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for Canadian journalists

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## Thinking journalism



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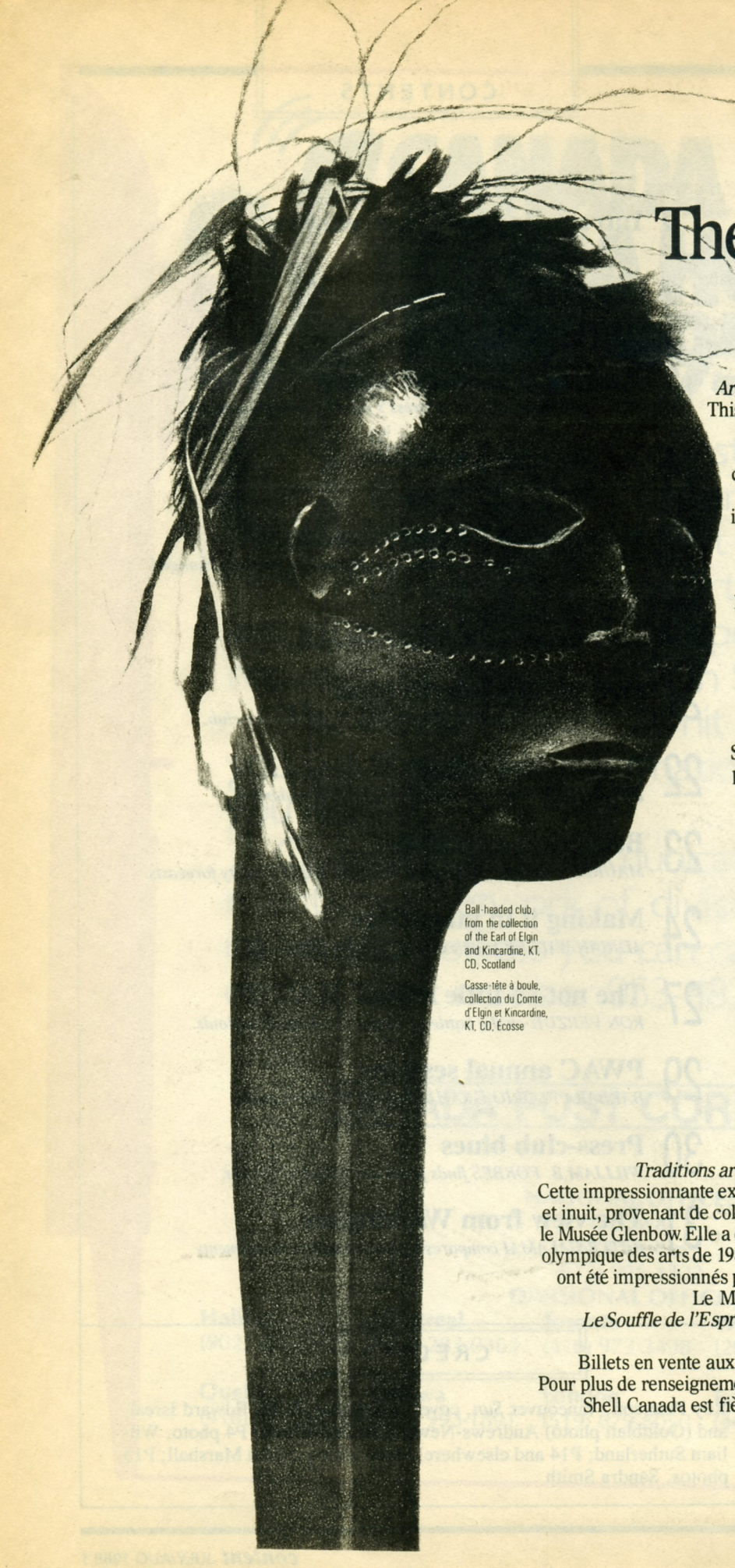
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## NEW EDITORS

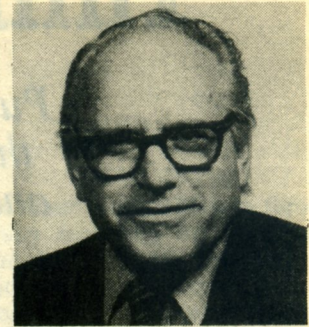
We mark *content's* 18th birthday next issue with welcome new names on the masthead: Murray Goldblatt, editor, and Klaus Pohle, managing editor, both of Carleton University's School of Journalism. Helping to allay any fears that our magazine might specialize in only the arcanum of academia are their varied hard-news backgrounds.

Goldblatt, after a McMaster University MA, went to the *Oshawa Gazette*, *Ottawa Citizen*, *Toronto Star*, and to nearly 14 years at the *Globe and Mail* where, among other things, he was national editor and Ottawa bureau chief. Moving to External Affairs he was founding editor of *International Perspective* magazine. He has also done many CBC commentaries. He joined the Carleton faculty in 1975 after several years of part-time teaching.

In 1964, Pohle became a Canadian Press copy boy in Edmonton in a year's break before going from high school to university. He got there in 1982, for his Carleton journalism MA. In between, he had moved to CP rewrite; to the *Red Deer Advocate*, from night desk to editorial writer and news editor; and in 1972 to the *Lethbridge Herald* as news editor, becoming managing editor in '79, the year before the Thomson takeover. Elsewhere in this issue is an adaptation of his thesis on Thomsonization.

It is one of a group of articles looking at bottom-line journalism, a "street-level" contrast to our cover story, Stuart Adam's paper, of which we are proud to be the first publishers.

John Marshall, chairman  
Friends of Content Inc.



Murray Goldblatt




Klaus Pohle

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# Thinking journalism...

*Published for the first time, the paper they're all talking about in the U.S. and Canada puts J-schools in context*

by Stuart Adam

**T**he purpose of this paper is to express a vision of journalism education and the research tasks of journalism educators in universities. Those in the know may find it odd that I or anyone would propose such a task so late in the day. Experiments in journalism education began in the United States in 1869 at Washington College, in 1878 at Cornell, in 1878 at Missouri, and in 1893 at the University of Pennsylvania.

Missouri, the first independent school, opened in 1908, and Columbia, bowing to the pressure and purse of Joseph Pulitzer, started in 1912 (1). At least two Canadian universities, Carleton and Western, which were influenced by developments at Columbia and the many state universities that got into the business later, have been at it since 1945 (2). So there has been lots of time for invention, experimentation, reconsideration, consolidation in both countries.

There have been, of course, considerable achievements. In some cases, large faculties have been built. To take a domestic example, Carleton's School of Journalism, with a full-time faculty of 23, teaches and graduates almost as many undergraduates and graduate students as the department of English, the cornerstone of the Faculty of Arts. There are rarely fewer than 500 full-time students pursuing journalism degrees at Carleton.

The departments of journalism at Minnesota, Missouri, Northwestern, Wisconsin and Texas are even larger. An article published in *The Atlantic* several years ago, with the charming title *Woodstein U.*, said that the university of Texas at Austin had 3,000 undergraduates registered in journalism programs (3). Happy or not, journalism education is a relatively large enterprise in North America.

Additionally, the field has sponsored some sound scholarship, particularly in media law, communication proc-

esses and ethics. There are some good reporting and production texts, style and writing guides, analyses of newspaper and magazine design, journalism histories and interesting attempts to write theory (4).

But there is a continuing sense of discontent. It is reflected in a number of documents and statements — most notably in recent years in the address of the president of the Association for

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## Some ask: "Should journalism education exist at all?"

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Education in Journalism in August, 1979 (5), and, more particularly, in the Oregon Report of the Project on the Future of Journalism and Mass Communication Education published in May, 1984 (6). As recently as June,



Stuart Adam

1986, the principal author of the second of these documents wrote in *Commentaries on Journalism Education* that the debate on journalism education, apart from the disagreement between journalism educators, included the unfriendly question: "Should journalism education exist at all? There are those in the academy and in the media industries who seriously doubt its value and say so with blunt force." (7)

Now, if journalism educators who read this feel uneasy about these observations and the negative tone, let me remind them that they are not alone. The debate on education is not confined to the field of journalism. The report on high school education commissioned by the Ontario Ministry of Education must be cultivating apocalyptic feelings (8). And the university system in Canada and the United States, quite apart from anything that might be said or judged in relation to journalism education, must respond sooner or later to the indictments of Allan Bloom in his remarkable book, *The Closing of the American Mind*. I agree with some of what Bloom says and have always believed that the solution journalism educators might seek would be a good deal easier if the rest of the university got its act together (9).

**T**his is not a casual dig made in order to give the appearance of balance in an argument in which the advantages appear to favor the other side. I believe (and I hope to persuade others) that journalism education ought to be considered a central task of the university — not a sideline to satisfy ill-considered notions of responsibility or a sideline which presents relatively painless opportunities for revenue or reputation.

I also believe that journalism should never be conceived as an autonomous task, divorced from the broader mission of the university. Whether journal-

# More than academic

by John Spears

Many working journalists never went to journalism school; and it's probably fair to say those that did spend little of their working lives thinking about journalism education. For those practitioners of the trade, the impact of Stuart Adam's article may not be immediately apparent.

However, its effect on journalism teachers who have read the privately circulated analysis has been profound. Peter Desbarats, dean of the graduate school of journalism at the University of Western Ontario, calls Adam's paper a watershed in the development of Canadian journalism education.

The paper also clearly intrigued the committee searching for a new chief of the esteemed Columbia School of Journalism. The committee had already approached Adam about the job, but they questioned him closely about the paper in subsequent interviews. (Adam didn't get the job. "It probably worked for me and against me," he says of the

paper. Desbarats thinks Columbia's decision not to grab Adam was a serious mistake for a school searching for direction.)

Desbarats sees the paper addressing two fundamental issues. It seeks to heal the schism that exists within many journalism schools between those teachers who want the schools to be professional training grounds, and those who see the schools as research-oriented, academic institutions.

Desbarats sees many practical applications of Adam's thesis that academic research and journalistic practice can be complimentary. Newspapers pondering accusations that their coverage smacks of sensationalism might want to consult journalistic historians, to set today's standards in the context of Canadian journalistic tradition. Or an organization like the CBC can — as it already has — consult an academic researcher such as Adam for ideas about how it can be accountable to its audience.

After Adam worked his way through university reporting for the *Ottawa Journal*, he held both reporting and desk jobs at the *Toronto Star*. He returned to the *Journal* to write editorials, then earned a Ph.D in political science at Queen's University. Carleton hired him to work in its journalism school in 1973, while he was completing his doctoral work.

Adam spent the next 14 years at Carleton, serving four terms as the school's director and working regularly as a producer and program consultant for CBC public affairs television.

He is now on a two-year leave at Western, where he holds the chair of the Centre for Mass Media Studies. He and Western law professor Robert Martin will be bringing out a case book on legal issues facing journalism. ☐

*John Spears, a Friends of Content directors, is in the finance department at the Toronto Star.*

ism programs are large or small, whether they are central to or on the margins of individual universities, I believe the subject of journalism itself is a practical test and living expression of the success or the failure of the system of education.

The motivation to do well by journalism students arises out of the most basic concepts and aims of liberal education. I make a special point of this because I believe the principal teaching aims of faculties of the humanities and social sciences, regardless of what their members think, ought to be to equip individuals for private and public lives. These faculties should see themselves as showing individuals how to know and benefit from the great works of thought and art so that their private lives will become rich and their acts of citizenship informed. The vocational aims, which are also a part of the university's mission, should be ancillary and dependant on the success with which the other two aims are achieved.

Journalism fits oddly and dependently into this mixture of aims. The starting point in my view is not education in journalism so much as education for journalists. Put differ-

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**"The starting point...is not education in journalism so much as education for journalists."**

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ently, journalism educators and researchers should be as concerned with the quality of education their students bring to school newsrooms or production studios as they are with the techniques that enable their education and judgment to show. Journalism schools are not professional schools in the conventional sense where there is likely to be a thoroughly articulated and autonomous body of knowledge

which is a profession's exclusive creation and possession. We are much closer to the traditional centre of the university than schools of business or law. We are especially close to academics who worry about democracy and for whom education is a preparation for citizenship.

In the *Educated Imagination* (p. 64), Northrop Frye says that "freedom has nothing to do with lack of training; it can only be the product of training. You're not free to move unless you've learned to walk, and not free to play the piano unless you practice. Nobody is capable of free speech unless he knows how to use language, and such knowledge is not a gift; it has to be learned and worked at." (10) Frye was speaking mainly of language and literature. But we can interpret him as speaking of all the elements we use to forge images of life. Journalism is one of the products of a legal and philosophical tradition which confers rights of freedom of expression on individuals. Its instru-

mental value in a true democracy is a function of the intellectual and practical training its practitioners receive — in a university.

I will put it more directly, I think journalism schools should be looked upon particularly by faculties of the humanities and social science as opportunities for the completion and realization of some of their most basic aims. These faculties should see journalism schools as occupying a special place in the academy, the success of which is vitally important to the health of the body politic. Universities should take pride in developing good schools of journalism. But most don't.

**T**here has always been resistance in the university at large to the view that the schools of journalism are engaged in an important, university-inspired task. There are a number of reasons for this. I am not going to review all of them here. However, I want to emphasize for reasons that will become evident that I believe the resistance runs both ways. The schism is not simply a product of the resistance of mainstream academics and administrators to journalism schools; journalism educators have played a role as well.

As uncomfortable as some mainstream academics are with journalism, too many journalism educators are uncomfortable with the academy. They resist the academic culture just as the academic culture resists them.

So, can we as journalism educators express a vision and establish pedagogical operations and research tasks which minimize the tension and reduce the width of the divide? Can we incorporate journalism schools more solidly into the academy? I believe we can, but this requires a more careful and considered incorporation of the academy into the schools of journalism. I will try to show how.

## II

**T**he most important published analysis of journalism education is a 144-page report inspired and supervised by Everett Dennis, formerly dean of journalism at the University of Oregon and currently executive director of the Gannett Center for Media Studies at Columbia University. The report's full title is *Planning For Curricular Change: A Report of the Project of the Future of Journalism and Mass Communication Education*. It was undertaken by a task force

under his direction to "study the present status and future direction of learning and advancement of knowledge in the field of journalism and mass communications within the realities of American higher education." (11)

I hope no one in Canada will be offended by the fact that I am relying on a U.S. document to speak to Canadian cases, but I say unapologetically that the problems journalism educators face in the U.S., although different in detail, are not so different conceptually from the problems we face in Canada.

Although the task force was struck at the University of Oregon — initially, it seems, for its own purposes — before it

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### **"Style manuals...rarely speak of the power of metaphor and other literary devices to convey meaning."**

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completed its two-year work it had consulted: all the accredited schools and departments of journalism and mass communication in the United States; a selected list of some 100 professors of journalism and mass communication; a group of 40 scholars from other disciplines; heads of professional and industry organizations; Oregon alumni; experts on communication technology... and the members of the Association for Education In Journalism and Mass Communication Task Force on the Future of Journalism and Mass Communication Education (12).

The report is, of course, diplomatic. It honors the achievements of journalism educators, salutes diversity, affirms the importance of the field in familiar ways and insists that the future is rosy. But there is at the same time a clear finding that all is not well. That finding is expressed in such statements as:

*"Although journalism schools had begun with lofty ideals ... many were little more than industry-oriented trade schools by the 1970s and 1980s ... (They are) following industry, not leading it;"* (13)

*"...there is little direct connection between the School (at Oregon) and its courses and the rest of the university;"* (14)

*"The field of journalism education has long been beset by a conflict between faculty members who regard*

*themselves primarily as teachers and researchers and those who identify themselves as masters of the profession ...;"* (15)

*"...the notion that craft courses adhere to professional standards set by the industry and that conceptual courses are governed by the realm of scholarship is still a persistent pattern;"* (16)

*"The paradigm of journalism education has not changed much in 40 years despite massive changes throughout the field of mass communication."* (17)

The report covers administrative matters. It contains the observation, for example, that it is extremely rare for a journalism dean or director to move into the upper administration of U.S. universities; and it says resolutely and justifiably that journalism schools are largely underfunded and their faculty members overworked. But the spirit of the document is not resentful. It is rather diagnostic and prescriptive; and of all its prescriptions and recommendations the most persuasive are curricular — that is to say, internal.

The basic points of reference for these prescriptions and recommendations are the five or so findings which I have just read. On reflection, they are not five findings so much as five manifestations of the same problem.

**T**hat many schools are "little more than industry-oriented trade schools;" that there is little connection between the schools "and the rest of the university;" that the field is beset by a conflict between scholars and practitioners; that craft courses adhere to professional standards and conceptual courses "are governed by the realm of scholarship;" that the paradigm of journalism education "has not changed in 40 years" — all of this means that the academic culture has failed to take hold successfully in schools of journalism.

It means that neither the schools nor their academic mentors, who in moments of ambition — as if ambition has much to do with it — exhort professionals to engage in "research," have figured out how to integrate the strictly vocational dimension of journalism education into its more recognizably academic dimension.

The Oregon report means this although it says it in an American accent — in a style which reveals the



experience of the American university and American society. But in my view, notwithstanding some understandable variation, it could have been written at a Canadian school. (I'm lying. I know of no Canadian agency that would have put up the \$86,000 U.S. it took to fund the exercise.)

But what to do? First, the Oregon report does not suggest that the schools should abandon their anchors in professional practice. It says and I quote: "...this critique... would seem to point toward journalism/mass communication programs that emphasize communication theory over professional practice. That, however, is not the conclusion of this report." A conclusion is, rather, that an effort must be made to integrate practice and theory. "... There needs to be a creative merger of more generalized mass communication study with the lessons of professional practice." "...It means embracing a generic approach to education and training" which combines intellectual and practical tasks (18).

So far, so good. There is no doubt that journalism schools make no sense if they fail to make "professional practices" the touchstone of their mission. Journalism schools must be about reporting and writing. (They ought to be about thinking too.) But if they are not about reporting and writing they have nothing special to be about. So the Oregon report does not breathe with hostility towards journalism practice. It does not adopt the concepts of the university to attack the field. It looks rather to the methods and achievements of the university to strengthen it.

The authors go on to say that a generic approach to journalism education entails three responsibilities:

-First, the curriculum should provide "a conceptual map of the field (the students) are entering. This means a distillation of the range of knowledge of mass communication and an adequate description of the various elements and organizations that comprise the field." (19)

-Second, the "course structure needs to do more to help students make sense out of the rest of their education." For example, the authors comment that teachers in "craft course need to be more aware of supporting coursework ... Courses in reporting can be better connected to political science and other social science disciplines." More generally, "the craft and conceptual courses ... need to be connected in a very real way of the work of the rest of the university or college." (20)

-Third, "specific craft courses must

be developed as part of an overall plan that is linked to the educational outcomes for the particular student." (21)

I have to admit that I find this last recommendation slightly cryptic. I take it to mean from the examples provided that apart from the capacity to write leads and news stories efficiently that courses measure more strictly skills in grammar, language and interpretation.

**T**he Oregon report goes on to make recommendations about the shape and components of the new "conceptualized" curriculum. The components are familiar. They include: mass communication and society; the history of mass communication; the economics, philosophy, legal and regulatory elements of mass communication; the technology and theory of mass communication, and international mass communication. The report also says that the purely

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**"...to push journalism craft courses more firmly in the direction of academic culture...would be to strengthen them."**

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practical or craft courses should similarly aim at what it calls "communication competency" — general literacy, visual literacy, computer literacy, information gathering and media writing techniques.

None of this is arguable on the surface and, if the recommendations led to a surge of energy and thought, the world of journalism education might be different. I stress the word "might" because there is an equal chance that the world of journalism education would be the same, despite the good intentions of the task force's writers, unless those that do the implementing take at least two methodological steps.

The first methodological step involves a consideration of the effect of the term mass communication. The Oregon group attaches that term to each of its conceptual categories even as it complains that the schools are little more than industry-based operations following not leading the field. It may be fair to imagine journalism as connected to mass communication systems; it may be fair to think of large newsrooms as the venue of much, perhaps most, journalistic activity; it is

essential, I think, to think of the techniques of news-reporting and news-writing as essential pedagogic starting points in journalism education. But it is wrong, I think, to allow the terms journalism and mass communication to blend uncritically. The payoff is that we are likely to jettison from our inspirational vision the journalism of Dorothy Day or I.F. Stone; similarly, we will be disinclined to study such journals as *The New Statesman*, *The New Republic*, *The American Spectator*, *The Nation*, *Harper's*, *The Atlantic*, *This Magazine*, *Vanity Fair*, *Esquire*, or *Saturday Night* — in which higher political and/or literary sensibilities are enshrined. We will be equally disinclined to examine the approaches to film documentary espoused by John Grierson and Donald Brittain — in which the visual and linguistic techniques of narration are both complex and polished.

**S**o a first methodological step is to evolve a theory of journalism which diminishes the power of the term mass communication. That step involves an examination of the meaning of the term journalism and a consideration of it as a form of expression involving well-defined rules of construction and form. It means, initially, setting aside a preoccupation with journalism as a process defined principally in terms of the activities of an institution or set of institutions, the mass media, and examining it as a method of expression and communication which occurs in a variety of settings. This does not eliminate mass communication or the mass media from study. It locates them.

If the first methodological step involves a theory of journalism, the second involves examining and incorporating more deliberately the elements of the academic culture into journalism education. The academy should be a source of methodological assistance and inspiration. In my view, both wings of the schools of journalism have looked too selectively at the academic culture while at the same time, when the imagination was failing, relied too heavily on the newsroom for sources of inspiration and methodological assistance.

You will recall that the Oregon report concluded that craft courses are typically governed by industry standards and conceptual courses by university standards. I agree with that conclusion and now am arguing that the cure is to push journalism craft courses more

firmly in the direction of the academic culture. The purpose would be to strengthen them. Put differently, I am recommending, first, that the courses in professional practices more deliberately incorporate the university's methods of classifying, analyzing and communicating knowledge.

So what is journalism and what are its elements? What are we seeking to convey and strengthen? What is an appropriate theoretical starting point with which to build a viable pedagogical system?

**F**irst, a definition: journalism is comprised of reports, story-telling and commentaries in the public media about events and ideas as they occur. Its principal elements are judgment — broadly speaking, news judgment, and reporting, language, narration, and analysis. Its meaning and utility are grounded in our notions of democracy and human interest — in politics and literature.

I know that some of this requires more careful elaboration, but at this point I am principally interested in the elements of journalism — the finding, reporting, description and assessment of things in the here and now — so that they may be articulated more directly to the elements of the academic culture.

Let me start with judgment. Every act of journalism involves a judgment — as I have already said, a news judgment — on the significance or importance of an event or a series of events or the expression of an idea. I do not want to mystify that process. Some things, such as the resignation of a government, the assassination of a leader and the beginning of a war are self-evidently important. But a clearer understanding of what is judged by journalists to be important may be surmised by consulting the full range of items in the lineup of the news shows of broadcasting agencies and in the pages of every newspaper. As the mind retreats from the spectacular and self-evident to the significant but obscure, the element of judgment in journalistic terms becomes more vivid.

**T**here is, of course, considerable variation. The *Suns* go for sex and scandal. By contrast, The New York *Times* ran a story several weeks ago about the dispute in the American association of professional philosophers between the analytic and moral schools. The criterion that put

that item on the front page reflects a cast of mind that sees the university as an arena of human action carrying as much significance as Gary Hart's dalliances with Donna Rice.

Similarly, we watched a film documentary on the journalism of I.F. Stone. A study of him and his paper reveals that the starting point in judg-

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**“Style manuals...rarely speak of the power of metaphor and other literary devices to convey meaning.”**

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ment and knowledge for a journalist such as Stone is dramatically different from a journeyman practitioner in the city room (22). This is not to diminish other forms of journalism. It is simply to illustrate that the judgment that guides us to certain stories and not to others is a significant element of a journalist's work. It is to suggest as well how judgment varies and how practice in judgment, inspired by formal classroom study, might enrich and modify current standards. There is not much in print which interrogates formally notions of journalistic judgment.

Let me turn to reporting. Reporting is the cornerstone of journalism. Reporting is to journalism as research and evidence-gathering is to scholarship. Traditionally, journalists have relied on the interview, observation, dead copy and documents — especially the interview — to construct their stories. To these techniques may be added survey research methods and the archival systems provided by computer-stored data. The incorporation of computer-based data systems and survey methodology into reporting adds new dimensions. But these do not eliminate the necessity to interview individuals and to observe events such as the Olympics. They haven't altered the fact that journalists must, just as I.F. Stone did, consult documents.

Journalism schools do not make reporting methods a formal object of inquiry. Although there are texts on the interview, for example, there is little in print which examines the realities and requirements of reporting in the light of the epistemological concerns of scholars. Nor is there much which borrows from other professional disciplines. For example, academic lawyers

reflect on rules of evidence for their own purposes. Journalists may have something to learn from them.

News judgment and evidence translate into words and images and the choice of words and/or images is a reflection of a journalist's abilities. The standard style manuals promote the adoption of a vocabulary that avoids 50-cent words and so they should. They rarely speak of the power of metaphor and other literary devices to convey meaning. But the higher journalism incorporates the metaphors of poetry and fiction. Academic journalists might look more critically and carefully at the linguistic gifts of the very best practitioners. They might examine literary and critical texts in order to strengthen the journalistic understanding of language and the imagination. This applies equally to the art of narration.

**E**very article, whether a simple news brief or a complex feature, whether it announces the death of Baby Gabriel's father or provides a Truman Capote detailed account of the murder of a family and an investigation in an obscure town in Kansas, represents a puzzle in narration (23). The narrative structure is the solution. The same style books that promote simple words also promote a declarative style and the use of the active voice. Writers in fiction such as Henry James have written extensively on narration and dramatization and he and others might be consulted — in the name of journalism (24).

Finally, many articles of substance incorporate ideas which guide the assessment and interpretation of the facts they report. Sometimes these are a conscious part of the journalist's method. If you want to read a vivid set of examples, consult those editions of *Vanity Fair* starting September, 1987, for Gail Sheehy's profiles of the candidates for the presidency. I call her work 'psychojournalism' and for better or for worse — I would say for worse for reasons which have no bearing here — she incorporates the techniques of psychoanalysis into the empirical tasks of reporting (25). Another vivid example is in the edition of *Esquire* in which Robert Timberg, White House correspondent for the Baltimore *Sun*, describes the relationship of Oliver North, the Iran-Contra culprit, and James Webb, a secretary of the navy in the Reagan administration. Ollie and Jim were classmates at Annapolis, officers in the American services in Viet-

nam, and genuine heroes. Timberg forged carefully into the lore of Annapolis, and the experience of Vietnam in order to provide a view of what each of these men enshrine, in their individual ways, in the subsequent drama of U.S. politics (26). The ideas such journalists use can be a conscious object of study. The meaning of the here and now can reflect in a more orderly way the world of ideas which is the university's special province.

To summarize, the journalist in his or her simplest and most complex tasks expresses a judgment on the importance of an item; engages in reporting, adopts words and metaphors, solves a narrative puzzle and assesses and interprets. The capacity to do these things efficiently and effectively is a reflection of a journalist's education and training. It is a reflection of training in judgment and interpretation inspired by the study of politics and the social sciences as well as the established conventions of journalism; it is a reflection of linguistic skill and narrative techniques that earns as much from poetry and prose as it does from journalism; it is a reflection of an imagination for reporting that comes as much from scholarship and law as it comes from journalism.

So the elements which the academic culture studies, and promotes and formalizes so thoroughly can be articulated to the elements of journalism. By inclination and obligation, the academy formalizes the study of these elements. By inclination and habit, journalists do not. They are stored in the heads of editors. The step into the academic culture requires that editors and journalism educators formalize what they know — to organize, reflect and comment on the storehouse of standards and method over which they preside — so that the heritage may be efficiently and thoughtfully transmitted. In a sense, I am asking for a scribal tradition to succeed an oral one.

### III

Let me turn for a moment to the other wing of the schools of journalism — the wing that thinks of itself as academic. As I mentioned earlier, there are some worthy and interesting scholars soldiering away in such wings. Nothing I am about to say is intended to insult their standards or intentions. Nor is it intended to suggest that such scholars aren't engaged in genuine university work.

However, in my experience, there is a persistent problem or set of problems in the academic wings of many journalism schools for which the search for solutions is no less important than the search for methods to strengthen the teaching of professional practices. I hesitate when I say this because I recognize that as I say it I am privileging one form of teaching over another and that is not my intention. In my view, all teaching and research in journalism schools should be conducted in the name of professional practices. Medical schools produce doctors and the knowledge generated within such schools is intended to strengthen the methods of the physician in his or her clinical incarnation. Conceptually, journalism schools should be no different. Yet, there is a difference between the classroom and the newsroom. There is a difference between directing news organizations for instructional

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**“The higher journalism incorporates the metaphors of poetry and fiction.”**

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purposes and generating and organizing knowledge for more general purposes. It is the academic wing of the school that normally presides over the latter.

But the current realities and arrangement of priorities require that academic instructors must struggle for status and time with students who are largely consumed with the acquisition of craft skills. The courses of such instructors are sometimes downgraded and considered as extras. Put differently, much of the tension between the professional and scholarly casts of mind is not simply expressed in tension between the schools and the university at large, but is internal to the schools themselves. It makes such schools of journalism like Lord Durham's Canada — two nations warring within the bosom of a single state.

Another expression of the problem in the academic wing is that, despite the interdisciplinary character of journalism, the social sciences have for too long dominated the agenda for research and academic teaching. This is not all bad, of course. However, if by scholarship we mean the study of mass media institutions and communication processes — a study which fits nicely into sociology or a part of political science

— then the scholarly task has been conceived too narrowly to fit the needs and aims of professional education. It means that the moral, the literary, and the philosophical faces of journalism education — not to mention its more manifestly professional faces — are not given the kind of academic attention they deserve.

The view of journalism education I am promoting borrows as heavily from the humanities — particularly from literature — as it does from the social sciences. And I think, modestly, that it speaks to the professionals in a voice they recognize because it starts with journalism, makes sense of it and thereby strengthens what they themselves value.

I think the solution to the problem or problems lies not in the correction of the skills these scholars possess, but in the development of a vision of the aims of journalism scholarship which turns it more manifestly and practically towards professional ends. The solution lies in providing a vision of the field that minimizes the importance of the current division of labor and gives journalism education a unitary character embracing both wings.

Traditionally, the fields of journalism have been neatly divided into professional practices, ethics, communication and society, communication theory, communication law, and so on.

While these categories of interest and knowledge are sound, they are not linked in a manner which makes them seem like elements in a single body of knowledge. They seem to have an independence, one from another, connected neither by method nor object of inquiry. My view is that the field of journalism studies should now be forged. It should be integrated just as political science represents an integration of separate approaches to the single subject of politics.

As before, the step towards integration requires the adoption of journalism, not mass communication, as the primary point of reference. With journalism as the unambiguous point of reference, the field should then be divided into five sub-fields which themselves would include further areas of specialization. The sub-fields I have in mind are derived from the notions of meaning, operations, social and political context, criticism and methodology.

Here in brief is what I suggest.

By meaning I mean the philosophy of

journalism or at least that part of it which speaks to the conscious intentions of journalists. The sub-field of the philosophy of journalism would be constructed out of texts in political, moral and literary philosophy. For example, the history of the idea of freedom of expression, the examination of moral claims made on behalf of journalism, and even the writings of members of the functionalist school of social science such as Robert Park and Harold Lasswell provide opportunities to speak to the "meaning" of journalism. This point of view borrows something from Max Weber who made a point of saying for methodological purposes that human action is meaningful. As I said before, I think the meaning of our work as journalists is to be found in the realm of that part of culture defined by politics and literature. Even a writer like Orwell, with a well-defined set of political aims, sought meaning in the purely literary dimensions of his work (27). The journalism educator starts his work accordingly with the inspiration contained in the analysis of intentions and goals. The educator recognizes that he or she is the custodian of the principles that guide the creation of things as well as the custodian of the principles guiding its explanation and criticism.

By operations I mean simply the range of professional practices and methods, from newsgathering, news writing and editing to layout and design; from radio and television production techniques to documentary film. It is the primary sub-field in Journalism Studies, not standing on its own, but making sense of all the rest. It corresponds in journalism education, as I have already said, to clinical work in medical education.

I might add that despite the prevailing wisdom "professional practices" encompasses ethics, law and public affairs. However carefully and systematically journalism students might study ethics and law, no matter how complicated we teachers might make them, ethics and law are essentially practical concerns that shape and circumscribe news judgment. Similarly, public affairs — politics, economics, science or whatever in journalism — represents the substantive domain of journalism practice and constitutes thereby a part of the sub-field of professional practices. By this I mean simply that, minimally, reporters must possess an understanding of current events. As they acquire experience

and seniority, they may become absorbed in beats such as labor, politics or entertainment and the substance of the issues and events in them. So the study of the operations or, put more directly, "professional practices" of journalism may incorporate selected branches of public affairs with links in other university departments and disciplines.

Media Studies or Mass Communications are the titles normally applied to the sub-field of inquiry which leaves intentions and/or meaning and operations behind and locates communication systems in the landscape of power, social structure, culture and behaviour. (In a sense, the sub-field examines how things turn out.) It is the

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**"The step into academic culture requires that editors and journalism educators formalize what they know."**

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business mainly of historians and social scientists, some of whom have an identity with or attachment to journalism practice, some of whom do not.

The many communications programs divorced from journalism, that have emerged in Canada, the U.S. and Europe are concerned with refining this portrait of the place of communication in society. Some scholars in this field think they have established a discipline. My view is that their work — at least the part that provides data and theorizes about the relationship between journalism/communication processes, on the one hand, and social and political effects on the other — is a sub-field of Journalism Studies.

Criticism is criticism — thoughtful reflections on the moral, technical, intellectual and artistic achievements of journalists. It is itself an artful blend of the materials of the other three sub-fields. It is comprised of the opinion of the world's best editor or producer.

Methodology is the self-conscious development and evaluation of the methods by which we create knowledge. Journalism Studies is a branch of the humanities and the social sciences and shares with them the methodological dilemmas, curiosities and disputes of the other disciplines.

So, in order to create a unitary and coherent field of study, I am suggesting, in summary, that we organize it as comprising five sub-fields: (a) the phi-

losophy of journalism, (b) professional practices, (c) mass media studies, (d) criticism, and (e) methodology.

#### IV

I have concentrated on curriculum and not on research. That is because I do not see the problems as very different. The problem of research — the agenda for study by journalism educators — is the same as the problem of curriculum. It makes no sense at this stage of the development of journalism knowledge to say that there are tasks for the classroom or workshop and tasks for the scholar in his or her private incarnation. We have to compare ourselves to scholars working in older fields in order to get a picture of our problem and our responsibilities.

As a political scientist with the job of teaching undergraduate courses in the Canadian politics, I can readily borrow from extant work — textbooks, anthologies, and articles in the field's journals — in order to stitch together a coursebook of materials which I can confidently present to a group of undergraduates or graduate students. A teacher of law charged by his dean with the responsibility of teaching constitutional law can similarly go to existing texts, commentaries and law reports.

The journalism educator is not in a similar situation. True, there are some reliable books and commentaries, learned articles and thoughtful reviews. But the environment of scholarship and learning is utterly different and, to a large extent, must be created. So, our work, initially, is to provide a clear picture of what we need to know in order to provide good courses; those materials must be organized and formalized so that they can be easily recovered — so that they may form, subject of course to review and re-examination, part of the equity in journalism knowledge created by journalism scholars for journalism students and practitioners. As this is being done, the research agenda will fall into place.

A final comment about the Oregon study. It is very thoughtful and certainly represents a fundamental contribution to journalism education. I know of no document which speaks as realistically and frankly about the problems that beset

the field. Its importance cannot be overestimated.

However, while I accept, with the modifications I have expressed, most of its recommendations and applaud its diagnosis and frankness, I do not accept a part of the spirit that drives it. I think you can tell from what I have said so far — in my references to Allan Bloom's treatise on U.S. universities and Northrop Frye's defence of literature — that I am an educational conservative.

I am not so conservative that I would refuse to enter a journalism school. I love journalism practice and education. However, I regard the expressions in the Oregon report of affection for technology and for the leaner wings of social science — for new knowledge rather than old knowledge, if I may put it that way — frustrating. Like all idealists, I would like to have it both ways. But if I were forced to choose, I would push journalists in the direction of the classics in literature, history, political philosophy, economics and sociology and leave the rest to chance.

## NOTES

1. The early history of journalism education in the U.S. is recorded in Edwin Emery and Michael Emery, *The Press and America: An*

*Interpretive History of the Mass Media*, 5th edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1984); .699

2. For an account of Columbia's influence in Canadian journalism education, see G. Stuart Adam, "The World Next Door, A Commonwealth Perspective," in *The Gannett Center Journal*, Vol. 2, no. 2, Spring, 1988; p. 110-111

3. Ben H. Bagdikian, "Woodstein U.; Notes on the mass production and questionable education of journalists," *The Atlantic*, Vol. 239, no. 3, March, 1977, pp. 81-92

4. There are lots of excellent introductory reporting texts in print. Recent book-length treatments of problems in journalism ethics include: Clifford G. Christians et al, *Media Ethics: Cases and Moral Reasoning*, (New York and London: Longman, 1984); Donald Fry (ed.) *Believing the News*, A Poynter Institute Ethics Center Report, (St. Petersburg, Fla.: The Poynter Institute for Media Studies, 1985); N. Eugene Goodwin, *Groping for Ethics*, 2nd edition, (Ames; Iowa State University Press, 1987); Edmund B. Lambert, *Committed journalism, An Ethic for the Profession*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); Philip Meyer, *Ethical Journalism*, (New York and London: Longman, 1987).

Interesting analyses of writing in the field of journalism history are contained in John D. Stevens and Hazel Dicken Garcia, *Communication History*, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1980). For a recent appraisal of research and theory, see Nancy Weatherly Sharp, *Communications Research, The Challenge of the Information Age*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University press, 1988).

5. For a version of this address, see James Carey, "The University Tradition in Journalism Education", *Carleton Journalism Review*, Vol. 2, no. 6, Summer, 1980.

6. *Planning for Curricular Change: A Report on the Future of Journalism and Mass Communication Education*, School of Journalism, University of Oregon, Eugene, 1984. (I will refer to this document below simply as the *Oregon Report*.)

7. Everett E. Dennis, *Commentaries on Journalism Education*, (New York: Gannett Center for Media Studies, 1986); p. 1

8. I am relying here on newspaper reports of the Radwanski report which examined Ontario's high schools. *The Toronto Star's* line story of Feb. 16, 1988 started this way: "Ontario's high schools are failing to educate about half their students and must be totally restructured to meet the challenges of a world economy, a report to the provincial government says."

9. Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987)

10. Northrop Frye. *The Educated Imagination*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964); p. 148-49.

11. *Oregon Report*, p. 1, 12. p. 2, 12. p. 5, 14. p. 10, 15. p. 10, 16. p. 11, 17. p. 11, 18. p. 79, 19. p. 79, 20. p. 79, 21. p. 80.

22. The reference here is to *I. F. Stone's Weekly*, a film by Jerry Bruck, circa 1973

23. Baby Gabriel was born without a brain, but she was kept alive on a life-support system so that her organs could be used for transplants. Less than a month after her heart saved the life of a British Columbia infant, Baby Gabriel's father, Fred Schouten, died of a heart attack. The reference here is to the page one account of his death in *The London Free Press*, Thursday, Dec. 10, 1987. The reference to Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* and, more particularly, to the art of narration is taken from Alfred Kazin's commentary on it and other works of the so-called New Journalism in "The World as a Novel: From Capote to Mailer", *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. XVI, no. 6, April 8, 1971; pp 26-30

24. The reference is to Henry James, *The Art of the Novel; Critical Prefaces*, with an introduction by Richard P. Blackmur, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934)

25. The articles includes "The Road to Bimini" on Gary Hart, *Vanity Fair*, Vol. 50 no. 9, Sept. 1987; "Jesse Jackson: The Power and the Glory", *Vanity Fair*, Vol 51, no. 1, January, 1988; "Gore: The Sun Also Rises", *Vanity Fair*, Vol 51, no. 3, March, 1988.

26. "The Private War of Ollie and Jim", by Robert Timberg, *Esquire*, Vol. 109, no. 3, March, 1988.

27. Orwell writes (*Collected Essays*, London; Secker and Warburg, 1961) in "The Prevention of Literature": "...literature is an attempt to influence the viewpoint of one's contemporaries by recording experience. And so far as freedom of expression is concerned, there is not much difference between a mere journalist and the most 'unpolitical' imaginative writer. The journalist is unfree, and is conscious of unfreedom, when he is forced to write lies or suppress what seems to him important news; the imaginative writer is unfree when he has to falsify his subjective feelings, which from his point of view are facts." p. 332.

"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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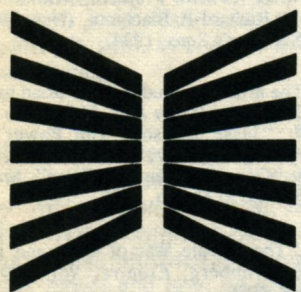
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# In support of the paragraph

by Ted Gomme

News-writers in Canadian daily and weekly newspapers tend to think in sentences, while their counterparts in publications that use coated paper think in paragraphs, or so it would appear from a comparison of the structures of their stories. Sure, the sentences in newspaper articles are indented and they are sometimes separated from what precedes and follows them by a blank line, both characteristics of paragraphs, but this does not conceal the fact that they are often single sentences and not true paragraphs in the sense of standard English usage.

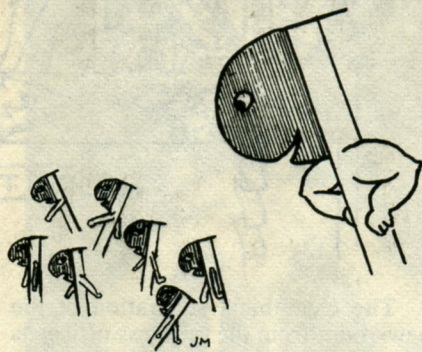
This practice imparts an impression of breathlessness, as though the reporter has just this minute rushed back from an assignment and dashed off his story in great haste to meet an imminent deadline. The result gives the appearance of being an outline of the article that would have been written if there had been sufficient time. This may be the situation on occasion, of course, but surely it doesn't happen all the time.

News journals other than daily and weekly newspapers generally use the paragraph, not the sentence, as the main structural unit of their articles. This gives their product a more finished appearance visually and conveys a sense that the articles themselves are more carefully planned and more deliberately prepared — which may well be the case, given the realities of publication scheduling.

Let's compare the treatment of a recent story by the *Globe and Mail* and *Maclean's*. These claim to be Canada's National Newspaper and Canada's Weekly Newsmagazine, so perhaps they can be considered representative of their types. (There may not be very many publications in Canada that would fall within a strict definition of 'newsmagazine' but various periodicals do carry news as part of their content.) The story was about the two bills passed by the House of Commons on May 31 curbing tobacco advertising and regulating smoking in federal-government offices. This was front-page news for the *Globe* the next day, and *Maclean's* covered it on page 12 of its June 13 issue which reached at least one subscriber about a week before that date.

The *Globe* covered the story in 871

words distributed over 44 sentences in 35 paragraphs. No fewer than 27 of these paragraphs contained only one sentence each, seven contained two sentences each, and only one had as many as three sentences. All of the first nine paragraphs were only one sentence long, and another unbroken string of ten single-sentence paragraphs appeared later in the article. In contrast, *Maclean's* used 684 words in 41 sentences and seven paragraphs. None of the paragraphs had fewer than five sentences — there were three with five, two with six, and two with seven. There was an average of 25 words per paragraph in the *Globe* 98 in *Maclean's*. The average number of



sentences per paragraph in the newspaper was slightly over one; in the magazine, slightly under six.

There are no rigid standards for the length of paragraphs, of course — a one-word paragraph can be quite in order. Perhaps we can borrow from Louis Sullivan's architectural theorem and agree that length follows function. However, in standard English usage, paragraphs do have a distinctive function, one that sets them off from sentences. It is a long-established convention that the opening of a new paragraph signals that the writer has finished with a particular segment of his composition, and is moving on to a particular segment of his exposition, narrative, description, or analysis. This convention is in the same order as other punctuation. When the average reader encounters a writer who does not honor this convention and who begins new paragraphs at whim and where the content of the piece of writing does not call for it, he is deprived of a set of signposts to help him find his

way through the information or argument the writer is laying before him.

William Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White offer some pertinent advice on the subject of paragraph length in my copy of *The Elements of Style*: "As a rule, single sentences should not be written or printed as paragraphs. An exception may be made of sentences of transition, indicating the relation between the parts of an exposition or argument." If they were writing today, Strunk and White might suggest other exceptions: the initial sentence in a composition, which often serves the same function as the topic sentence in a paragraph, and the one-sentence paragraph that is used for some special effect.

Why do newspapers reduce paragraphs to single sentences? It has been suggested that they do this because they use such narrow margins. Presumably this is an argument based on how deep a paragraph should look in relation to its width. Modern technology should permit the use of wider columns, such as are used in other types of publication. In fact, the first seven of the paragraphs in the *Globe* article cited are half again as wide as the columns used for the rest of the article and for most of the other news columns in the newspaper. It is also said that short paragraphs facilitate fast reading. In the case of the *Globe* story, this does not wash. Despite its visual appearance, the story doesn't present a series of topic sentences for paragraphs that were never written or, having been written, were shorn of much of their substance. Many of the one-sentence paragraphs could have been combined into longer paragraphs. What now looks disjointed and choppy would prove to be coherent, space would be saved, and the reader could absorb the message every bit as quickly.

The differences between the styles of the *Globe* and *Maclean's* articles is reminiscent of the contrast between the oratorical deliveries of the earlier, unreconstructed John Turner and the urbane Pierre Trudeau, the one staccato and abrupt, the other smooth and polished. (30)

*Ted Gomme, of Toronto, a long-time aficionado of government and news media style books, is a friendly critic of print communication.*

# Bottom-line newsrooms

*The threatening wave of the future  
a flood of low morale and resignations  
and it's hit the London Free Press*

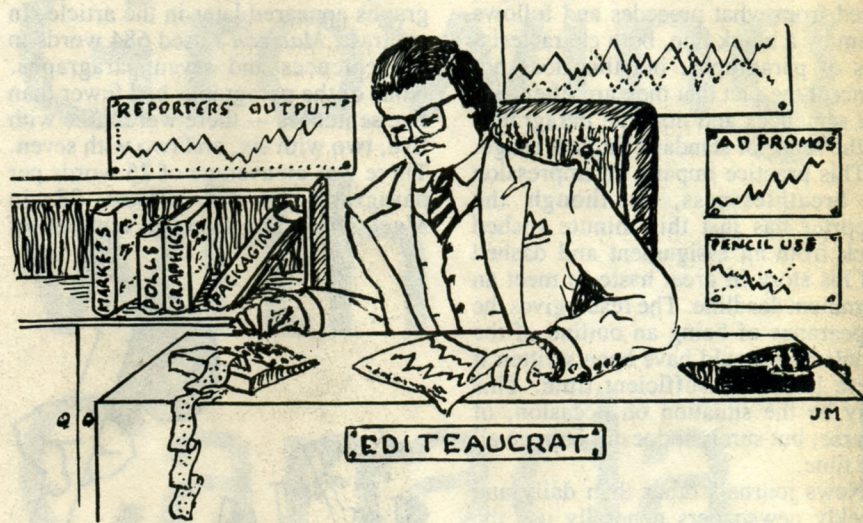
by Sandra Smith

Newspapers are being invaded by managers waving MBAs as their tickets into the business — sometimes as their entree right into the newsroom. “Bottom-line journalism!” the critics call it. They fear the new breed of news manager is a profit-programmed robot more interested in turning a dollar by turning the newsroom into an efficient producer of low-cost feature fluff instead of hard-hitting, substantial news.

Former Seattle *Times* reporter Doug Underwood, a leader in the fight against the trend, is convinced it is a serious problem that is diminishing the quality of journalism. He's a hot item on the seminar and panel circuit since his scathing study of the phenomenon, underwritten by the Fund for Investigative Journalism, was published in the *Columbia Journalism Review*, March/April.

At the annual session in Kitchener of the Ontario Reporters' Association, he happily clashed with new-wave advocate Phil McLeod, editor of the *London Free Press*, who labelled his thesis “bullshit.” The *LFP* has been suffering the kind of make-over and staff shake-up and subsequent low-morale and “I-quit” turmoil that hit Underwoods Seattle newspaper — and which prompted Underwood to quit and go into academia.

Also critical of some of Underwood's approach — both at the speaker's table and later in an interview — was John Miller, director of the School of Journalism at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute. (Both he and MacLeod are past managing editors of the *Toronto Star*, neither with MBAs.) But Miller didn't let the “social climber” MBA faction off lightly. “First thing they do is cut the news hole, then say they guess you don't need as many reporters. They don't understand the dynamics of news... we have to educate them.”



The old ethical separation of the newsroom from the business offices is disappearing. Underwood describes the modern, corporate newspaper editor as “a person who, as likely as not, is going to be found in an office away from the newsroom bustle immersed in marketing surveys, organizational charts, budget plans and memos on management training.”

This new-age editor is being lured into newspapers when fewer people are reading them. The race to win readers back is being fought with slick marketing schemes, tight management and a focus on the bottom line.

Underwood was fortunate to be a reporter for seven years on papers that encouraged investigative pieces and hard-hitting coverage of local business. But the good old days disintegrated for him when five top executives with MBA's arrived at the *Seattle Times*. Unable to cope with the new marketing-driven management system he felt was perverting news, Underwood found refuge in the University of Wash-

ington's journalism department.

Underwood now calls the *Times* “a beautiful woman who wants to be known for her brains. It's a handsomely designed newspaper. The art and graphics are marvelous. It's beautifully packaged with a lot of entertainment value, good comics, good astrology charts...”

To make room for graphics and pictures, the *Times* looks for shorter stories, sacrificing the news hole. This is all done to respond to the reader who, according to surveys, was too busy and in need of easy-to-read stories, much like TV.

Underwood sees the *Times* as a representative of all that's wrong with MBA management. He overheard executive editor, Mike Fancher, bragging that a buddy-buddy relationship between news and business leads to a healthy profit. “We are a stonger paper because of our better relationship between the news and the business sides. When we make more money, part of that comes back into the newsroom so we can provide a better product.”

But the money isn't necessarily spent



for the right reasons, said Underwood. "It has gone for more mid-level managers to do the planning and packaging of the newspaper. But what about the traditional news? What about the things I value the most about what a newspaper is all about?"

He said one person covers Washington, DC for the Times. And he said he'd lose sleep if he were the editor who decided no one should cover the military even though the concentration of bases in Seattle is one the greatest in the country.

Underwood lays much of the blame on an overdependence on readership studies and marketing surveys. "I still maintain that readers generally don't know what they want, but they do know a good newspaper when they see one. I think a certain amount of surveying is necessary but you don't let this sort of approach of thinking of readers as a market become more important than thinking of yourself as a journalist serving the readers."

**H**e said the Denver *Post* found out the hard way that reporters know better than readers what should be in the news. After being bought by the Los Angeles *Times*, MBA editors experimented with a packaged newspaper filled with shorter stories about subjects the readers said they wanted to know more about. "Shortly after, they did some surveys and found many of these things alienated the readers; they wanted a paper that gave them the hard news in a way they were used to. So, the paper turned back to basics."

Miller challenges this argument "What's the matter with us if we can't accept that newspapers have been



MILLER: "You're naive."

badly managed in the past?" He labelled Underwood's ideas as naive. "He hasn't worked in newspaper management before. I think until you do, you don't really understand that it's more complex to manage now than it was before under different pressures from above to justify your budget. That didn't happen in the old days when you spent whatever you could," said Miller.

Miller said he has accepted reality. "Newspapers are big business now and you have to be accountable." Instead of complaining about MBA's moving in, Miller thinks reporters should be responsible enough to take control of a potential problem. Rather than thinking of a desk job as selling out, they should work to fill editorial positions themselves. As for marketing surveys — Miller thinks the ability to identify problems through these methods is the



UNDERWOOD: "Readers alienated."

strongest quality MBA's bring to the newsroom.

He pointed out that at the *Star*, a survey showed young people weren't reading the paper. "That's important to know. So we fished out this idea for *What's On* (a youth-oriented section), and it seemed to fit everything they were talking about. It made sense from a strategic point of view and it made sense from a journalistic point of view. If there hadn't been that study, we wouldn't have got that section"

McLeod was astounded anyone would consider not listening to their readers. "I don't know what use we are to anyone if we're not in business. Believe your readers when they say, 'I haven't got time to read with you.' Believe readers when they say, 'I don't care about those things.' Believe readers when they say, 'You've got to change or I'll get my information someplace else, like the TV, radio,



MCLEOD: "Bullshit!"

magazines or another paper." Believe readers when they say these things.

Listening to readers is the mandate of the London *Free Press* since it welcomed an MBA as its associate publisher a year and a half ago. When Jim Armitage arrived, the paper launched a readership survey of 1,000 people. McLeod said the changes of the last few months are an attempt to revamp the management system and appearance turning it into a "paper of the 1990's."

**E**xactly what that means is being kept secret until it happens this fall. McLeod did say it will include some of the graphics and packaging talked about at the conference. "I think these techniques are the best thing that has happened to journalism in the last 20 years. Finally, we're going to get away from these long thumb-sucking dirges that nobody reads. We'll get back to journalism that people can read and we're going to get some more room for other things."

"They've also asked us for less politics. We might give them that," he said, explaining those stories need to be more related to the average person. He said shorter stories are common already, though not a constant. "All we're really doing is finding new ways of getting the same content in the paper."

Freelance writer, Rod McQueen, in *London Magazine*, November, 1987, quoted Jim Armitage 25 saying, "The role of editor is changing at the *Free Press*. We are looking for a stronger degree of leadership."

And in March, 1987, 19 editorial jobs were put up for grabs. Said McLeod, "We hope the juggling of jobs will make us more responsive."

Assignment editor Neil Morris was

on vacation when he got a call informing him his job had been posted. "It was a day and night change-over, really a kind of nightmare," he said in an interview from Ottawa, where he works for the Canadian Medical Research Council. They did the job thing right in the peak of vacation period. When I got back from holidays, people were applying for jobs against their friends. It was diabolical." He was offered a reporting beat in place of his nine-to-five editorial position.

Morris thinks money motivated the job juggle. "The general feeling was they were trying to get rid of high priced people to boost their profits." He said two rewrite people were made assignment editors, with hardly any reporting experience.

He recalls writing stories in the past without worrying about length. "Now they've even started to tell you what you could put in your story. If you didn't do it their way, they rewrite it."

He can't figure the rationale. "We were running in the upper-mid range of circulation, so the paper was doing well and making good money."

McQueen had reported that circulation had remained at about 128,000 copies for more than 20 years. However, penetration of the potential mar-

ket dropped from 90 per cent 25 years ago to 60 per cent.

Morris, however, complained that features are practically never written now. "They cut stories to size so much that you can't put any substance in them." The sad part, he said is that the *Free Press* used to be a paper that encouraged detail and substance. "Now the product is deteriorating. Maybe if it hadn't been such an enjoyable paper to work for, giving you a feeling of real pride, I wouldn't feel so bad about leaving."

He says he isn't bitter but, "after 22 years of busting my ass to put the paper on the map medically, I didn't want to be part of it anymore. The paper and management were changing in a way I didn't find suitable with my views of how a newsroom should be run. I'm concerned about the future of that newsroom."

**T**he morale is so pathetic, he said, that reporters are calling him in search of jobs in Ottawa. He said when he left, people were standing up in the newsroom and complaining in front of editors and others reporters, alike.

"It's like a refugee camp," said another reporter who wanted to remain

anonymous. "Everybody's waiting their exit visa."

While morale is scraping the floor, McLeod thinks it's all worth it in the end. "The reporters are reacting the way reporters normally react to the kinds of changes. Not very well. But I think it's made us a better paper from the stand point of what readers think of it." He said circulation is climbing slightly.

Morris said, "They have nothing to support what they're doing. I think what they've done is in the wrong direction. Whether they will achieve what they want, only time will say."

Underwood said, "My hope is the pendulum will swing back." Until that happens, he urges reporters to fight. "It's always been tough to be good reporters, to always cover the news and be aggressive. I think we've always had to challenge institutional levels. I think we've got to battle on. We have to do the kinds of stories sometimes that we want us to do. But we've gotta find ways to do and get the stories we think are important."

*Sandra Smith, a summer reporter at the Brantford Expositor, is returning for her graduate year at Ryerson's School of Journalism.*



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# The bucks stop here...

*And high quality journalism as well according to many readers' perception, 'Thomsonization' case history finds*

*Bottom-line newsroom management flowered in its most decried form 54 years ago in Northern Ontario when Roy Thomson bought a Timmins weekly newspaper. The rest is the stuff of press club and boardroom legend. "Thomsonization" is not synonymous with the MBAing of newsrooms, but the same goals are achieved using a less sophisticated bookkeeper mentality. Journalists in prestige takeovers such as the Globe*

*and Mail don't feel the full impact, but vast numbers elsewhere do. The process rates more attention than it has received — primarily in futile government inquiries. But there is only one specific study — a 1984 MA thesis, *The Lethbridge Herald: a Case Study in 'Thomsonization,'* by Klaus Pohle, former managing editor of that newspaper. What follows (a flashback but still pertinent) is adapted from that 185-page work.*

by Klaus Pohle

This thesis is a study of only one paper's "Thomsonization," but the *Lethbridge Herald* is an ideal case, because prior to its purchase by Thomson Newspaper Ltd. it had a reputation for innovative, investigative, wide-ranging journalism. By 1980, it had a \$1-million editorial budget, and more special services, more specialists and a larger staff than probably any other newspapers of its size — for example, 40 compared to 25 at Thomson's slightly smaller Peterborough *Examiner*.

One of the few who criticized it for this study was J. P. O'Callaghan, *Calgary Herald* publisher, who thought it didn't address local needs in part because of "stuffing its columns with unlimited boilerplate" from three or four major American syndicates. "It was slightly better than ordinary, somewhat pretentious, rather lazy in its local coverage."

More typical of Canadian journalists was Edward Moser, former *Globe and Mail* managing editor and owner of *The Pass Promoter*. He called the *Herald* "one of the best newspapers of its size in Canada, putting to shame many bigger papers in the quality of its news coverage and editorial page articles."

\*\*\*\*\*

In January, 1980, Thomson took over FP Publications's eight newspapers including the *Herald*. For the first



Look, dear! I bought more papers.

seven or eight months it was left alone except for a spring visit by several Thomson executives. St. Clair McCabe, then president, told the

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## The bottom line

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writer that the staff didn't have to worry about quality being cut; head office was more worried that "you don't do anything" to hurt it.

In August, 1981, a team arrived asking justification for every budget item, and introducing the new owner's

demands: 37 pages of monthly forms detailing everything from profits, advertising lineage and newprint consumption, to wastage of supplies. Time consuming and sometimes annoying, but it did improve department heads' grasp of their own operations.

It was clear that cost-cutting and cost-efficiency was the new philosophy. The smallest expenditures required his approval. Middle management was to become largely irrelevant in decision-making, and many were convinced the publisher was there just to carry out orders from Toronto.

This became particularly apparent when budgets were cut at head office without consultation or explanation. And while the paper was publicly praised by its new owner, privately it was criticised. One executive complained it was being run like a metropolitan paper. Thomson general manager Brian Slaight said "major changes" would be needed. The paper had been reasonably profitable, but it took no magician to see how it would be eminently more so operated as a typical Thomson one.

First job cuts were on the mechanical side. Bulletin board notices decreed and drafted in Toronto were the first notification for some victims and even their department heads. They were signed by production manager Robert Helmer, but he said later he was the designated hatchet man to keep the publisher clean. This tactic enables Thomson to maintain the public fiction

that decisions about his newspapers are made locally.

**T**he policy of centralizing control became apparent in the advertising area, according to the marketing services manager Joe Myndio. His proposals to make his unit more effective were ignored... "Instead, I was told what to do. You were heard but never listened to. All they wanted was a joe boy."

With the club of conformity — what's good for one Thomson paper is good for another — came the legendary budget axe. There were some erratic pay raises but usually far below rising living costs. One worker's was so little it was wiped out by a jump in parking fees. In 1981, ad sales commissions and car allowances were slashed. Myndio, who had voluntarily gone back into sales, said: "More work for less pay...\$4 or \$5 an hour. We never realized how good we had it until Thomson came in."

Head office types began arriving with vexing regularity. And department heads soon learned "suggestions" were orders. Circulation manager Robert Fenton lost one raise because,

in spite of countless unpaid overtime on a poorly-conceived computer project, he had missed a couple of "suggestions."

Autocratic policies spawned anger and frustration. They also sparked an abortive attempt at union organizing. A visit by head office officials, ostensibly for other reasons, zeroed in on anti-union tactics.

*(Ed. A "confidential" Thomson memo brown-enveloped to the Ontario Reporters' Association around this period told circulation managers how to screen out prospective delivery contractors who might "agitate for union rates and conditions." It also "suggested" job applicants be interviewed when incumbents would see others wanted their jobs. And if a prospect asked if he would get minimum wages? Terminate the interview.)*

The Lethbridge meeting became an acrimonious discussion about management techniques, profits, pay, morale; and when the fear was voiced that good people might leave, the reply was, "No one is indentured to us." As for pay not pacing living costs, there were lectures on the economics of the consumer

price index and suggestions that people should grow vegetables and shop wisely.

The message was: Treat employees well as long as it didn't cost anything; otherwise it was to be a confrontational them and us. This led to the resignation of the production manager, and I decided to that I could not work for an organization so intent on maximizing profits at the expense of its employees.

\* \* \* \* \*

**U**p to this time, editorial was the envy of other departments. Budget requests generally had been honored. The legislative bureau had even been upgraded into a year-round one, and the stable of local and syndicated columnists retained. But Thomson officials were said to be unhappy with the extent of local political and government coverage, and with the lack of "garden party" stories. The publisher began suggesting there was not enough "women's news" — recipes and beauty tips. Then "Tips for Managing Editors" began coming in from head-office consultant John Farrington, pushing light news treatment

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emphasizing flattering pieces about leading citizens, service clubs, chambers of commerce, merchants. A compendium of boot-licking, an editor of another Thomson paper said.

In mid-June, 1982, I resigned effective July 31, giving ample time for selection of a replacement, expected to be from within the department. Well-qualified editors applied for the job. In mid-July Farrington arrived as interim editor reportedly to give publisher Donald Doram time to choose a replacement. Farrington quizzed staffers on all aspects of the operation — and about co-workers. Most spoke freely, believing he'd soon be returning to Toronto. But they found out on Aug. 21 — the applicants for the job never having been interviewed — that Farrington was actually my replacement. As one reporter said, "(he) started out on a lie."

Farrington came from England in 1965, served on a number of small Thomson papers, and moved to head office in 1980. On arrival at the *Herald*, he expressed concern about the excessive news space, said, pointedly, that he'd never worked where there was a news editor, assistant city editor or a separate editorial-page department, and a small paper didn't need a library.

*(Ed. Last fall he was moved to the Sudbury Star, another paper where the Thomson takeover — in 1953 — was a delayed time bomb, but which eventually reduced editorial quality and caused some of the worst labor strife in Canadian journalism.)*

Subsequent changes in *Herald* editorial policies resulted in unprecedented public opposition, including formation of a citizens' Committee for Quality Journalism, boycotts, picketing, and also obscene graffiti and threats that saw security guards posted at the homes of the publisher and the managing editor.

**T**he Thomson centralized style had entered the newsroom; no matter was too small for the m.e.'s direction, from vetting editorials and letters to the editor, to the routing of all mail through him. The autonomy of other editors was diminished or ended.

*(Ed. The Kent Commission found head office honcho John Tory personally involved in quibbles about Ottawa-bureau petty-cash.)*

Assignments were so rigidly planned — every minute of every reporter's day — that there was no room for individual initiative. When city editor Andrew Ogle said some of the best reporters might leave, he was told, "We're not married to them... there are lots of unemployed journalists around."

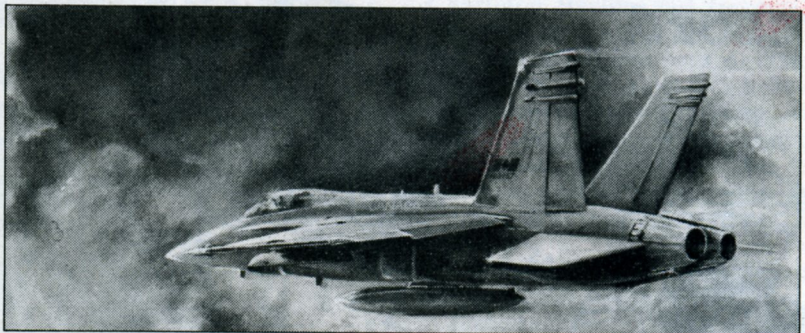
There were no firings initially, but people leaving were not replaced, though an editorial secretary was used to write lifestyle stories, and an inexperienced advertising-department writer was given news work. Overtime pay was mandatory by law, but every effort was made to avoid it. Farrington suggested to Ogle that reporters should not charge overtime on an out-of-town assignment because it was "such a big perk," and that it shouldn't be necessary to pay for "sitting around conventions, when you're not really working." Most such trips were soon a thing of the past.

Freelance reviewers' fees were cut — in one case from \$40 to \$20. District reporters were issued cameras to eliminate photographers. Farrington took control of the supply of reporters' notebooks, and even wanted the editorial-page editor to dole out and account for pencils. The salary schedule was killed — "back to the old system of suckhol-

ing for your money," said chief photographer Rick Ervin.

Most of the local and syndicated columnists were eliminated, which saved money, but also helped make way for a transformation of highly-respected editorial and op-ed pages into lighter products including an on-the-street feature addressing such questions as, "Are You a Geezer or Senior Citizen?" Farrington explained that Lethbridge didn't need a *New York Times* of the Prairies. "We're a small-town community newspaper and we should act like one." This meant covering "anything and everything" local, particularly "the positive events, the good stories and the happy stories." On the other hand, more sensationalism was sought in crime news and cases of personal tragedy. One of the paper's top-rated reporters, Philip Jang, was fired for insubordination — shocking staff and community. After trying twice for comments from a family bereaved by a drowning, he had refused to go back a third time. His suit for wrongful dismissal was settled by the paper out of court.

Public condemnation blossomed on open-line shows, in packed meetings, and in letters to the editor (the paper... "simply leaves me gasping in wonder,"



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A WORLD OF CANADIAN TECHNOLOGY.

“not to be taken seriously, if taken at all.”)

The defence was that the public outcry was inspired by an elite at the university and did not represent some silent majority who were happy with the stress on locally-produced news.

However, it was not local news *per se* to which protesters were objecting, it was the kind of fluff and whipped cream being emphasized. And in fact, a content analysis showed that before the Thomson formula, the staff filled 46.1 per cent of the news hole, and afterwards, only 42.7. In spite of claims otherwise — and which outside news media seemed to believe — space assigned to city and region section declined from 13.9 per cent of the total newshole to 8.3 per cent. A study by the previous management in 1980 found more local content per reporter than at critic O’Callaghan’s Calgary *Herald*. But under the new policy, reporters were being used for easy, soft features, while significant, more time-consuming stories were missed.

After the news management change, hard news on the front page declined to

56 per cent from 90, and for photographs, from 45 to 16. This had the biggest impact on perceptions of how the paper had lost credibility.

In a 1979 survey, a remarkable 80 per cent of respondents felt the paper was doing an excellent job overall, and 40 per cent said they spent an hour or more daily reading it. In 1983, a survey

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## The bottom line

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commissioned by this writer found only 31 per cent felt it was doing an excellent or good job; only 11 per cent spent an hour or more reading it. In addition, 57 per cent thought it had declined in quality, four per cent said it had improved, and 34 per cent found no change.

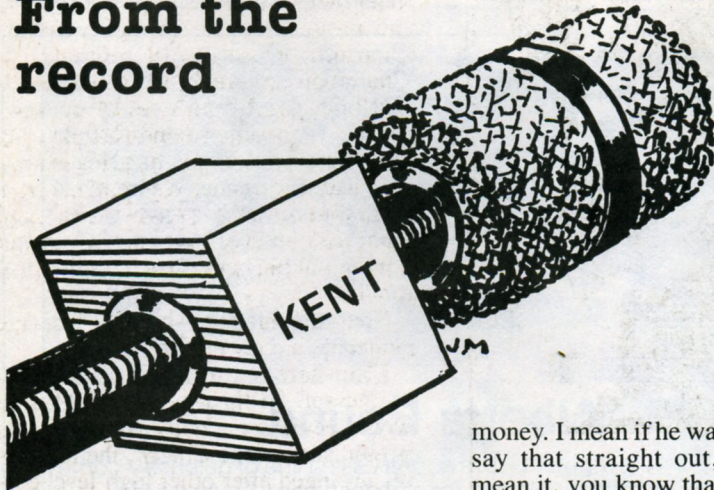
Finally, there was evidence of reader reaction in circulation figures. Over the years prior to the editorial makeover, there had been regular increase of four per cent annually. Circulation fell 5.5 per cent in the year

after the change and had not recovered more than a year later, in spite of the *Herald* being the readers’ only local game in town.

Meanwhile, they were being served by only 28 editorial staff persons, down from 40.

*(Ed. There are still only nine editing and 15 reporting positions, plus three photographers. Newsroom atmosphere, however, has improved markedly. Circulation remains the main evidence of the journalistic failure of the Thomson make-over. From about a 29,000 daily average in 1982, it dropped to about 27,000 a year later. For May, 1983, the Herald projected — on the basis of historical growth patterns — circulation of 29,800. Instead, the latest figures for 1988 indicate a daily average of about 26,400. Market penetration in the city (the percentage of household subscribers) has declined from a high of about 95 per cent before the changes to about 71 per cent today. At the same time, the population of Lethbridge has grown from about 56,000 to 62,000.)* (30)

## From the record



**I**n May, 1981 — not long after Thomson Newspapers bought FP Publications, including the Lethbridge *Herald*, but before its bottom-line policies were applied to that paper’s editorial functions — Ken Thomson told the Royal Commission on Newspapers what he thought about the way his operations were criticized:

“I think, you know, we labor in our organization under one or two handicaps. My father’s early beginnings were rather glamorous and fascinating: I think miraculous...My father was an ambitious man; he wanted to make

money. I mean if he was here, he would say that straight out, and he would mean it, you know that.

“But he was also a proud man. He was a man of integrity and honesty and decency, and he wanted to produce good products for the people he served through his newspaper. But, you know, we have grown as a corporation. We have grown. And since the Hudson’s Bay situation and the (London) *Times* and the International (Thomson Organization) and the oil and everything, the family name has come out. That has not been my desire, I would like to be unknown. But it has come out. And people seem to relate the size of our corporation — our profits are produced, you know, and everything else

— and I am sure people look at us and say, well, they are making a lot of money, and all the rest of it, why can’t you produce better newspapers? It is an automatic statement they say.

“They don’t really understand that our newspapers — most of them, except the most recent additions — are vastly different in make-up than the newspapers, for instance, the *Globe and Mail* and now the *Winnipeg Free Press* (both part of the FP takeover).

“And it is unreasonable... for people to have a general expectation with regard to our community newspapers that relates to any degree with the papers of the stature of the *Globe and Mail*...

“I guess we just have to hope that eventually we will be able to make people realize that we are producing good newspapers; that we have to produce them within the context of the community, the social and economic community, in which they are published. And people will accept them on that basis and compare them with comparable newspapers in this country and in the States.

“I think if they do it on that basis, I think we would come out all right. But as a corporation — if you take the corporation and break — and compare it — and relate it to the components of the corporation, I think the expectations get totally out of hand.” (30)

# That Sinc-ing feeling

by John Marshall

Newspaper developments in Ottawa add new dimensions to the business of the business-oriented being in control of Canada's news agenda. It might have journalists crying into press club beers, but the tears would be dropping past their manic grins at the spectacle of, among other things, publisher pots and kettles blackening one another.

Marc J. Charlebois, publisher of the Ottawa *Sunday Herald* ushered in the silly season with a June announcement that the tabloid *will, too*, be going daily, in spite of earlier false alarms. This time, he could even name the key-stone "kettle," Sinclair Stevens. The

new daily could appear this September, or possibly next March.

And in what must be the purplest-

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## The bottom line

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prose report of boardroom doings since Moses returned from the burning-bush meeting, Charlebois put journalistic enterprise into its real context. He told how Sinc kept sniffing around a partnership brew Charlebois was cooking with someone else until it lost steam. Then — there were serious meetings with Sinc:

"I spoke of how important it was to ensure that the shareholders who began the journey with us were protected. 'Sinc' agreed. I told him that my partner, Ken Lehman, had sacrificed a great deal to keep the paper alive and I wanted my friends to be completely satisfied with any deal we put together. 'Sinc' agreed. I insisted that any agreement we came to had to include a 'profit sharing' program for our employees. 'Sinc' agreed."

All bottom-line. Apparently nothing to tell his readers in connection with partner Sinc or his wife agreeing to any guarantees of good journalism.

But, in spite of what Charlebois said was a general consensus by media critics that he'd picked the wrong man, what clinched the deal was when the politically-battered Stevens said, "Marc, we're both in the middle of a battle and we both know we're going to win. Why don't we win together?"

At this dramatic moment (unfortunately with no photographer to record the moving scene, though possibly Charleton Heston will recreate it), Charlebois reports, "We shook hands and both gazed into eyes of commitment... we made a bond to fight with everything we've got to bring choice and justice to venues where it had been abandoned.... We have met and embraced another warrior. No matter how brutal the battle, we have the stuff to win."

The stuff, maybe — but not, from the evidence, a copy editor.

Elsewhere — in the *Financial Post* — Russell Mills was saying Ottawa would never see a daily *Herald*. Mills is publisher of the *Citizen*, the monopoly arranged after other high-level corporate sessions which also considered only the interests of shareholders, not those of readers. Too bad there isn't someone — purple prose or not — to record those Southam-Thomson hand-gripping, eye-meeting, battle-together decisions to kill newspapers in Ottawa and Winnipeg.

Meanwhile, the unsinkable Sinc, with Charlebois heading his York Centre's new International Publishing Division (Stevensizing may become synonymous with Thomsonizing), blasted the news media. In Halifax, he cited what he called myths:

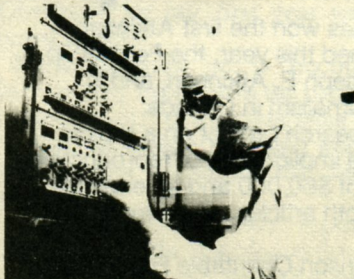
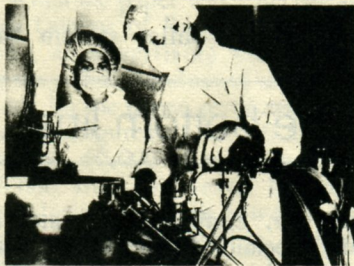
— That they had a right to to

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investigative work. "You should urge the press to join the police force where at least there are constraints."

— That they were benevolent. "The most profitable business undertaking in the nation."

— That they are non-biased in their reports. He said newspapers are closely aligned with the left (tell that to the Bassetts, Thomsons, and to Thomson's Tory Tory) and "run by the children of the 60s."

— That they don't seek power. "(They) have more influence than the government of Canada on what happens."

— That they report facts — "The

greatest myth," newspapers make up stories when they don't have enough real news.

All of which prompted the Toronto *Star* to editorialize: "Won't the new Ottawa *Herald* be something to behold — publishing just the facts, and only those that are not investigated; shunning power; hiring no one who was raised in the '60s; and with an owner-cum-Tory MP who says he sees no conflict of interest in sitting on the *Herald's* editorial board while keeping his seat in the House of Commons; and laughing all the way to the bank. That's news, and revenge, Stevens-style."

And the *Star* owners, who'd once had a director who'd also been an MP

and a cabinet minister and a national Liberal campaign chairman, are chuckling to *their* banks. They ranked 65 last year in the top 1,000 Canadian profit-makers, according to the *Globe and Mail*, the owner of which, Thomson Newspapers, ranked 16, two behind Lord Ken's International Thomson Organization. Considering the Lord's involvement in so many vital sectors of Canadian and international life, the *Globe* isn't inclined to emulate the *Star's* brashness to talk much about media conflicts. (30)

*John Marshall, a former employee of the Bassetts, the Thomsons (Globe and elsewhere), and the Star, is on the board of Friends of Content.*

## Big Brother's computerized

Decades ago, a Thomson Newspapers genius devised a simple (simplistic) way of comparing member newspaper editorial operations: get the editors to report how many news items of various types their staffs produced; distribute the results, and laggards would work to become more efficient. (And maybe you could cut the staff of the top-rated?) This bit of bottom-line bureaucracy naturally deformed news judgment and lowered journalistic quality wherever editors were timid enough to pay any attention to the head-office report. "Whatcha say, Joe?! Y'gotta find that grafting alderman? Forget it. Rewrite yer council story into five parts, gimme a couple

of paras on this Kiwanis press release, and do a quick phone poll about the heat."

But now, a similar system has

### The bottom line

popped up, computerized, and is proudly proclaimed in the last *Bulletin* of the American Society of Newspaper Editors by its inventor, Big Brother Nick Bournias. He's metro editor of the Florida *Times-Union* and Jacksonville *Journal*. For four years he's found time away from his real work to log

into his personal spread-sheet program a record of 40 reporters' page-one or section-page bylined appearances. He gives each item Nickie Points(!) for such things as beating the local TV station and the play on the page. The results are posted monthly, quarterly and annually for all to see.

He concedes he makes mistakes and that the system is "hopelessly flawed," but he still thinks it shows him where pay raises should go. "I'm paying for quality." And he confesses that he doesn't know if it's improved his newspapers, and that maybe it's a waste of time.

The *Bulletin* elicited reaction pieces from two of his reporters. One, Derek L. Kinner, a one-year man who says he's definitely in the minority, thinks the Nickie Points are great. They've got him a raise. He's on a court beat where (it's Florida) there are 60 prosecutors. He can really grind out stories, averaging two and a half a day in one month.

William A. Scott, a four-year man, bravely says the system's unfair and is a dangerous tool one step away from a daily story quota. He says it discourages in-depth reporting and encourages quickie stories while sources are neglected. It's also damaging newsroom cooperation because some reporters are afraid others will steal their stories. He's had the second highest cityside rating.

The *Bulletin* noted that Associated Press Managing Editors studies found many editors are interested in finding hard and fast data to measure productivity, but that most systems have been deemed unsatisfactory.

JM

(30)

## Pappert wins first Atkinson Fellowship

Toronto freelance writer Ann Pappert has won the first Atkinson Fellowship Award in Public Policy. Established this year, the Fellowship is named after The *Star's* founder, the late Joseph E. Atkinson, and is designed to further his tradition of liberal journalism in Canada.

Pappert will now pursue a year-long research project on a topical public policy issue — in this case, the social implications of reproductive technology. She will also receive a stipend of \$60,000 and an expense budget of \$25,000. Her final series of in-depth articles will be made available to all Canadian newspapers.

The Fellowship, sponsored by The Atkinson Charitable Foundation, The Toronto *Star* and the Beland Honderich family, is open to all Canadian print and broadcast journalists.

We congratulate Ann and wish her success in the months to come. Applications for next year will be available in the spring of 1989.

THE TORONTO STAR



# Formula for new daily no sure thing

by Maureen Argon

After about seven years of only one English-language daily newspaper, Montrealers were more than ready to accept a new one when the Montreal *Daily News* hit the stands on March 15. All available copies of the tabloid were snapped up before noon — a reported 80,000.

State-of-the-art technology, well-known columnists and reporters lured from the *Gazette*, 25 per cent ownership by British media entrepreneur Robert Maxwell, and publishing baron Pierre Peladeau's promise to spend \$25 million over two or three years all seemed the ingredients for success.

But after more than three months, it's not such a sure thing. The *Daily News* has suffered a severe drop in circulation, and the distribution system continues to be unreliable. No papers at all turned up one recent Saturday. Persistent editorial glitches and staff changes plague the newsroom — the city desk has yet another new editor for an average of one a month.

Any newspaper has start-up problems; a settling-down period is to be expected. And readers will chuckle over typographical errors, but they are generally tolerant of such minor gaffs — for a while.

The problems at the *Daily News* may point to something more than expected growing pains — a misreading of the market (it doesn't seem to have it clearly defined), poor judgment when

line hype seducing the reader. An early edition blared "Penis in window 'not porn'" about an inside story about a controversial window display in a Montreal art gallery. Another head declared "Drapeau Speaks" over a story concerning the troubled Civic Party he once headed. The speech amounted to a terse "no comment."

The *Daily News* emphasizes local news, entertainment and sports. There are a few, seemingly-token political stories off the wire, especially concerning international news. During the Moscow Summit, a photo of Moscovite bikini-clad beauties was given more play than the news coverage. Photos of scantily clad women are frequent if not daily features of the paper.

Said Crysler: "They have a tough time finding their spot. They are trying to be punchy, trying to be different and sometimes end up going a bit too far."

Clark Davey, publisher of the *Gazette* said, "just talking about the *Daily News* gives them a credibility they shouldn't have."

Whether the paper's staff has the expertise to do a better job is also questioned. While a few big names were lured from the *Gazette*, many of the reporters are young and experienced, and a few are fresh out of journalism school. Many are from the broadcasting industry with no print experience.

One of them blames the paper's difficulties on poor management, a lack of leadership and labor-relations firmly entrenched in the 19th century. Morale among reporters is rumored to be poor. Said the reporter: "The place is very much like a machine, a news factory. It's assembly-line journalism. People are expected to work until the editor says go home. That can be up to 15 hours a day in some cases.

Whatever problems are plaguing the *Daily News*, few are willing to predict an early demise. While Crysler believes the paper must get under control soon, he is optimistic in the long term. "I don't expect Peladeau to fool around much longer."

Davey at the *Gazette* thinks the *Daily News* could be around for quite a while. "Pride has deep pockets," he said, "and Mr. Peladeau's pride has very deep pockets." (30)

Maureen Argon is a multi-lingual, Montreal freelancer.

## The bottom line

hiring staff, and inexperience with the high-tech equipment.

When the paper was launched, Charles Dunbar of Rannaud and Dunbar Inc., an advertising and marketing agency that conducted a feasibility study for the paper, projected paid-circulation figures of 45,000 after three months, 60,000 after 12 months and 70,000 after two years. Insiders say circulation is much lower than the three-month projection, probably below 20,000.

While acknowledging that building an audience from scratch is often tough, Lindsay Crysler, director of the journalism department at Concordia University, said he is surprised at how low the circulation has fallen.

The publisher, George MacLaren, refuses to discuss figures, but has been quoted saying about \$3.5 million of the \$5 million advertising budget has been achieved. Indeed he said that for the month of May the newspaper was over budget in advertising sales, adding "Obviously for our first year we set limited targets."

While he said he is becoming "increasingly happy with the paper we are putting out," it is unclear what kind of a paper is being offered and whether Peladeau has misjudged the market altogether.

Said one *Daily News* reporter: "They gave me the impression this was going to be an upscale tabloid geared to a young upwardly mobile yuppie market, and what we have is a crude imitation of Fleet Street which appears to be directed to a blue collar market."

The paper features glitzy, often raucous headlines — followed by stories that seem empty compared to the head-



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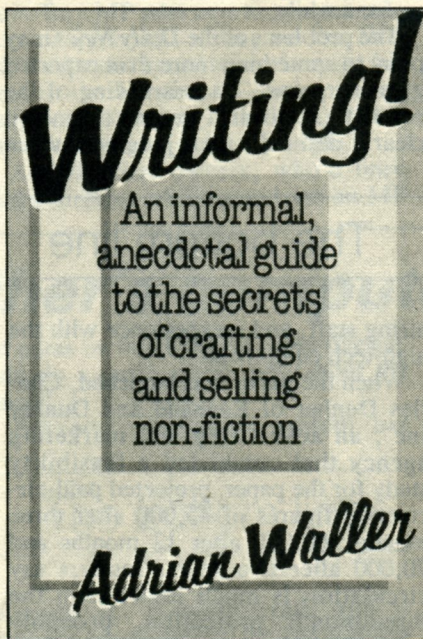
# Making it in magazines pointers from a pro

by Adrian Waller

**R**elatively few news reporters ever successfully master the jump to magazines because they have become experts at nibbling at the news rather than sewing up a story in one tidy package. True, newspapers have proved to be an invaluable training ground for anyone wanting to write; reporters generally agree, though, that carefully crafting magazine articles as opposed to hurriedly writing news stories, is a completely different skill. Thus they content themselves with the excitement of dealing with the newsroom's day-to-day pressures, recognizing that magazines — particularly those that have built up loyal advertising and a faithful readership — strive for a healthy balance between good literacy prose and stalwart, informative journalism that reporters cannot consistently provide.

Besides length, shape, anecdotes, and sensitive writing, magazine articles require other ingredients that will justify their prominence and length. To some degree, the news editor's criteria apply. He seeks stories that are timely, prominent, different, and to some degree unusual, all set mostly within the paper's circulation area. But here the similarity ends. For the magazine editor, such saleable elements as the unlikely, the tragic, the comic, or the bizarre can never stand alone. Neither can a story be merely interesting. It must earn a spot in a magazine's pages by having infinitely more to commend it.

The magazine article is a multifac-



ted organism composed of many things all so inextricably entwined that they often cannot be separated. One element that *can* stand alone, though, is *significance*. In fact, it towers high above all others.

One magazine editor describes the intangible coagulation of all the story-gatherer's forces as "a spark signalled by a bell that sounds in the brain the moment your heart says you could be onto something good. From then on, brain and heart work hand in hand, compelling you to pursue, dig deeper." For newpeople, the process works

incessantly, which is why they hold their jobs. But for the magazine writer who must seek topics of greater value and with wider implication, it may happen only a couple of hundred times in a lifetime. When it does, he or she will be shuffling, reshuffling, and filtering the pros and cons of yet another story in one corner of the writer's very intricate mind.

"There is only one trait that marks the writer," says novelist Morely Callaghan. "He is always watching. It's a trick of mind and he is born with it."

Born with it? Perhaps. No one pretends that thinking makes writers or even that writing can be taught. But a voracious craving for thoughtful expression never hurt anyone, not the least those who yearn to see their words in print.

Success in writing comes largely from being curious, inquisitive and broad-minded. We must possess a strong sense of argument but always be ready to recognize both sides of an issue fairly and with a natural compassion born of an appreciation and understanding of life. "How vain it is to sit down to write," said Henry David Thoreau, "when you have not stood up to live." Writers need to hold their own views firmly, of course, but they should develop the skill of setting down other people's without letting theirs intrude. These are qualities that, like magazine sense, can be acquired by assessing our best, most objective journalism on radio, television, and in print and appreciating the contemplation and

*Adrian Waller has learned the writing craft in many areas — including the fast pace and short takes of the old Toronto Telegram, through more thoughtful if no less deadline-conscious exercise of about 400 magazine articles, and between the covers of eight books, including Writing! from which the accompanying article has been adapted.*

*Living in Lachine, Que., with his wife and daughter, he finds time away from research and the keyboard to collect Canadian and European art, restore antiques, paint, do home renovations, and enjoy music and theatre.*

*His latest book — like Writing!, published by McClelland & Stewart — is the eighth edition of The Canadian Writer's Market (\$12.95 paperback). It lists more than 1,260 markets, including twice as many magazines as the previous edi-*

*tion, and 50 more book publishers. Waller has also added those newspapers and farm publications that accept freelance articles. He's drawn from his previous book to provide vital advice to freelancers trying to hit the markets catalogued, and in the case of consumer magazines and publishers, thumbnails their requirements. The book is topped off with lists of agents, prizes and awards, creative writing and journalism courses, and writers' organizations.*

*Cautionary note: Past listings are supposed to be updated, but, alas, an erroneous year-old address is given for content under its own listing, and in another, it is said to be affiliated with Sources. It went its own way in 1982 when owner Barrie Zwicker sold content to Humber College which sold it to Friends of Content two years later.*

planning behind it.

As writers, we should never forget that our two prime functions are to entertain and to inform. Both must be tempered by rigid, professional ethics and keen social responsibilities. "A writer," said the suffragette Nellie McClung, "must have the pores of his heart open." When we are honest with ourselves, our readers will be the first to benefit. Using that intuition and instinct as best they can, then, good freelancers ferret out the worthwhile and quickly shed the irresponsible.

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One Toronto freelancer claims that for an average magazine article she spends three weeks gathering information, four days sorting it out — and only a day or so actually turning it into copy. For me, however, these proportions would be exaggerated. A day to write a 3,000 word magazine piece tends to underestimate the effort required to shape words and polish them until they shine. For an average assignment, I probably spend 10 per cent of my working time thinking, 30 per cent on actual writing, and 60 per cent on unearthing the facts.

Generally speaking, the bigger and

more intricate the article, the more research it will require. I, and others like me, have all too often wrestled with issue pieces containing as many as one hundred sources: from people actually being quoted as experts to those who have merely substantiated a line here or a word there in the finished job. Rarely, you'll find, does a well-researched piece contain fewer than thirty sources, particularly one aimed at a national audience. Conversely, some stories may have only a dozen or so — profiles, for instance, when the prime source is obviously the person about whom you are writing. But even these stories require a lot of research, if only to verify those dates, times, places, or events your subject might have told you about.

While we rarely ever develop a voracious hunger for leafing through newspaper clippings, dry academic studies, or dull government reports over several hours for days on end, it's a chore that just has to be done. This, in a nutshell, is what research is, and serious writers will also confirm that what they produce ultimately lives or dies according to how well they research it — to cover their tracks, plug the holes, or to touch all bases. No amount of clever writing

later, they know, will ever camouflage a digging job done erratically or skimpily.

Writers — non-fiction and fiction — really need to study the people they write about, always and everywhere. Sometimes they have to ask what lies behind a smile, a tear, or a burst of nervous laughter. When a tender look turns stolid, they must find the reason for that, too, then form words to describe the face itself.

\*\*\*\*\*

Readers expect writers to portray people well, which is not always an easy task. Description brings together two powerful forces: your visual perception and your words. To some people, even among those who have never written, description is somehow second nature. To most of us, though, it's something that comes only with practice. During interviews, professionals list those features that distinguish a particular physique, astutely omitting those that are common to all physiques.

Most magazine articles require only a few sentences of description — early, as *Equinox* reminds us — so readers get to "know" important characters at the outset:

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Nearly 200 years after his death we are still wondering what kind of man Beethoven really was. His contemporaries described him as being five-foot-two.

\*\*\*\*\*

At a panel discussion on polishing during a Toronto writers' conference most of the questions dealt with the need for writers to acquire self-editing skills by taking editing courses. Some participants felt they might be able to learn it by working on each others' manuscripts. One panellist was asked if he rewrote or revised his work. "Oh, no," he said. "The moment you start tampering with art you sort of ... well... damage it. You spoil its spontaneity. I send the first draft off and start something fresh. If the editor doesn't like it, that's too bad."

I gave a different answer. Polishing, I maintained, was that part of writing I enjoyed most of all. I found I could generally do it leisurely, often with a pen, a drink, and a couple of dictionaries. I enjoyed the challenge of compressing words, seeing just how many I could cut from a manuscript without weakening it. I was grateful, in fact, for everything I could safely cross out

because it reinforced the feeling that I really *was* being left with only the good, strong stuff.

On average, I said, I revised each magazine article three times, measuring my work's success by how dirty with markings each draft was. The one the editors bought was usually the fourth. My books generally underwent four revisions and were polished twice afterwards. (Some chapters in this book were overhauled six times, and later underwent four intensive bouts of polishing, two on hard copy and two on the word processor screen.) Each revision, I hoped, produced tighter, more precise work. Finally, I needed to tell myself that any more changes were purely arbitrary, and at that point I had considered my job done at last. Before printing the clean final manuscript, however, I read my work aloud to test it for rhythms and meaning, and to find any clutter I may have overlooked. "Some more complicated stories," I added, "obviously need considerably more revisions."

Polishing also provides the last chance to correct important details like spelling, dates, and names. You will probably have pencilled these into your first rough draft or ensured they were intact when you typed your research notes.

Just as important, you may discover through polishing that your characters aren't well enough etched or that their dialogue needs smartening-up. Perhaps you'll also find spots where you've drifted from the theme.

Polishing should show you where you can make some sentences more emphatic by turning them around or by changing tenses. To help the logic of your thoughts become more apparent, entire paragraphs may need to be revised and moved. Poor punctuation can be at the root of some problems. Too many commas, for instance, makes reading especially hard going. These can very often be usefully replaced by dashes or brackets, which isolate parts of a sentence with a lot more simplicity and impact.

But above all, polishing nearly always involves condensing on a larger scale — chopping away parts of a story and building new bridges across the gaps this will leave. Broadly speaking, this is an art: the work of experienced editors. But condensing involves techniques that almost anyone can learn. If you want to polish well, you must learn them, too.

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# ACTRA

## Toronto tabs talk tough toe to toe

by Ron Verzuh

"Get businesslike, but don't let it show in your pages." — Senator Keith Davey in his 1970 report on mass media.

Senator Davey would have been positively gleeful had he attended the annual meeting of the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies (AAN) Toronto last May. He would have found the host paper, *Now*, and the 56 other AAN members excellent company. Their ancestors were members of what he once called the "Volkswagon press." Now some of them are driving Cadillacs and they got them by adopting the above credo.

Ever budget conscious, this is the second year in a row the papers mostly U.S. ones, have met in the land of the 80-cent dollar. Last year they shared marketing strategies and "psycho-graphics" in Victoria, home of *Monday*, another AAN member, though one that has not totally sold out to fast-buck advertising and listings of what to do with your dual-income-no-kids (DINK) lifestyle.

This year discussions also centred on how to tap the largely untouched Canadian market. Rumor has it that this fall AAN's *Seattle Weekly* will challenge AAN's *Georgia Straight*, Vancouver's once-notorious underground paper. *Voir*, aimed at the Montreal yuppie crowd, is the newest French weekly. It co-habits with *Montreal Mirror*, started in 1985, the AAN member serving the English community. And *Metro*, an adpacked eight-page lightweight, is making a bid to be "Ottawa's Downtown Weekly."

But the biggest market war of all is brewing in Toronto where *Metropolis*, not yet an AAN member, has recently set out to challenge *Now*'s supremacy in upscale yuppieland.

*Metropolis* editor and publisher Richard Rotman says *Now* has left a hole in the market partly because of its political slant. "A lot of their stuff seems to be filtered through a political viewpoint," he says. "Our attraction is to present a marketplace of diverse opinion across the board."

The Chicago-born Rotman moved to Canada about five years ago after marrying a Toronto woman. He was work-



ing in his family's public relations firm and had been a freelance contributor to the *Chicago Reader* since 1974. The *Reader*, along with New York's *Village Voice*, not an AAN member, by the way, the Boston *Phoenix* and the L.A. *Weekly*, were the models for a new breed of alternative newspaper that grew out of the underground press of the 1960s.

Rotman balks at the suggestion that his "mainstream alternative" might be to the right of *Now*. At 36, he says it differs in that it wants to appeal to the older crowd (target audience 25-49 years old). The new paper has a kid's page and plans articles on education and parenthood.

*Now* editor and publisher Michael Hollett, 32, calls the newcomer "an upwardly mobile rumor." He says "the biggest statement (about *Metropolis*'s politics) is that it doesn't have a news section. What you find in *Metropolis* is an absence of politics. We know by default where that takes one in terms of the political spectrum. If you're for nothing, you're for the status quo."

In six years, the former student and small-town press editor has built *Now* into a small empire, distributing 80,000 copies weekly and boasting a readership of 250,000 with more than 55 per cent of them with household

incomes above \$40,000. And despite much flack from the left, it covers the gamut of progressive issues from feminism and unions to gay rights and Third World politics.

Rotman says another key difference is that he's attracted several outstanding and well-known journalists. He points to a former *Maclean's* writer, Mark Czarnecki; Daniel Richler, former host of *The Journal's Friday Night*; Jonathan Gross, a Toronto *Star* TV sports writer who used to be a *Sun* rock critic, and Larry LeBlanc, one of the originators of *Record* magazine.

Hollett calls these heavy hitters "the same retreats that have been around the market for the past 10 years." He says he has rejected more than one person on Rotman's staff. He laughs when told that *Metropolis*'s top freelance rate is \$500. "This year we used the Toronto *Star* (Newspaper) Guild contract to set our rates."

Rotman sees major differences in content as well. "If you take away the club advertising from *Now*, there's very little left, whereas ours is going to be a lot of different areas without one really popping out as the main thing. Their thrust and motivation is music. Ours is a general interest in the arts as well as some news content." *Metropolis* also runs the New York *Times* crossword puzzle and plans to crib from New York's *Spy*, the popular satirical magazine founded by former *Canadian Review* publisher Graydon Carter.

Hollett says the claim to more diverse content is a crock. "It's an entertainment paper for people who don't like to go out. It's a newspaper for people who don't care about the issues," he says.

"It's not a magazine of enquiry," Hollett argues. "It's not asking questions which make people feel uncomfortable." He says Rotman can't produce the thoughtful features that attract a "discerning older readership." He points to his newly created Central American bureau staffed by former *Toronto Life* writer Stephen Dale. "We can afford to send the guy to Mexico to do a feature on free trade."

Where's the money coming from to launch *Metropolis*? Rotman says George R. Gardiner became a major backer after he saw the market research

produced by Decima Research Ltd. "He's a venture capitalist," says Rotman, adding that he owns the Gardiner museum of ceramic art.

"You know who Gardiner is?" cackles Hollett. "He's the colonel! Gardiner's money is into fried chicken. Like how cool is it at cocktail party's to say you're the chicken man? Gardiner has made tons of money on chicken corpses."

"I respond to 250,000 reader," adds Hollett. "He (Rotman) responds to the guy who's got the wallet. When the revenues don't correspond to the business plan, the guy will pull the plug."

As the challenger in this battle of the tabs, Rotman suggests that "there's room for both. I think what we're up to can attract a different audience (*Metropolis's* starting press run is 55,000). I've never said that I want to wipe them out or that they shouldn't be in business or anything like that."

As the reigning monarch, Hollett

says "This is a guy who's seen the market, salivated, because he's damn right it's a totally lucrative market. But you don't get it by going after the market, you get it by putting out something that achieves an editorial goal, fills an editorial need.

"Disinterested, third-party entrepreneurial cash is not the way to build a publishing venture. You've got to have editorial integrity," he adds. "The paper has to feel like it's editorially driven. *Metropolis* doesn't have that."

Undoubtedly, *Now* has lived up to the Davey credo. It's businesslike, with anticipated ad revenue of \$5 million in 1988, and it's journalistically sound. The question is will *Metropolis* also take Davey's advise in its search for the end of the yuppie rainbow.

\*\*\*\*\*

In 1966, George Martell trekked across Canada in search of supporters for a radical upstart called *This Maga-*

*zine Is About Schools*. Last spring, the York University professor hit the trail once again. This time to set up something called *Our Schools, Our Selves*.

"The magazine for Canadian Education Activists" will feature articles on "the politics of curriculum; money and power; class, race and gender realities; community and union education; labeling, streaming and gutting the program; teachers, students, parents and communities fighting back." Martell promises "humorous features, biography, poetry, book reviews and puzzles to help keep our thinking alive."

The promotional brochure also quotes east-coast labor leader James B. McLachlan, who said, "I believe in education for action. I believe in telling children the truth about the history of the world."

No launch date was given. (30)

*Ron Verzuh is an Ottawa writer and regular content contributor.*

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# 'Make the bastards print it'

by Barbara Florio Graham

Freelance writers — Ottawa says they're Canada's lowest income earners — were given large helpings of inspiration, though with a peppering of desperation, at the annual session of the Periodical Writers Association of Canada (PWAC) in Calgary.

One panelist, award-winning Toronto writer Arthur Johnson, noted that publishing is one of the most heavily subsidized industries, and "what is not known is that writers often provide the subsidy." He detailed some of the often unexpected expenses an author has to incur on the industry's behalf — travel, preparation of an index, libel insurance, photographs and other art.

June Callwood, a founding member of PWAC, also spoke in part to the pocketbook. Married for 44 years to writer Trent Frayne, she said he was "like my long-term Canada Council grant." And she said "I've had royalty statements in three figures — with a decimal point." typical of the humor-coating she gave a serious message, she deflated any ideas of the glamor of being an author by talking about how she's been sent "on a coast to coast tour — from Burlington to Montreal."

Elizabeth Monroe, publishing director of Western Producer Prairie Books didn't give the hopeful all that much hope either, when she revealed that for every 20 books her company published each year, it rejected about 730 proposals. Participating in a session discussing how to develop books out of magazine articles, she also warned that sometimes a magazine article may so satisfy the public's interest in a subject that the potential for a book sale is nullified.

However, the 49 delegates and about 25 observers at the June sessions in Winnipeg, also were encouraged to hang in there, and without compromise. Callwood, who makes a habit of challenging a lot of people (most recently neighbors fighting establishment of a Metro Toronto youth shelter she's backing), said, "There's an element of anarchism in the decision to be a writer." And she advised that if an unpopular subject or opinion surfaces, "write it so bloody well that the bastards have to print it."

One of the "printers" was a featured speaker, John Fraser, former *Globe and Mail* ballet writer and China and

United Kingdom bureau chief, book author, and now Conrad Black's editor at *Saturday Night*. (See May/June *content* Getting it right at *Saturday Night*). In effect acknowledging Black's right-wing, autocratic reputation, and disarming critics by using the ploy of verbal escalation, Fraser referred to his new boss as "Vlad the Impaler." He asserted, however, that the monthly publication remains independent of its proprietor's interests.

Fraser said he was revamping the magazine "to eradicate the sense of solemnity," and he said that it should be for Canadians, but not necessarily about Canada.

There was encouragement for non-Toronto freelancers with an eye on *Saturday Night's* top-level fees. Fraser told them he was looking for writers from outside the magazines' home base.

In business sessions, delegates passed two resolutions condemning free trade, another directing the executive to explore the issue of declining literacy, and one to develop co-operation with other writers' organizations in Canada and elsewhere.

Countering reminders that writing's a tough job, were helpful sessions on marketing, finance, long-range planning, copyright, and other subjects. This fall, the organization will produce *The Canadian Writer's Network*, a booklet listing brief descriptions of members' work available for publication. It is the start of a program to help members sell outside their usual markets. PWAC already produces an annual Directory of Members, a Fee Survey, and a bi-monthly news letter. It also has produced a highly-successful guide to freelancing, *Words for Sale*, which was updated in 1983 by MacMillan of Canada.

The president, Sid Tafler, also noted that in spite of limited resources, the organization had played a vital role in recent changes in federal copyright law... "perhaps the most important and sustaining area of interest within PWAC this decade. Our voice is heard at the highest levels of government at a crucial time in the history of legislative protection of creators' rights."

Two new chapters — in London and Winnipeg — are joining those of Atlantic Canada, Montreal, Ottawa, Kings-

ton, Toronto, Saskatoon, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and Victoria. Names of local chapter co-ordinators can be obtained from PWAC National Office, 24 Ryerson Ave., Toronto, M5T 2P3.

30

Barbara Florio Graham, author of *Five Fast Steps to Better Writing*, is PWAC Ottawa chapter co-ordinator.

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# Singing the press club blues

by William B. Forbes

**A**t this year's annual meeting in the spacious quarters of the 44-year-old Toronto Press Club a motion was passed — not without considerable debate — giving the vote to social members, persons who have little or no connection with the news media. The club also launched a drive to recruit more members — especially social members.

The move (one disgruntled news veteran wondered if they'd drop the "Press" from the club's name) reflects a media-membership problem being faced by press clubs around the world.

In New York, where there are thousands in media and media-related jobs, the press club has had to join the Chemical Club and other organizations in the same premises. The popular London International Press Club at the foot of Fleet Street went into bankruptcy and closed — a quarter of a million pounds in debt. A new club has opened in London in a very modest way, but it is already struggling. An' what's a matter-r-r-r wi' Glasgie...? The Glasgow Press Club executives are worried because they cannot attract the younger people from either print or broadcast.

In Chicago, a huge city with two metropolitan dailies, 21 regional, district and suburban newspapers and more than a dozen radio and television stations, the press club died. In Dallas, a city famous for its flamboyant journalism, the press club also closed.

The Toronto club — still a viable operation — is not the only Canadian one to see its working-press membership diminish. The Montreal club, once popular and solvent in its prime Sheraton Mount Royal location (long into the nights), is reduced to limited and uncomfortable surroundings over a restaurant.

There are some bright spots, including the 100-year-old Winnipeg club, holding its own and staging a sumptuous celebration of its longevity this October. And in Moncton, the press club is popular and prosperous, probably due to a large social membership, and to slot machines which seem to be tolerated, and — as an article in this year's Toronto *Byliner* suggested — because the only other attraction in Moncton is High Mass.

The sad truth — from the point of



Those were the days...

view of press-club cash registers — is that the news business has changed drastically. The intense rivalry that existed between big-city dailies, and the subsequent razzing camaraderie over a few suds, lives only in a Val Sears book or at the end of the bar where the aging regulars re-hash old scoops. Of Canada's 110 dailies in French and English, 90 publish without competition in their market areas. In New York, where there were 10 thriving dailies early this century, there are three, and only the *Times* is making money. With rare exceptions, newspaper circulations have remained stagnant in recent years, increasing by an average of less than half of one per cent annually while populations climb.

The news gathers have changed, too. Those of today are not the breed of yesterday. Make of it what you like, but many more of them are women, and all of them are much better educated, including degrees in journalism. In the "good, old days," newsmen bellied up the bar revelled in the story of the managing editor who wouldn't hire a man as a reporter if he knew the meaning of the word "nuance."

Even the managing editors can define it now — and their interests and those of many on their staffs go far beyond just the news business and shop talk with newsroom cronies. (One who was not renewing Toronto Press club membership explained: "I've heard all these stories a hundred times, why suffer any longer?" Many of the new

breed are busy seeking further education and the opportunity to travel. If married (sometimes even when single) they have the burden of mortgages, and they may live far from the press clubs in the downtown core. And they don't have to go far, either from work or from home, to find a wide variety of places for entertainment.

Of course, some haven't even investigated what the clubs have to offer, and in the good ones with many dedicated volunteers (often, those social members), there are many attractions. At Toronto, it ranges from hard-hitting (and hard-hit) panels on vital news media issues, to "slave auctions" (bid for lessons from a bar tender, a gourmet meal served in your home by a club member, a lake trip by a boat-owning member, or...?). Top flight entertainers and entertainment groups passing through town often play the club, and there is the pool table, the card tables, the dining tables — and even, in desperation, those guys at the end of the bar — "Remember the time when..." And it does sponsor *THE* press awards.

It'd be a heckuva note if, some day, a couple of old news gatherers sitting in some yuppie greenery of glass and chrome have to use the same remember-when opener about a long-gone press club.

30

*William B. Forbes, in the newspaper, magazine, and broadcasting industries for more than 50 years, is executive editor of Canadian Printer & Publisher, Printing Product Guide and Electronic Publishing. He's won 22 awards for editorial achievement, magazine design and editing.*



# It's a different bus

*Canadian problems on U.S. elections beat include agenda-setters, herd instincts and hazards of creeping Americanism*

by Peter Calamai

In the 1980 presidential election campaign, Joe Schlesinger and a CBC television crew would wait for the candidates to come to them.

"We'd study their schedules and find a town that both Reagan and Carter — sometimes, Mrs. Carter — were going to go to. Then we'd plant ourselves there for three days. Now the campaigns are much more fluid and they don't have schedules until the last minute. The chase has become much more frantic and less thoughtful."

\*\*\*

Marci McDonald of *Maclean's* remembers asking Bill Brock, campaign manager for Bob Dole, about his candidate's position on the Canada-U.S. free trade agreement.

"Brock was a former trade representative for the administration. He said, 'I think he's for it. He must be for it. Just a minute I'll check.' And they had a hurried conference and told me that Dole was for it but had some reservations. It was clear that none of them had thought about it at all."

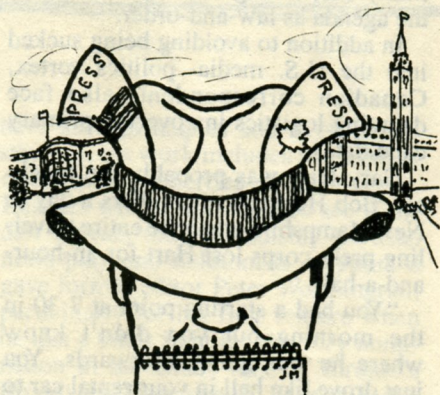
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In February, columnist Allan Fotheringham was trailing Michael Dukakis on the streets of Des Moines, Iowa, the state which kicked off the selection process.

"People couldn't get within 30 yards of him because of the papperizzi. Not only is it impossible for individual reporters to get near the candidate, it's also impossible for the general public. The whole process has been turned on its head."

\*\*\*

Bob Hepburn of the *Toronto Star*, a former Ottawa bureau chief, likes the



openness of the press-politician relationship in the United States.

"It's a lot easier here to get people like campaign advisers and consultants to talk on the record. It adds a lot more credibility to a story. In Canada, there's still the we're-never-quoted mentality inherited from the bureaucracy."

\*\*\*

Glimpses from four resident Canadian correspondents in the U.S. all deeply involved in covering the ultimate in staged media events — a presidential election campaign.

A presidential campaign isn't an exotic assignment for any reporter who has ever covered a Canadian federal election or leadership race.

"Everything in Canada is a slightly watered-down version of the American system," says Fotheringham, who recently switched his thrice-weekly column from *Southam News* to the *Financial Post* and the *Sun* newspapers.

"There are more aides, more flunkies, more skillful liars and better pollsters."

And, every Canadian correspondent in Washington would add, more length

and more money: two quantitative differences that amount to a qualitative difference as well.

"Here so much is being written years before the election," says Hepburn. "What would we think in Canada if Jean Chretien announced two years ahead of time that he was campaigning to oust Turner at a leadership convention? Would we then cover every event he went to? Travel with him across Canada?"

In effect, that's what happens in the U.S. Already strategies are being plotted for the 1992 presidential election, and by early 1990 candidates will be running for the right to have their finger on the nuclear-war button.

The stakes are higher for American political journalists as well. If they draw a winner, they can build the campaign into a coveted White House assignment. Superb campaign coverage on a local paper or station might bring a job offer from the network or the *Times* or *Post*.

For Canadian correspondents, the presidential campaign is important but so are a lot of other stories — free trade, turmoil in the Gulf, drugs, guns.

Leading among Canadian media in the resources devoted to the U.S. campaign is *Maclean's*, which assigned bureau chief McDonald full-time to election coverage last September and has run a staff article nearly every week. In the June 27 issue, *Maclean's* devoted three columns to a McDonald piece about speculation on a vice-presidential running mate for George Bush but only two columns to the Pentagon procurement scandal.

Such coverage doesn't come cheap. Two days with Bob Dole cost McDonald \$2,400. A trip to California with Dukakis, \$3,000. But the time and resources allowed *Maclean's* to produce a comprehensive cover on the Massachusetts governor, with 10 pages

about the man, his policies, his state, his aides and his views on Canada.

"I spent a lot of time with him just watching," says McDonald. "You don't always use something that week but five weeks later something you've noticed may fall into place in the jigsaw. I wouldn't have got as much material for the Dukakis piece if I hadn't travelled with him. The time on the candidate's airplane is great getting-to-know-you time, great for building comradery with advisers."

Even with such investment, McDonald shares the same problems as other Canadian correspondents covering the presidential campaign: limited access to candidates and advisers, avoiding contamination by pack journalism, translating U.S. political ideology into Canadian terms.

Says the CBC's Schlesinger: "The danger for foreign correspondents is that they get caught up in local politics. The people who are called lefties in this country aren't lefties in Canadian terms. Jackson gets called a radical just because he talks about health insurance."

Yet the U.S. political perspective which puts Jackson at the left of the ideological spectrum infiltrates Canadian newspapers and broadcasts daily because of the torrent of campaign coverage from U.S. news agencies. The *Star's* Hepburn found that anticipation helps in heading off creeping Americanism.

"I had a takeout on Dukakis written and ready to run the day after the New York primary, which was going to be the turning point. One of the reasons I did that was that I knew our editors were going to be slapping in any Dukakis profile they could get their hands on."

Avoiding contamination by the U.S. media is also a problem on the ground during the presidential campaign. So powerful are the agenda-setters — The *New York Times*, The *Washington Post*, the TV networks and weekly newsmagazines — that U.S. coverage cycles through themes:

Campaigns are Too Grueling, The Primary System is a Mess, The Major Parties are Dinosaurs, the Search for Vice-Presidential Running Mates, and The Conventions are Circuses.

This herd instinct was reinforced this year by the advent of the Presidential Campaign Hotline, an on-line political dopesheet which digested political news from across the nation. Every morning, political journalists could find out what their colleagues said in that day's broadcasts or papers. Each

campaign team was also given a 200-word slot to make a daily pitch.

"We have the freedom and the duty to look behind, to show that someone set the agenda and what their motives are," says *Maclean's* McDonald. The system here makes it all the more important that we do stories about the advisers, that we don't just take the superficial candidate stories as the last word."

As an example of deliberate manipulation, McDonald cites the attempts in late June by Lee Atwater, Bush's campaign manager, to convince news organizations to write about the prison furlough program in Massachusetts. Many did, letting the Republicans set the agenda as law-and-order.

In addition to avoiding being sucked into the U.S. media-politics vortex, Canadian correspondents also face daunting logistics in covering primary candidates.

Gary Hart was probably the toughest. Bob Hepburn remembers a day in New Hampshire when the entire travelling press corps lost Hart for an-hour-and-a-half.

"You had a starting point at 7:30 in the morning but you didn't know where he was going afterwards. You just drove like hell in your rental car to keep up with the motorcade."

For TV, the logistics can be every-

thing, since they have several people and a 1000-pound edit suite to move around. In addition, says Schlesinger, the correspondent is expected to screen all the coverage available from U.S. networks and their affiliates.

"So there's less chance to get out and find out what is really happening, to talk with voters as we did in the 1980 campaign. There's less first-person reporting."

With all the pitfalls and problems, Canadian correspondents do have a major advantage over U.S. journalists covering the presidential campaign.


Says Hepburn: "You're trying to give more perspective to election pieces here. You state things in starker terms than you would if you were covering a campaign in Canada."

Schlesinger sees it as a trade-off: "You have no access but you have a lot more freedom to come to a conclusion."

"Canadian correspondents," says McDonald, "are lucky to be one step removed from the process. You can put things in a wider context."

Says Fotheringham: "You have to be more sweeping in your judgments." 30

*Peter Calamai, a familiar name in content, is Southam News' Washington correspondent.*



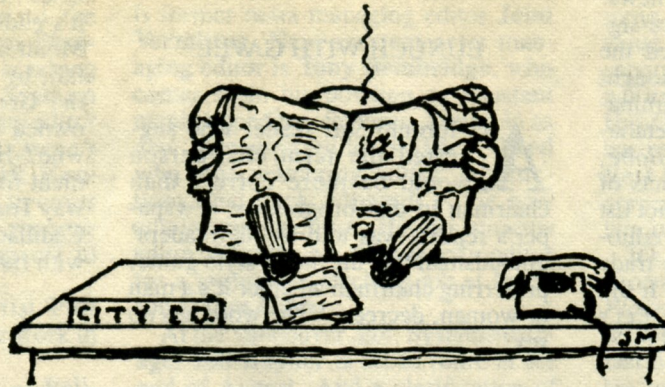
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# Scene in passing



## SUNSHINE BOY

Toronto *Sun* columnist Garth Turner, is emulating a previous editor-owner of that conservative (except for page three) tabloid by going into politics — officially. Turner won a Halton-Peel Tory nomination, saying, "Politics is an extension of my work." Aside from his column from which he took a sabbatical on principle (the paper doesn't

have such principles and says he can stay on), his work includes assembling downtown properties in Burlington. Readers will be watching to see if the *Sun* repeats the outlandishly partisan news-play and columnists' support it gave former editor Peter Worthington, particularly for his first venture when he lost a bitter fight for the Tory nomination in the ethnic mix of Toronto's Broadview-Greenwood. It included a final weepy-looking cover picture and tasteless headline, "IT GOES TO THE GREEKS." Worthington (later beaten as an independant conservative by the despised NDP in a by-election) hadn't learned from his old boss, the Toronto *Telegram* Tory publisher. John Bassett ran and lost in another immigrant-heavy riding — in part because he campaigned the working-class streets from his Rolls Royce.

## NEXT QUESTION

The CBC staffer had a zinger ready to deflate Prime Minister Brian Mulroney basking in his economic summity in Toronto. He asked (nudge, nudge, wink, wink) if the PM had any gifts for Toronto like the millions of dollars worth of same he was handing out to win Quebec's Lac-Saint-Jean by-election. You mean, the PM in effect asked, like the \$400-million headquarters you are getting?

## HIS SLIP'S SHOWING

The Montreal weekly, the *Chronicle*, found it was no class act when it fear-

lessly published a diatribe letter to the editor that sneered at francophone Quebecois. But it was a class action — by the Association of West Island Francophones. It was settled out of court when, in addition to making a substantial donation to the organization, the weekly agreed to buy ads in four major Quebec dailies, including the English-language *Gazette* repudiating and denouncing the letter, and apologizing. But gosh, editor John Austen had just thought by running the letter he was showing how ridiculous extremist positions had become.

## PUFFERY FOR PUFFING

While some newspapers have banned tobacco advertising, the coffin-nail manufacturers aren't completely out in the cold. No-ad papers happily — and at no charge — plugged one cigarette company by using its name in reports of a jazz concert it sponsored. But one reference in a long story is nothing compared to the no-cost plugs in CBC-Toronto's supertime news. The entertainment staffer used the name at least three times in a short chuckling segment.

## LET GEORGE DO IT

In a recent *Maclean's* column, George Bain, ex of the *Globe and Mail*, makes public a copy of a previously confidential letter from John Tory, Thomson Corporation president, to Prime Minister Mulroney's office. It

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was back in 1985, urging no interference in a planned U.S. takeover of a book publisher in Canada. Pointing out pointedly that Thomson was the largest foreign owner of publishing enterprises in the U.S. (more than 110 newspapers and a flock of other more-significant publications), he warned the government against a "poorly thought out, counterproductive and discriminatory" action that could lead to retaliation against Canadians. The *Globe*, which pontificates against conflicts of interest in others but which does not list any of its owner's conflicts on its editorial page, is consistently for free trade of course — and a "free press." It did not scalp its ex employee's scoop. Let's not get too free.

### QUOTE OF THE YEAR

Former wrench in the spokes of the *Spec* at Hamilton and investigative gadfly at the *Globe* and now a bulldog digger at CBC radio, Gerry McAuliffe's against journalists (with or without BAs) taking prizes for their work from corporate sponsors. Still bouncing around is the one he burned across to the annual session of the Centre for

Investigative Journalism: "It's like the Mafia giving a cop-of-the-month prize."

### EUNUCH WITH GAVEL

A Toronto *Star* reader who suggested the term chairperson would be more correct than chairman in that progressive newspaper's reports was told by the readers' ombudsman that the *Star's* style guide, preferring chairman whether it's a man or woman, decrees: "The word has no sex."

### FEEDING FRENZY

The feeding frenzy continues in Montreal, but it's aimed at anglophone cuisine. The gourmand Quebecor Inc., owner of five dailies among other things, becomes Canada's biggest printer in a \$185-million deal with BCE Inc., Canada's biggest company, which gets 21 per cent of Quebecor. It emphasizes the latter's Canadian and

international presence. Meanwhile Montreal's Telemedia Inc., already largest publisher of consumer magazines in Canada, is buying Comac Communications' four western magazines (it has a big stake in a fifth), and it's adding to the 22 French-language Montreal area weeklies it bought last fall, by buying a string of weeklies in the Georgian Bay area. They were owned by Andrew Markle. Andrew who? He of the famous 1982 apartment-flip scandal in Ontario; his Seaway Trust did a fast shuffle with 11,000 Cadillac Fairview units. He's charged with fraud.

### FRIEND OR FOE?

Mavor Moore, playwright, author, actor, columnist, etc., writing about the all-news network proposal: "When we frankly admit that when we talk about television news, we are dealing with fiction, we see that the greatest threat arises from political or commercial power-mongers who try to pass off their fiction as our fact. The only way to foil them is to gather one's own fiction and maintain enough outlets to share it with all concerned...the CBC is the only possible choice." J.M. ☺



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## SHORT TAKES

At the Ottawa *Citizen*, Reporter **Janice Middleton** has left to start a family, medical reporter **Cathy Campbell**, has gone to the Kingston *Whig-Standard*, **Steve Bindman**, national law reporter, is taking leave of absence to enjoy his Southam Fellowship, former assistant city editor **Chris Hall** has moved to the Queen's Park Bureau, replacing **Mark Kennedy**, who returns to Ottawa to cover Parliament Hill, and city hall reporter **Christopher Neal** is heading off to work for CUSO.

Windsor *Star* editorial artist **Phil McLeod** resigned for full time work in his own design business.

At the Hamilton *Spectator* — Religion writer **James Carney** has resigned to concentrate on his church duties. Labor writer **David Estok** has gone to the *Financial Times of Canada*. District editor **Gord Green** has moved on into the public relations field. Another departure is **Shelly Easton**, former court reporter, who has moved west for a change of pace. Photographer **Ron Albertson** has become chief photographer at Hamilton's sister paper, the Burlington *Spectator*. And three people who stuck it out have been signed on full-time: freelancer **Gary Yokoyama** joins the photographer's list; summer student in 1987 and freelancer **Barbara Brown** joins the GA ranks as does long-time stringer **Jill Morrison**.

In Winnipeg, **Liz Pogue**, who was features editor at the Winnipeg *Sun*, signed on as copy editor at the *Free Press*.

At the London *Free Press*. **Carol**

**Kehoe**, who was copy editor for the weekend supplement *Encounter Magazine* is now its editor. New sports editor is former news managing editor **John Vormittag**. New assistant news managing editor is **Tony Bembridge**, who comes from his position as assistant managing editor, features. Sitting in as new managing editor is **Dick Ward** who was managing editor, productions, and **Jack Alpaugh** is the new administrative editor. He was systems editor. Leaving his desk as city editor for a journalism teaching job at Ryerson is **Don Gibb**.

At the Vancouver *Sun*. Systems manager **Bill Rayner** is set to retire at the end of August. And a clarification of two items which appeared in the March-April issue: **Peter O'Neill** is still a reporter in Ottawa, and sports columnist **Peter McMartin** is still writing his pieces. He was a replacement for **James Lawton** back in the winter.

There are a lot of troop movements at the *Globe and Mail*. **Paul Knox** will move from the Mexico City bureau to open the *Globe's* 10th foreign bureau in Rio de Janeiro. **Linda Hossie**, currently a member of the editorial board, will become bureau chief in Mexico City. **Jim Rusk** will return from Beijing to become an associate editor of *Report on Business*. He will be replaced by **Jan Wong**. **Chris Waddell** has become the Ottawa bureau chief. **Jeff Sallot**, former Ottawa bureau chief, will replace **Lawrence Martin** in Moscow. **Martin** will return to Canada and

take a leave of absence (to write a book?) **Paul Koring** joined the Ottawa bureau. **Al Strachan** will move to Calgary where he will continue as national sports columnist-reporter from the West. **Kevin Cox**, has moved from Calgary to become the Halifax bureau chief. **Robert Martin** has returned to the Toronto newsroom. **Bert Marotte** will become a business correspondent in the Montreal bureau in late summer.

It's now on page 46 of **Claire Hoy's** controversial book, *Friends in High Places* if you want to read it before it disappears. It's the lengthy reference to **Ian MacDonald** writing speeches for his long-time social friend and news contact, **Brian Mulroney**, while he, MacDonald, was a Montreal *Gazette* columnist. It won't be there in any future edition, because its deletion was part of an out-of-court settlement of a libel suit by MacDonald. Hoy also had to release a statement of apology saying MacDonald did not write speeches for Mulroney at any time prior to resigning from his columnist's job in Sept., 1985. MacDonald rated 21 index references in Hoy's best seller, including snide ones about MacDonald's "friendly biography" of Mulroney — and a lot of quotes from it.

The *Bear Hill Voice*, a newspaper which had served four Alberta Indian bands for 20 years, has folded. Its one-time staff of 10 had been reduced to three. But the collapse of this native-media voice is not a reflection of the total scene. **George A.**

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**Lessard**, of Inuvik, NWT, notes in a letter to the *Globe and Mail* that there are more than 20 native communications societies across Canada. They include the Wawatay in Ontario, which has a radio network and newspaper; the Inuit Broadcasting Corp., the Inuit-language TV for the eastern Arctic; and Taqramuit Nipingat Inc., producing daily radio and TV for the Inuit of Nunavik (Arctic Quebec).

**Barbara Yaffe**, who has worked off and on in Toronto and in the Atlantic Provinces for the *Globe and Mail* for seven years, and for CBC and most recently for the St. John's *Sunday Express*, is suing the *Globe*. She seeks \$1.2 million because, she says, the paper is in breach of contract. On the strength of a written offer of a job as Vancouver bureau chief, she gave notice of her resignation to the *Express* — and then the offer was cancelled.

The glossy and highly-professional *Ryerson Review of Journalism* has been named the best journalism-student magazine in North America. It topped 19 other entries in the first time the Association of Education in Journalism and Mass Communications has had an award for a magazine category. Students **Lisa McCaskell** and **Doug Bennett** were editor and senior editor of the winning issue. Instructors **Lynn Cunningham** and **Don Obe**, the latter a former editor of *Toronto Life* and former Ryerson journalism director, were to accept the award in Portland, Ore.

Finalists for the 1987 Michener

Award for journalism are the Vancouver *Sun*, the Kitchener-Waterloo *Record*, CBC Television, *CFPL-TV* in London, the *Eastern Graphic* in Montague, PEI, and Southam News. The winner of the award for "disinterested and meritorious" public service in journalism will be announced later this year.

The six finalists were selected from 39 entries, a drop from last year's record total of 74. But the Michener Awards Foundation said the "remarkable improvement in quality of entries more than offset the sharp drop in numbers."

The *Sun* was chosen for a seven-part series on AIDS that occupied 12 1/2 pages. The *Record* was cited for a two-part series on bigotry in area schools.

CBC-TV was selected for a two-hour documentary on runaway children entitled *Runaways — 24 Hours on the Street*, while *CFPL-TV* was cited for a one-hour documentary on the life of a Southwestern Ontario farm family.

The *Eastern Graphic* disclosed confidential and other background information on the proposed fixed link between Prince Edward Island and the Mainland.

Southam News conducted a study of literacy in Canada which was published by 24 newspapers and summarized in *content* Sept/Oct/87.

**T**oronto *Star* photographer **Ron Bull** suffered a cut over one eye July 4 when a policeman jammed his camera into his face, knocking the camera and Bull's police media accreditation to the ground. The officer, who had rushed him to stop

him from taking pictures of other policemen wrestling with anti-U.S. protestors, restrained him until he realized he was an accredited photographer. Bull later accepted the officer's apologies.

**Doris Anderson**, Toronto *Star* columnist and former president of the Canadian Advisory Council on Women's Issues, gave the news media a C-minus "at best," for coverage of women's issues. She told a conference sponsored by the Women's Legal and Education Action Fund that editors go for the big names and big fights, and bury or miss the most socially significant issues. 30

*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 many letters and phone calls.*

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