diebel** moves into the *Star*'s Ottawa Bureau after covering the Hill for the Montreal *Gazette*. Also from the *Gazette* comes **Doug Ball** to sit as picture editor. He was photo editor in La Belle Ville. Moving from picture editor to assistant photo editor is **Graham Bezzant**.

New faces include zones reporter **Henry Stancu**, who comes by way of the Ontario Provincial Police's news bureau; fashion reporter **Bernadette Morra**, who was fashion and beauty writer at *Flaire* magazine; *Wheels* section reporter **Graham Jones**, who has worked as car and motor-sports writer and editor at various publications throughout Europe, and restaurant columnist **Cynthia Wine**, who is not only co-host of TVOntario's *Money's Worth* program, but author of the *Toronto Underground Restaurant Book* and *Across the Table: An Indulgent Look at Food in Canada*.

Retirements include columnist **Bob Duffy** and assistant city editor **Jim Hanney**. Departing is fashion reporter **Nancy Hastings**, who has moved on to *Chatelaine* magazine. Movement inside the newsroom includes **James Atkins**, who goes from assistant foreign editor to news editor. James is replaced by former foreign desk copy editor **Fred Edwards**. Reporter **Brian McAndrew** sits in as assistant city editor and former national desk copy editor **Rich Orchard** is now assistant *Life* section editor.

Back in Toronto, **Ann Pappert**, 41, won what is possibly Canadian journalism's most coveted prize — the first Atkinson Fellowship in Public Policy. Designed to further the traditions of liberal journalism espoused by Toronto *Star* founder **Joseph E. Atkinson**, it finances a year's research and writing with a \$60,000 stipend and up to \$25,000 in expenses. She'll use it to do a series of articles — to be made available to Canadian newspapers — on the social and policy implications of reproductive technology. A New Yorker, she came to Canada in 1970 and has been freelancing, often in difficult investigative areas, ever since. She was author in 1983 of a scathing critique of the media's handling of a tragic British Columbia mental health case, although she was criticized in return for some aspects of her report commissioned by the Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded (*content*, June/July, 1983).

**June Callwood**, a *content* director, continues to receive recognition for her untiring efforts in a multiplicity of social causes, including a Doctor of Sacred Letters degree at Trinity College, and an Honorary graduand of the Faculty of

## NEXT ISSUE

The first publication of Canadian G. Stuart Adam's view of journalism schooling — an article that has aroused debate here and across the U.S.

Also — MBAs taking over the news

Social Sciences at Carleton University.

**Elaine Dewar's** *Toronto Life* piece, *The Mysterious Reichmanns*, rejected last February as an entry by the suit-shy National Business Writing Awards organizers, got the recognition it deserved from the gutsier National Magazine Awards people. It won the Toronto journalist two awards. Meanwhile, the \$102-million lawsuit filed by the Reichmanns against *Toronto Life* (and others) keeps manufacturing material for future J-school and law-school texts. The secretive Reichmanns have guaranteed the longest-running and widest readership of any magazine article in Canada's history — though they've been fighting to keep some of their own submissions in the suit out of the media.

**NATIONAL NEWSPAPER AWARDS:** Spot news reporting, **James Ferrabee**, *Southern News*; foreign reporting, **Thomas Walkom**, *Globe and Mail*; enterprise reporting, **Claude Arpin**, *Montreal Gazette*; feature writing, **Marilyn Dunlop**, *Toronto Star*; sports writing, **Jim Proudfoot**, *Toronto Star*; editorial writing, **Raymond Giroux**, *Le Soleil*, Quebec; business reporting, **Christopher Waddell**, *Globe and Mail*; critical writing, **David Prosser**, *Kingston Whig-Standard*; feature photography, **Bruno Schlumberger**, *Ottawa Citizen*; spot news photography, **Les Bazso**, *Vancouver Province*; cartooning, **Raffi Anderian**, *Ottawa Citizen*.

Elected to the Toronto Press Club executive committee: President, **Manny Escott**; Vice-president, **Ed Simon**; secretary, **Eleanor Wright-Pelrine**; treasurer, **Bill Dampier**; membership secretary, **Ed Patrick**.

For those intrigued by a reference in **Ron Verzuh's** feature in the March/April *content*, here's the address of the *The Utne Reader*: 2732 W 43rd St., Minneapolis, Minnesota USA 55410.

Former Carleton *Charlatan* editor and ex-Ontario bureau chief **Lynn Marchildon** has taken over as president of Canadian University Press (CUP) (CUP only has one full-time employee during the summer). **Tu Thanh Ha** is whiling away the summer at the *Ottawa Citizen* until he begins his term as v.p./national features writer in late August. He spent last year toiling at Quebec bureau, and edited Concordia U's *Link* before that. **Eleanor Brown**, researcher for the Halifax bureau of the *Toronto Star* and former CUP Atlantic bureau, will be national bureau chief.

**Catherine Keachie** is the new executive director of the Canadian Periodical Publishers' Association. Involved with the Canadian publishing industry for many years, she replaces **Dinah Hoyle**, who has become publisher of *Owl* and *Chickadee* magazines.

**Kathleen Blake (Kit) Coleman**, who covered the Spanish-American War for the *Toronto Mail and Empire* as the world's first accredited woman war correspondent, is among four people named this year to the Canadian News Hall of Fame. The others; **Joseph E. Atkinson**, the late publisher of the *Toronto Star*; **J. Douglas Creighton**, president and chief executive officer of the Toronto Sun Publishing Corp., and **George Edward Desbarats**, a pioneer printer and publisher. Desbarats founded the *Canadian Illustrated News* in 1869, *L'Opinion Publique* in 1870 and *Dominion Illustrated* in 1888, the significant weekly news magazines in the new Dominion. His great-grandson, **Peter**, is journalism dean at the University of Western Ontario.

*Submissions for consideration for publication in Short Takes are welcomed at 36 Charkay St., Nepean, Ont. K2E 5N4. Preparation of this edition of Short Takes was co-ordinated by Toronto Sun reporter John Schmied and dozens of letters and telephone calls.*



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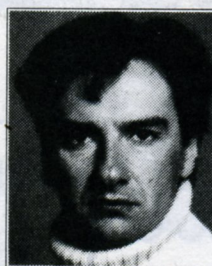
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Michel Marano (819) 539-5421

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Yvon Julien (514) 429-4611

Vancouver  
Les Holroyd (604) 689-3314

Kitimat  
Allan Hewitson (604) 639-8203

