content

for Canadian journalists

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November/December 1989

Inside the Mothership

Robert Fulford and Ross Perigoe assess the new crew

- Environmental bandwagon spins its wheels
- Report card on media literacy programs
- In memoriam: Donald Brittain 1928 - 1989

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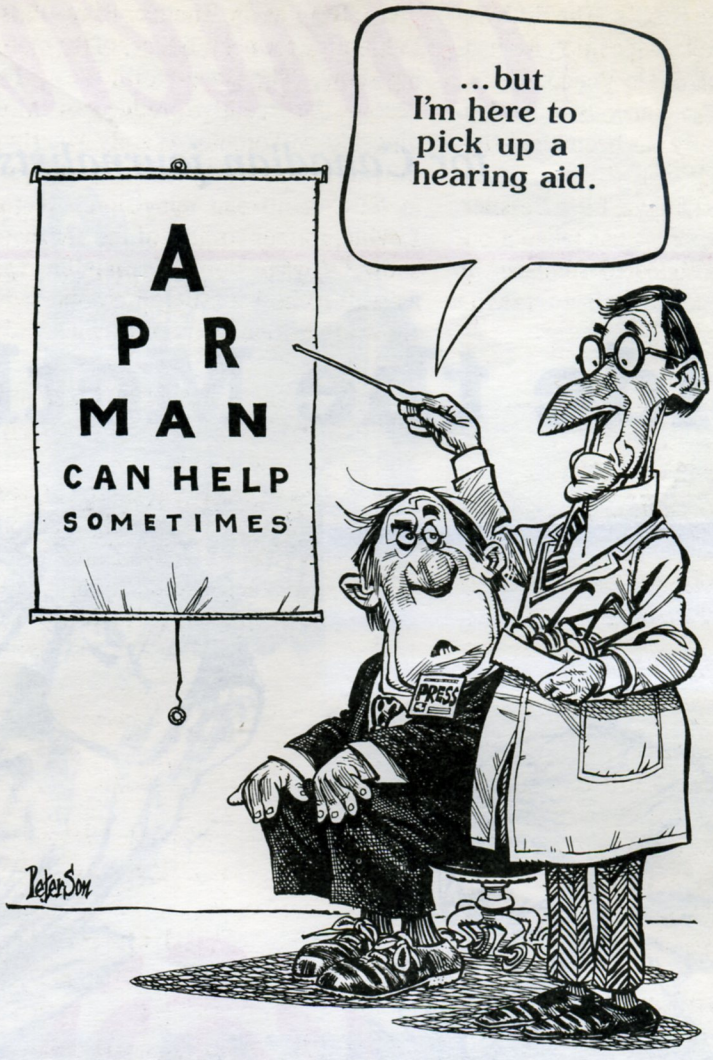

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for Canadian journalists

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Editor's Notebook

Twin appointments of Gérard Veilleux as president and Patrick Watson as chairman of the board of CBC have renewed the debate over the corporation's future. Robert Fulford, author and critic, and Ross Perigoe, professor of broadcast journalism at Concordia University, examine the subject in light of these appointments. They speculate on the relative position in the power structure of Veilleux and Watson -- the weight of opinion seems to be that Watson could end up as an articulate figurehead. Running the CBC, as Fulford notes, has always "looked to outsiders like a death sentence." Both Fulford and Perigoe provide their prescription for healing the CBC.

The current issue of *content* also assesses the impact of the CRTC ruling giving Maclean- Hunter a large segment of Selkirk Broadcasting. This decision runs counter to the views of those who see an unhealthy trend in cross-media ownership.

Rick Boychuk weighs the present-day treatment of environmental issues by the media -- the surge of coverage and special editions but the failure to grasp the full measure of corporate responsibility for widespread pollution.

The advantages and drawbacks of judicial inquiries are analyzed by Professor Jack London of the University of Manitoba. The media's shortcomings in disaster coverage are reviewed by Stephen Hume.

The relatively new field of study in media literacy has stirred controversy among media figures and educational authorities. Two writers, Sandy Greer and Orland French, trace the problems with this venture.

Deborah Dowling of the *Ottawa Citizen* charts publishers' unusually vigorous campaign against the GST. Getting newspaper, magazine and book publishers together is quite a feat in itself.

Brian Nolan, Carleton University professor, television producer and author, recalls the role and range of the late, great filmmaker, Donald Brittain. ❑

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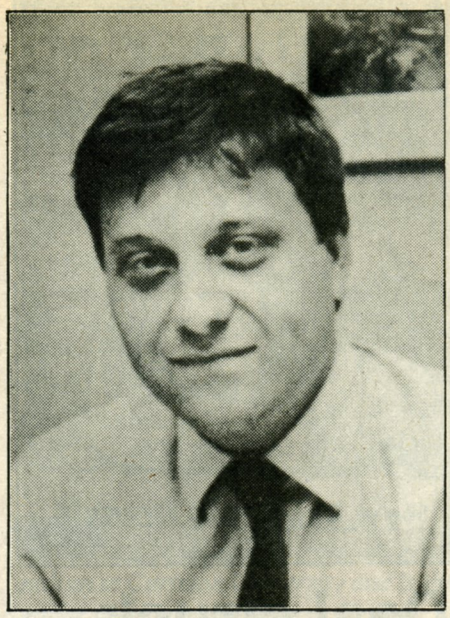
(This issue released for distribution in December 1989)

Ottawa says newspaper can't hire South African

A recent ruling by the federal department of employment and immigration endorses the view that national identity is one of the qualifications journalists possess. Ottawa blocked a bid by the *Vancouver Sun* to hire a non-Canadian as business editor in late September, deciding that several qualified Canadians applied for the senior position originally offered to South African Gerald Prosalendis.



South African Prosalendis

Canadian Shaw

A need to look at the world through Canadian eyes

The newspaper's decision to hire Prosalendis met with opposition from the Vancouver-New Westminster Newspaper Guild and from Burnaby-Kingsway MP Svend Robinson. Citing the domination of Canadian newspapers by foreign news sources, Guild president Mike Bocking says it's important that readers receive a Canadian interpretation of world affairs in their newspapers.

The job of business editor of *The Sun* is "a senior position," Bocking argues, from which Prosalendis would determine the newspaper's coverage of key business issues.

"The business editor directs news and there's a lot of Canadian issues that need coverage from a Canadian perspective," Bocking says. He insists that the fact that Prosalendis is a white South African had nothing to do with the union's opposition; what bothered the Guild was the plan to hire a non-Canadian to direct coverage of such crucial issues as free trade, the general sales tax and, ironically, immigration.

Nationality and news is a perennial subject for debate among journalists. In August *The Sun* published a report by Southam News Washington correspondent Peter Calamai which lamented the degree to which American news reports in Canadian newspapers originated from American sources rather than from Canadian journalists posted to the United States. Calamai argued that Canadian newspapers should view the world through Canadian eyes.

Sun editor-in-chief Nicholas Hills defended his hiring of Prosalendis, claiming Prosalendis was "hundreds of points ahead of anyone else."

"I appreciate that it's sensitive and it's upsetting for some people," Hills explained, "but all we're trying to do is get the best people to work here to put out the best paper, and sometimes, occasionally, this may mean hiring from outside."

Prosalendis was most recently the general manager of Times Media Ltd., a South African communications company. He is the former financial editor of *Business Day*, South Africa's leading financial daily.

The names of the other candidates vying for the job were not released, and after the Prosalendis decision the newspaper had to go back to square one in looking for a business editor. *Sun* reporter Gillian Shaw has since been given the job.

"There is no policy here that involves hiring anyone, in the general sense, except good Canadian journalists," Hills says. "On the other hand, if you walk out into the newsroom, you'll hear all sorts of accents, including mine."

Hills came to Canada from Britain in 1960, landing his first job as a general reporter with the Pembroke, Ont., *Observer*.

In a letter to *The Sun*, immigration department senior consultant Rick Crutchley wrote: "In the final analysis, we do not believe we can certify that no qualified Canadian applied for the position. There were several people who applied whom we believe had the background and experience to be considered 'qualified' for the position." ❑

--Mike Gasher

Mike Gasher is a Vancouver freelance writer and a student of Canadian Studies and French at Simon Fraser University. He was a sports reporter at The Province *for six years.*

Frank aims poisoned arrows at Ottawa

Roll up your sleeves and bare those fists! *Frank* magazine is in Ottawa.

After two years of putting it to the well-heeled and well-connected of Halifax, the irreverent rag has invaded the capital, slinging its acerbic arrows at the powerful and the pretentious.

Owner David Bentley has ventured to Ottawa in search of a larger market for his struggling satirical journal, whose Halifax circulation has stalled at about 4,000 copies. The 32-page, ink on newsprint magazine is produced on alternate weeks in Halifax and Ottawa. Bentley hopes some muck-raking capital news will entice enough maritime readers to fork over $1.75 an issue and "one day" push it into the black.

Since its initial appearance in September, Frank Ottawa has trashed Erik Nielsen's political memoirs and skewered developers, journalists and politicians at all levels, including Ottawa's mayor Jim Durrell, dubbed "the world's wealthiest municipal pol."

Roy MacGregor, Ottawa Citizen columnist, figures that Frank is "long overdue" in Ottawa. But Gord Grant, departing bureau chief for The Canadian Press and a target of Frank's barbed wit, calls Frank a "trash magazine."

"I wouldn't call them journalists," says Grant.

But Bentley makes no apology for his approach.

"Sometimes we tend to overdo it," he says, "but we won't be in the middle and we aren't going to be fair." ❑

--Marty Logan

Marty Logan is a first-year Master of Journalism student at Carleton University.

Deal struck to govern newspaper awards

The negotiations seemed at times as tough and bitter as the Baby M custody case, but both sides fighting over the future of the National Newspaper Awards have finally struck a deal. The Toronto Press Club and an awards board created by the Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association have agreed on a scheme to govern the awards for at least the next five years.

Here's the deal:

- the Toronto Press Club will license the new board to use the National Newspaper Awards name and prize money from the NNA trust;
- the new board -- dubbed "son of CDNPA" by Toronto Press Club president Ed Patrick -- will run the awards, including the gala dinner, and the site of the ceremony may rotate among Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver;
- the value of each prize will be doubled to $2,000;
- two new categories -- one for layout and design and the other for special projects -- will be added to the 13 NNAs now awarded.

"I'm just glad it's all over," says Bryan Cantley, manager of editorial services for the Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association, who has been involved in the fight for close to two years.

The push to change the structure of the awards grew out of grumbling in a number of newsrooms that the awards, which were founded by the Toronto club in 1949, were too Toronto-based and not "national" enough. A survey of newsrooms a year ago found that 81 per cent of respondents opposed the Toronto Press Club's continued sponsorship of the prizes, and 59 per cent believed that a separate board should be set up.

But negotiations on the composition of the board and the crucial question of control of the NNA name bogged down quickly. Each side staked out its claim: the CDNPA felt that it could run a more "national" awards program and asked the press club to give up control, and former president Manny Escott dismissed the CDNPA awards proposal as "the bosses awards."

By mid-summer, matters were so bad that the CDNPA announced the creation of an entirely new set of awards -- the Canadian Newspaper Awards. The July-August CDNPA newsletter announced that an awards advisory board had been created to work out details of the new program. Prize money for a CNA was set at $2,000 -- double the $1,000 National Newspaper Award -- and the site of the awards presentation would be in Toronto in 1990, Montreal in 1991 and Vancouver in 1992.

However, the prospect of two national awards programs pleased no one, and in late August a new attempt was made at finding a compromise. "If we can find a middle ground that isn't quicksand for either of us then we'll happily co-operate," Patrick told *content* in early September.

Working out the compromise took two months of on-again, off-again negotiations. But Patrick now says it was worth the effort: the Canadian Newspaper

Awards are dead, the new board has broad representation from the newspaper industry and the National Newspaper Awards presentation ceremony will be a "bang-up gala."

"We're quite happy now that we see the arrangement."

The board running the awards draws on newspaper people from coast to coast, including Nick Hills of the *Vancouver Sun*, Bill Peterson of the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, John Honderich of the *Toronto Star*, John Paton of the *Ottawa Sun*, Norman Webster of the *Montreal Gazette*, Marcel Desjardins of *La Presse*, Paul Willcocks of the *Saint John Telegraph-Journal and Evening Times-Globe*, and Kerry Lambie of Thomson Newspapers. In addition, the board includes Stephen Bindman, president of the Centre for Investigative Journalism, former newspaper executive Dona Harvey and John Miller of the Ryerson School of Journalism. Two spots have been reserved for representatives of the Toronto Press Club.

The new committee will hold a licence for the 1989 program and the next four years. The Toronto Press Club membership has until May, 1990 to vote on whether to make it a permanent deal.

★★★

While the Toronto Press Club and the CDNPA completed their negotiations on the National Newspaper Awards, work on a new set of TV awards was moving ahead.

The executive of the National Press Club in Ottawa has ratified the idea of sponsoring a national television news awards. The first awards presentation will be held in the fall of 1990, says press club president Michel Gratton. As *content* went to press, the club and representatives of CBC and CTV were working out the details.

Until now, the only national award competition for TV journalists has been the Gemini awards, which are essentially part of the entertainment industry. ❑

--Catherine McKercher

Catherine McKercher teaches journalism at Carleton University and is the editor of content's *Briefings section.*

Quest for French-language Newsworld continues

Radio-Canada is still pursuing its quest for a French Newsworld service. The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission denied the network's application for an all-news channel last August, but a Radio-Canada team in Montreal is working on a new proposal that should be ready by February.

The CRTC rejected the initial submission for two main reasons -- insufficient original programming and a belief that there was no demand for the service.

Radio-Canada's new proposal will focus on fixing these two deficiencies, says Jean-Marc Lefebvre, director of public relations for French programming.

Lefebvre says Radio-Canada is working on increasing the number of hours of original programming by looking into co-productions with the private sector. In the proposal rejected by the CRTC, original programming accounted for just 22 per cent of the schedule. Lefebvre says the only way to increase that figure is to find outside partners.

The group working on the new proposal hasn't defined how it will prove the demand for the service. Lefebvre says a recent survey in *Videotron*, a Montreal cable company's magazine, says the main reason viewers turn on their sets is to watch the news. He says that proves there is a demand for an all-news channel.

But Jean-Paul Galarneau of *Videotron* isn't so sure. He says the survey simply shows current viewing patterns and does not identify a demand for more news. He says the Quebec market already has lots of news shows and he hasn't received any requests or inquiries about a news channel.

Lefebvre says that sometime before February, Radio-Canada will carry out its own surveys to prove that there is a demand for the service.

Financing the service is the last obstacle the team will have to tackle. Many critics of the proposal told the CRTC the money would be more wisely spent on improving Radio-Canada's current programming. But Lefebvre says that the news service would be totally independent of Radio-Canada's budget. Rejecting the new proposal wouldn't mean more money for the French network.

Lefebvre says increasing cable subscriber rates or increasing government

Thou shalt not get involved

Montreal CBC Newswatch reporter Paul Carvalho was suspended for two weeks for what management branded as stage-managing a picket line demonstration at a well known steak house. Roch Magnan, the program's executive producer, determined that Carvalho had staged a picket-line circus, "a clear breach of journalistic policy."

Magnan admitted that there is a tendency among pickets and others to respond to TV crews. Television coverage could be manipulated, Magnan conceded, but it was the task of the television reporter to cut through the blarney and get to the facts. ❑

participation are some of the ideas being considered to finance the project.

While Radio-Canada officials pull together plans for the French service, few Quebec viewers are able to receive the English-language Newsworld, which debuted July 31. Despite offers of service at bargain rates, none of the Quebec cable companies carry the CBC all-news channel. Galarneau says anglophones represent represent too small a share of cable companies' markets and the francophones aren't interested.

Lefebvre says the French-language project will have to be approved by Radio-Canada management before going back to the CRTC. After that, public hearings on the plan would have to be held. In the meantime, Quebec viewers who are hooked on news will have to turn to the American Cable News Network, which is carried on several Quebec cable systems. ❑

-- Marie Lafaury

Marie Lafaury is completing her Master of Journalism at Carleton University.

Trade pact may drop reference to journalists

Plans to amend a free trade clause that has angered journalists on both sides of the border may make the journalists happy, but upset other wordsmiths such as television and film scriptwriters and authors.

Ottawa and Washington are preparing to eliminate journalists from the list of so-called professionals who enjoy relaxed immigration laws under the Canada-U.S. free trade agreement.

But if they do, it means other "writers for hire" will also lose the benefit, says Ed Skerrett, a senior official with the Immigration and Naturalization Service in Washington.

The Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association has asked that journalists be taken out of the trade agreement as a matter of principle. It argues that journalists don't want any special privileges not available to the general public.

However, an official of a Canadian writers' guild says she suspects most members of her organization don't have similar purist views and welcome the relaxed immigration procedures.

"Canadian screenwriters would like to have that option left open," says Margaret Collier, executive director of the writers' guild of the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA).

"There are all sorts of individuals who would appreciate it," says Samuel Jephcott, president of the Canadian Film and Television Association.

Jephcott says the provision would legalize much of current activity by which Canadian writers, with laptop computers in tow, "seem to take a lot of vacations" in places like Los Angeles to work on television scripts or "a quickie movie."

The section of the free trade agreement in question is designed to allow professionals easy entry to Canada or the United States to work for an employer in the other country on a temporary basis, which is loosely defined as not taking up permanent residence.

Instead of going through the usual paperwork, which is said to take anywhere from 30 to 120 days, writers can simply present themselves at border points for entry with the appropriate credentials.

In the case of journalists, those credentials include a university degree, a provision that has been the focus of much controversy.

Virtually every group of journalists in Canada and the United States has condemned the degree requirement, claiming it borders on state licensing of the craft.

Even the various writers' groups, including the Writers Guild of America (East), have called the requirement silly and bizarre.

The CDNPA and the American Newspaper Publishers Association have both called for the deletion of journalists

Back Talk

Polling methodology defended

To the Editor: In its February edition, *content* published an article on media polling during the 1988 federal election. The article said that Gallup, for a controversial Nov. 7 poll, "switched for the first time from in-home, face-to-face interviews, for which it is equipped and its interviewers trained, to telephone interviews." In fact, while most of Gallup's published polls are done in person, about 70 per cent of the firm's proprietary work is done over the telephone by trained interviewers. The Nov. 7 poll employed the same in-home survey methods used by the firm for almost 50 years. The article also said Gallup's main preoccupation during the election was with party standings rather than issues. Gallup does not disagree that it issued more surveys dealing with party standings than most other polling organizations, but points out that it also released 14 polls dealing with issues such as free trade and the leaders' debate. ❑

Doug Fischer
Managing Editor
Southam News

from the list, although for different reasons.

The ANPA, unlike the CDNPA, does not feel that there is a lofty principle of privilege involved, since journalists are simply included in a long list of professionals and not singled out.

Rather, spokesman Paul Boyle said last July that the ANPA feels it has no choice but to ask for deletion because U.S. officials have refused to budge on the baccalaureate requirement.

Meanwhile, while it is unclear whether Canada has the same interpretation, Skerrett said the reference to journalists applies to other writers, who also require a baccalaureate to qualify.

Skerrett, a senior examiner with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service in Washington, said the provision applies to "anybody who is in the broad spectrum of journalists, which, in our view, includes writers" of radio, television and film scripts and books.

At the time of writing, External Affairs and International Trade Canada would make no official comment on whether journalists are about to be deleted. However, one official, speaking for background only, said it appears likely "they're going to be struck from the list."

Skerrett was part of the working group of American and Canadian officials who concluded a set of meetings in October by agreeing that the reference to journalists will be deleted.

There is some confusion, however, over the exact process for making the change.

An External Affairs spokesman in Ottawa said that any changes to the trade agreement have to be ratified by the Joint Commission headed by International Trade Minister John Crosbie and U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills.

But Skerrett has a different view. "This kind of thing doesn't really have to go that high," he says.

In any event, on the American side, the proposal would have to be published in the Congressional Register to allow 30 days for public comment.

The External Affairs spokesman said there are no public hearings planned before any change takes effect, but there has been "broad consultation" with groups representing journalists.

Skerrett says the bilateral working group collected mounds of dissenting briefs from journalists, but received no submissions about the requirement from other writers' groups such as ACTRA. However, Collier says most writers are probably not even aware that they're included in the deal, let alone that they're about to lose its benefits.

Collier says she plans to make immediate inquiries, while Jephcott promises to raise the "very important piece of intelligence," at a meeting of the Canadian Conference of the Arts.

Martin Waldman, a spokesman for the Writers Guild of America (East), says he assumes most U.S. writers want the easier access provided by the agreement, but he could make no comment until the guild studies the matter. ❑

--Philip Jalsevik

Philip Jalsevic is a staff writer for the Kitchener-Waterloo Record.

New weekly focuses on Parliament

In Ottawa, a city inundated by media coverage, it's a wonder no one has thought of it before: a community newspaper for those who work in and around Parliament Hill.

The Hill Times is out to fill the void. Operating from a modest duplex, Ottawa's newest weekly newspaper is delivering stories of interest to parliamentarians and those interested in parliamentarians.

This means covering not only the issues before Parliament but the more personal stories, including profiles of MPs and features on such topics as environmentalism on the Hill.

Regular features in the 12-page tabloid include columns by Charles King, former associate editor of the *Ottawa Citizen*, and syndicated columnist Dalton Camp, senior adviser to the federal cabinet from 1986 to 1989.

Financed by advertising sales, *The Hill Times* has been distributed free since its first issue Oct. 8 to 5,000 members of Parliament, Senators, parliamentary assistants and senior civil servants. As well, the newspaper sells for $1 at 75 newsstands in the Ottawa area.

Publishers Jim Creskey and Ross Dickson expect the paper to break even in six months, and begin to turn a profit in two years. They acknowledge that their target is a discriminating audience.

"Making this paper work means gaining the respect of its readers and earning our way into a fairly sophisticated community that is used to dealing with the media," says Creskey.

Creskey and Dickson are veterans of the community newspaper business. Since 1976, Dickson has owned and published *The Equity* in Shawville, Que. Creskey, now foreign editor at *The Ottawa Sun*, published *The West Quebec Post* in Buckingham, Que. from 1981 to 1987.

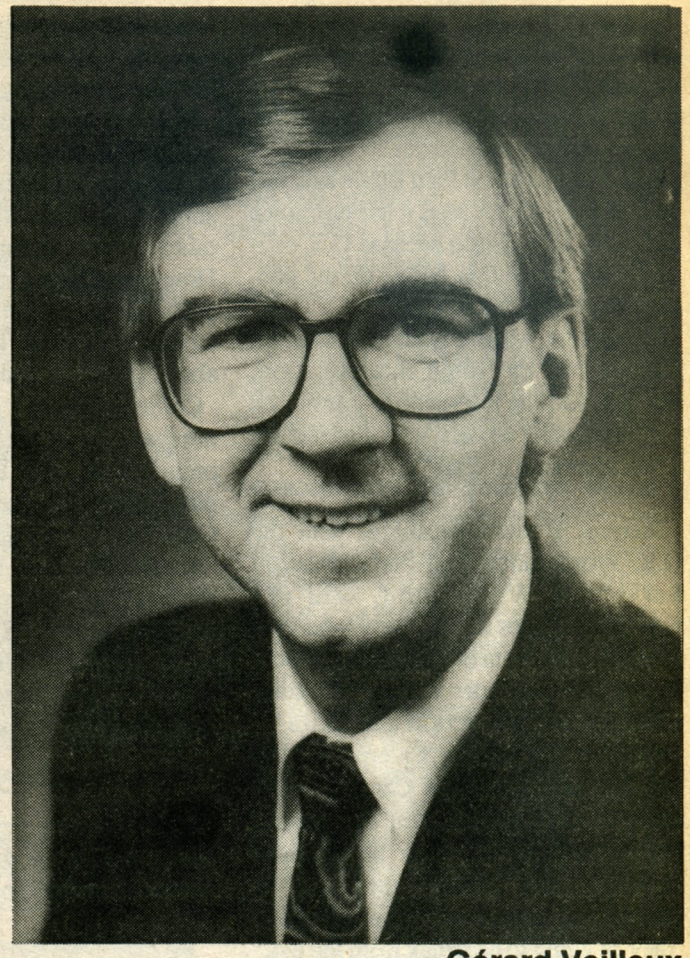
"We both love the newspaper business and miss the opportunity for a family-run paper," says Creskey. His wife Anne is general manager of *The Hill Times* and his six children help out with photography and layout.

Dickson and Creskey looked for inspiration to Washington, D.C.-based *Roll Call* newspaper. Established in 1955, the twice-weekly *Roll Call* has a circulation of 18,000 and is the inside track for the people and politics of Congress. ❑

--Linda Quattrin

Linda Quattrin is completing her Master of Journalism at Carleton University.

Patrick Watson



Gérard Veilleux

Can the new team at the CBC play ball --and win?

by Ross Perigoe

The press release, announcing his appointment to one of the two most senior positions in the CBC, describes him as...

"...one of the most versatile personalities in Canadian broadcasting, with an international reputation established as an author, actor, panelist, producer, commentator and lecturer...

He is equally at home in radio and television and his work in these media and has been recognized with many national and international awards."

The announcement of Patrick Watson's appointment as chairman of the CBC last September? No. It was written 17 years ago. And the appointment referred to Lister Sinclair, not Patrick Watson.

So it was with a sense of deja vu that I heard about Watson's and Gerard Veilleux's selections as chairman of the board and president respectively at the CBC. The broadcaster and the bureaucrat. It seemed like a natural. So natural, it felt like it had happened before. Then I remembered.

Two months before he took over as president of the CBC in 1972, Laurent Picard announced that his choice to take his old job as executive vice-president would be an English broadcaster. It was to be a marriage melding management and production skills. It didn't work. Sinclair left after only two years.

Sinclair sympathizes with anyone in senior management. "In many ways, Patrick is going to share my problems," Sinclair says. "Instead of living up to the excited expectations of programmers, the nature of the job means that most of the decisions have to be delegated as before. Moreover, Patrick, who has wanted this job all his life, is going to have other problems. Pierre Juneau wanted it, too. Both of them came at a time when managing the CBC was not going to be much fun for anybody." In the words of Sinclair, "He may be presiding over the morgue."

They're tough words. But there's reason to share Sinclair's pessimism. Look back to the presidents and chairmen of the board the CBC has had over the past 21 years.

George Davidson came from his post as secretary of the treasury board, where he had been for almost four years. Davidson was installed to curb excesses in spending. He didn't know broadcasting. But he had a sharp pencil.

Davidson was succeeded by his executive vice-president, Laurent Picard. Prior to his time in the corporation, Picard had ben professor of business administration at the Ecole Hautes Etudes Commercials. He didn't know broadcasting, but he knew management.

Picard hired as his executive vice-president Al Johnson. Johnson had worked as assistant deputy minister of finance in the federal government and as secretary of the treasury board. He became president. He didn't know broadcasting. But he, like his predecessors, knew budgeting. Is this beginning to sound repetitive?

Each time a new head was brought in, there was a sense in the corporation that he had the skills to ferret out waste and also had the ear of the treasury board. The theory went that after waste got trimmed, the corporation could get an infusion of money. Each time, the dollars got pinched. And the treasury board didn't seem have quite as good hearing when the new president came with his hand out, boasting of his new, leaner corporation.

Only Pierre Juneau changed the routine of management by accountants. This time the corporation got management by a philosopher. Juneau knew broadcasting. As head of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), he oversaw broadcast policy. And coincidentally, the president who got hit the hardest with the biggest budget cutbacks was the philosopher, not the accountants. The CBC calculates in its last annual report that the government has cut them by $60 million per year since 1985.

"The theory went that after waste got trimmed, the corporation could get an infusion of money. Each time, the dollars got pinched."

Now the corporation has Gerard Veilleux. Fresh from chopping Via Rail in half, he has a mandate to cut the CBC's expenditures by $140 million (or 14 per cent) over the next four years. These are cutbacks that Pierre Juneau has said will make the corporation virtually unrecognizable from what it is today. But if anyone can handle it, it's Veilleux. After all, his broadcast experience -- just like George Davidson and Al Johnson -- includes a stint as secretary of the treasury board.

The other half of the team, the public half, is the one whom this commentary began with. Patrick Watson is one of the world's finest broadcasters. What he does best is dream. He is legendary for his ability to make that dream come alive on a television screen. From This Hour Has Seven Days to The Struggle for Democracy, his programs have been stimulating and never condescending.

Watson and Veilleux might be able to develop a climate that allows for more co-productions with outside broadcasters. And they might be able to re-energize the staff if they see a re-vitalization in programming terms. But Watson will face a big handicap. Instead of functioning as a day-to-day manager, he will be working with the board of directors. That distancing of Watson from the process could make him ineffectual at achieving any profound change that he really wants to do.

Veilleux will handle the cuts on the inside. Watson will carry the ball outside the corporation. If the mandate changes, and who can believe it won't, it'll be Watson's job to sell it. Together, if they can make people believe in yet another new, leaner-than-lean corporation, then they'll be doing their jobs. If they can streamline the responsibilities and bring in more money, they'll be miracle workers.

But in all this, there are some disquieting elements that suggest the depth of commitment needed to turn the corporation in a new, positive direction still hasn't been made by the government.

Consider first, the press release announcing the appointment of the two men. Nowhere does it refer to a governmental policy of re-dedicating itself to excellence in broadcasting. Nowhere is there a sense that an already outstanding organization will have new impetus to lead Canadians into the next century.

Second is the suggestion that the role of chairman of the board is not really a full-time job. If, as I suspect, whole portions

of the mandate of the corporation are about to be dispensed with, then the corporation will want to take advantage of Patrick's legendary skills at selling a series of unpalatable cutbacks. Some part-time job.

Of all the difficult choices Watson and Veilleux will face, none will be more difficult than the rationalization of English and French services. Just look at the latest CBC annual report. As it stands now, French television consumes 29 per cent of CBC's programming dollars and French radio another nine per cent. These numbers don't include the costs of running the distribution system -- powering the transformers, renting satellite time. They're just what it costs to produce the programs. Nobody wants to admit it, but it means that one language group which accounts for 23 per cent of the population gets dollars that account for 38 per cent of the programming budget. Is anyone going to calculate how much more it costs to program to French consumers of CBC programming than it costs to reach English?

A similar tough choice may well have to be faced regarding the smaller stations. I applauded the creation of French television in Vancouver, Edmonton and Toronto. But the appetite for bilingualism just isn't there from the Mulroney government. No matter what the howls of protest from francophones, many of the regional French stations may well be sacrificed.

Here's a list of some other places I'd look:

- Hire Kenneth Dye, the auditor general, to conduct a task force on waste. If anyone can find it, he can. Offer incentives to those who save the corporation $25,000 or more per year.
- Rethink the funding of English television stations in the Maritimes. If the rest of the country had their own stations in cities the size of Happy Valley/Goose Bay, Corner Brook, Sydney and Charlottetown, there would be stations in Sherbrooke, Que., Lindsay, Ont., and Red Deer, Alta. The French service has its anomalies as well, with stations in Rimouski and Matane.
- Keep English television supper hours at their present length, but create a national and international newscast to be inserted in the local program. The staff used in producing those national and international reports in each of the stations should be folded into a stronger public affairs unit. Do the same for a national sportscast. Make late-night local news province-wide, with material fed from the other centres in the province.
- There are rare cases when English and French radio and television services work together. The best example is the work done by the Beijing correspondent. There, material is produced for all four services by a single reporter. It's hard. It takes a lot of cooperation. But makes the best use of the reporter on the scene. Why can't that be done more frequently? What's needed is the creation of a super-scheduling office for radio and television crews in news and current affairs.

  The office would coordinate crews so reporters asking questions for French television could be asked to provide a statement for English television as well. It's a coordinator's nightmare, but it's one of the things that federal politicians see every day. They see sometimes up to four television crews at a single press conference, covering stories for The National, The Journal, Les Nouvelles and LePoint, not to mention local television and radio. It looks wasteful. It's got to be managed better.
- It seems incredible, but CBC actually pays broadcasters to carry their signal. Last year, the payments were more than $15 million. Why should the CBC pay the broadcasters for airing The National and The Journal? They should be paying the CBC for the privilege.
- Review the value of CBC Northern Service now that Inuit Broadcasting is firmly in place and broadcasting to their people.
- Create amateur sport and arts programs using material shot all over the country by the local news shows, and packaged weekly. Have it paid for by an advertiser who would pick up all the

programming costs in return for sponsorship recognition on the network.

- Program movies overnight on weekends, using the storehouse of film rights the CBC has. Create a nightly phone-in program on television. Open up the number of hours that can be sponsored, don't reduce them.

All of that might take care of a half of the first year's worth of cuts.

These cuts will cost. Parts of the corporation's mandate will have to be hacked off. Maybe it will be regional programming. Maybe the move toward Canadianization of the broadcast schedule in English television will be delayed and finally ignored. What's clear is that the corporation can no longer be expected to do all the things it does now.

The fact that the cuts will cost jobs has never bothered this government. But, if the cuts are as profound as Pierre Juneau seems to think, it will also cost us all in terms of how we see ourselves, and what makes us different as a society. In an era of free trade and increasingly blurred images between our society and that of the U.S., those distinctions are to be treasured.

Memory can sometimes cloud our vision of the present. Sometimes it helps us understand how we got to be where we are now. This memory recalls that four of the last five presidents of the CBC have been money men. And that, when they hired a program-oriented person to help steer the corporation's orientation, the task proved to be too much.

I hope Lister Sinclair is wrong about Watson presiding over the morgue. I suspect he is not. So, in the end, the new team may have come -- with apologies to Mark Antony in *Julius Caesar* -- "not to (p)raise the CBC...but to bury it." ❑

Ross Perigoe is assistant professor of broadcast journalism at Concordia University in Montreal. He worked intermittently for the corporation between 1970 and 1980. In 1981, he was appointed program director of CBOT, the CBC's Ottawa television station, and in 1984 became assistant to the vice-president of regional broadcasting. He joined Concordia in 1985.

Some modest proposals

By Robert Fulford

When Lester Pearson twisted George Davidson's arm and Davidson finally agreed to leave the treasury board and become president of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in 1968, he sent the prime minister a one-line note in Latin. It was the salutation that Roman gladiators traditionally addressed to the emperor as they went into the arena to fight: *Caesar morituri te salutamus!*, "Caesar, we who are about to die salute you!"

The story, told by Christina McCall in her book, *Grits*, is a crucial CBC anecdote for two reasons. First, it demonstrates that running the CBC has always looked to outsiders like a death sentence (and in fact Davidson's career did end ingloriously at the CBC). Second, it reminds us that the more things change, the more they remain the same.

Pearson appointed to the CBC job a bright civil servant, the man running the treasury board. Pierre Trudeau appointed another bright bureaucrat, Al Johnson, the former head of the treasury board. And now Brian Mulroney, casting about for a CBC president, has also picked the top civil servant in the treasury board -- and managed to get applauded for his brilliance and wisdom in doing so.

Gerard Veilleux, Mulroney's chosen, is, like Davidson and Johnson in their days, all but universally admired by connoisseurs of the mandarinate. Like them, he unfortunately knows nothing of broadcasting. But since the Mulroney government had earlier decided to split the CBC leadership into two parts, it had a way around that problem not available to earlier governments -- it made Patrick Watson, one of the most admired broadcasters in Canada, chairman of the board.

As a result, the two appointments were jointly received with ecstasy in the newspapers, and the fact that Veilleux is French Canadian and is succeeding a French Canadian was largely ignored. Until this year the CBC presidency had alternated bilingually, like the governor-general's job and the Liberal leadership.

Another point not mentioned in the newspaper stories was Watson's precise position, as outlined in the new Broadcasting Act: he is a part-time chairman and therefore lacks the automatic clout that goes to full-time chairmen of Crown corporations. His role is undefined and could be as marginal as that of the Canada Council chairman -- he could, in theory, be isolated from decision-making and turned into a public mouthpiece and solicitor of funds from the cabinet. Watson will have to carve out the job for himself, and set the right precedents for those who follow him.

Assuming, however, that Veilleux is interested in improving the CBC (as he says) and Watson's job will in fact be important (as both of them say), they'll need all the advice they can get. Herewith some suggestions.

- **Play favorites.** If you must cut budgets, do not (like your unfortunate predecessor, Pierre Juneau) cut across the board by percentages. That's the worst thing to do, because it rewards bad managers (they have fat in their budgets, so won't be hurt), punishes good ones (they'll lose essential money), makes you look incapable of

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making decisions and produces cynicism all around. Instead, cut programs that perform badly. Protect programs that perform well.

- **Take a vice-president to lunch -- and fire him.** Through all the financial crises, not one vice-president (so far as I know) has been eliminated -- and last time I looked there were 17. Getting rid of a few of them will encourage the troops, raise in the government's mind the possibility that you may be serious and astonish the hell out of everyone else. It will also make you unpopular in some corners of head office on Bronson Ave. -- and that, too, should be among your goals.
- **Hire people smarter than you are.** This will be truly revolutionary. For most of the 1980s the practice of CBC executives -- with a few exceptions -- has been to hire or promote people who are less impressive than those doing the hiring. The result is exactly what could have been expected: ever-widening circles of mediocity. Reverse this procedure and you'll see morale improve. And when you leave, the CBC may contain a few employees qualified to succeed you.
- **Reclaim the policy high ground.** Since the 1950s, when the Diefenbaker government reduced the CBC from regulator to just another broadcaster, CBC executives have been far too timid about their role. The CBC remains *the* national broadcasting force and must remain so. As such, it should always have a lot to say about how all the other elements will fit in -- it (not the CRTC) should be the main source of policy ideas for the future of cable, pay-TV and all the other elements.
- **Put the private sector on the defensive.** For far too long, private broadcasters have been getting away with murder, making huge fortunes while contributing little of value to broadcasting. The CBC should cease to be shy about pointing this out, so long as it keeps its own promises. One idea: Propose a joint venture in drama development that will require a large cash outlay from the privates while the CBC contributes people and resources. But never let it be said that either of you is the close friend of a wealthy private station owner.
- **Cut back on sports coverage.** The CBC now gets little or no credit for sports broadcasting because the privates can do it as well or better -- and in any case nobody remembers which network carried which game. This is a field the CBC can allow to shrink without harm to anyone.
- **Focus on drama in English.** The great black hole in Canadian broadcasting is drama (whether made-for-TV movies or sitcoms or classics) on the English television service. It has improved slightly in recent years, but it needs to improve a lot more. This -- not public affairs -- is the problem to worry about. Your period in office will finally be judged by whether you leave this essential aspect of broadcasting in good shape.
- **Get professionals on board.** Argue, beg and if necessary scream to get each new opening on your board filled with noisy, tough-minded professionals who are as interested as you are in a system that works for audiences and artists. Norman Jewison? Denys Arcand? William Rowe? Donald Sutherland? Guy Sprung? Martha Henry? Peter Herrndorf?
- **Make alliances with your natural friends.** As it stands, the CBC, the provincial broadcasters, the NFB and Telefilm give every public impression of being competitors or at best uneasy colleagues. In truth, they're all heading in the same direction and this fact should be emphasized rather than muffled.

In the experience of Canada (and most other countries), public broadcasting is not a necessary evil -- it's the better kind of broadcasting. Defending it, in all its forms, should be at the top of your agenda. ❑

Robert Fulford writes a column for the Financial Times of Canada *and is 1989-90 Maclean-Hunter chair in communications ethics at the Ryerson journalism school in Toronto.*

Corporate giant prevails

Maclean-Hunter captures Selkirk

by Jamie Hubbard

Executives at Maclean-Hunter Ltd. were ebullient when, last September, the federal broadcast regulator finally gave them the nod to acquire Selkirk Communications Ltd. "We're thrilled," one executive said privately.

The public posture the company adopted, though, was much more restrained. Maclean-Hunter (MH) chairman Don Campbell said that he was "very pleased" with the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission's (CRTC) decision.

The reason for the restraint was simple. In determining the outcome of the biggest and most comlex braodcast decison that had come before it, the Commission set a $21.2 million precedent.

That's the amount the Commission ordered MH to ante up to "strengthen and improve" the Canadian broadcasting system. It's a decision that other broadcasters are eyeing warily.

When broadcast licences change hands, the Commission routinely requires the purchaser to ante up something extra, beyond the purchase price. These additional funds are usually put into existing industry pools -- from which producers can draw at least part of their financing -- or they go directly into increased Canadian programming or upgrading the radio or television system being bought.

But MH was ordered to create a new capital fund and told it must come up with uses for it that are acceptable to the CRTC. That precedent will ultimately boost the cost of making the acquisition, broadcasters complain.

"That kind of decision," says one prominent Toronto broadcaster, who asked not to be identified, "means you have to guess at the amount the CRTC will require you to put up and then build it into the purchase price."

While the decision is hardly popular with broadcasters, it will provide some measure of relief for beleaguered Canadian producers hard pressed to finance their productions. And few observers believe that the precedent will deter any communications company from going on a buying spree if the deal make sense in the first place.

The sale of Selkirk -- which operated radio and television stations in Canada, and cable television in both Canada and the U.S. -- provided the broadcast industry with a rare opportunity to pick up some very successful properties. The company went on the auction block in mid-1988., when Southam Communications Inc. put its 20 per cent voting stake up for sale. Southam, which was restructuring to guard against takeovers, wanted out of broadcasting to focus on printing and newspapers.

Maclean-Hunter, which had long been eager to expand both its cable and broadcast operations, jumped at the chance to buy Selkirk. In a deal that was as puzzling as it was dazzling, MH president Ron Osborne made an initial $45 a share offer for Selkirk. Four weeks later he topped his won offer, upping the bid to $49.50 a share.

"There was a competing bidder," Osborne said at the time. "Rather than run the risk that we couldn't match or top another offer, we decided to make a preemptive strike."

The second offer -- totalling $606 million, the biggest deal in Canadian broadcast history -- captured Selkirk.

The corporate tale then took another twist. Both MH and Selkirk had overlap-

Mixed-media ownership non-issue

Mixed-media concentration of ownership has not ranked as an issue of grave concern among policymakers. Two studies on concentration in the media gave only passing mention to cross-ownership between print and broadcast operations.

The Davey Committee in 1970 acknowledged that concentration of ownership through mixed-media could lessen media diversity. But rather than advocating increased control of mergers between print and broadcast media, the Committee suggested ownership links between the two media could be regarded as a newspaper's survival insurance in a tough economic market.

The committee offered no definitive statement on the good or evil of mixed-media ownership, saying only that each case must be judged in light of individual circumstances.

More than 10 years later, the Kent Commission came close to the same conclusion.

On the topic of mixed-media ownership, the 1981 report of the commission said it was only a concern when common ownership of different media took place in one community. That is, the Commission could see no harm in cross-ownership as long as the media were "quite distinct geographically." ❑

ping operations, notably in Alberta, and Osborne knew that the CRTC would require MH to sell at least some of the duplicate stations.

But interest from other media companies in picking up pieces of Selkirk was intense and MH was flooded with offers. Between December 1988, when MH paid for the Selkirk shares it acquired, and January 1989, Maclean Hunter spun off nearly half the Selkirk properties it had acquired, recouping about $310 million of the $606 million it paid.

Among those capturing some of the Selkirk booty were cable giant Rogers Communications Inc., which bought 11 radio stations in Alberta and British Columbia; Western International Communications Ltd. of Vancouver -- the second largest CTV affiliate -- which acquired a Calgary TV station and the balance of joint venture it already had with Selkirk; and the Blackburn Group Inc. of London, Ontario, owners of the *London Free Press*, which wated to acquire CHCH-TV in Hamilton, didn't get a share of the booty.

While the deal made corporate sense, critics charged that MH was trafficking in licences. The CRTC frowns on companies "flipping" properties without adding any value to either the station or the broadcast system.

In its ruling, the Commission said MH was not trafficking in licences -- but it was making a $21.2 million gain on the sale of the properties -- hence the requirement to create the kitty.

Though the Commission approve the MH-Selkirk deal and most of the subsequent sales, it had harsh words for three of the participants in the spin-offs.

The biggest blow was to the Blackburn Group. The Commission turned down its request to buy CHCH-TV. It was believed that CHCH, which has no network affiliation, was going to be the cornerstone in a new network Blackburn had visions of building.

But the CRTC apparently didn't believe that was possible.

Blackburn "failed to convince the Commission that it had developed the strategies and an effective business plan necessary to improve CHCH-TV's financial performance and to reduce foreign program costs," said Bud Sherman, the Commission's vice-chairman.

WIC was also disappointed with part of the ruling. The CRTC turned down WIC's proposal to buy two Edmonton radio stations.

But MH won't be allowed to the stations, since the communications giant already has radio outlets in the same markets.

Deal shows CRTC not opposed to big business expanding its media reach in Canada

The CRTC also rejected an application Selkirk had submitted prior to the MH takeover. Selkirk had struck a tentative deal to buy a French language radio station in Montreal, which would have given MH its first shot at capturing a slice of the Quebec advertising pie.

But by refecting that application, the CRTC may have done MH a favor. Chairman Campbell has hinted that the manpower the company would have expended on the Montral stations might now be used to turn CHCH around. Maclean-Hunter has six months to decide whether to keep CHCH or try and find a new buyer.

Despite being on financially shaky ground, CHCH remains an attractive property. Its proximity to Toronto gives it access to a wealth of advertising revenue. It is also distributed via satellite to several communities across Canada, making it a potentially attractive medium for free-spending national advertisters.

The CRTC's decision also contained some regulatory surprises. By allowing the deal to go through, it sent a message to Canadians that the Commission wasn't opposed to big business expanding its media reach in Canada -- as long as there were benefits for the entire broadcast system. That trend was established during Andre Bureau's tenure as chairman -- which he gave up earlier this year -- and new chairman Keith Spicer does not appear to disagree.

It its decision, the Commission said "The majority of the Commission is of the view that the greater prominence MH assumes within the Canadian broadcasting system ... does not represent excessive or undue concentration of ownership. Specifically, the Commission considers the diversity of broadcast and other voices present in the various communities... sufficient."

Neither did the Commission strongly rap Maclean Hunter for the way it struck the deal. Most media deals are conditional on receiving Commission approval, broadcast proprietors are unwilling to risk the CRTC's wrath by assuming acquisitions will be approved.

MH bought Selkirk's shares outright, not making the Commission's nod a condition to wrapping up the deal. That the CRTC did not strongly criticize MH for that approach surprised many observers.

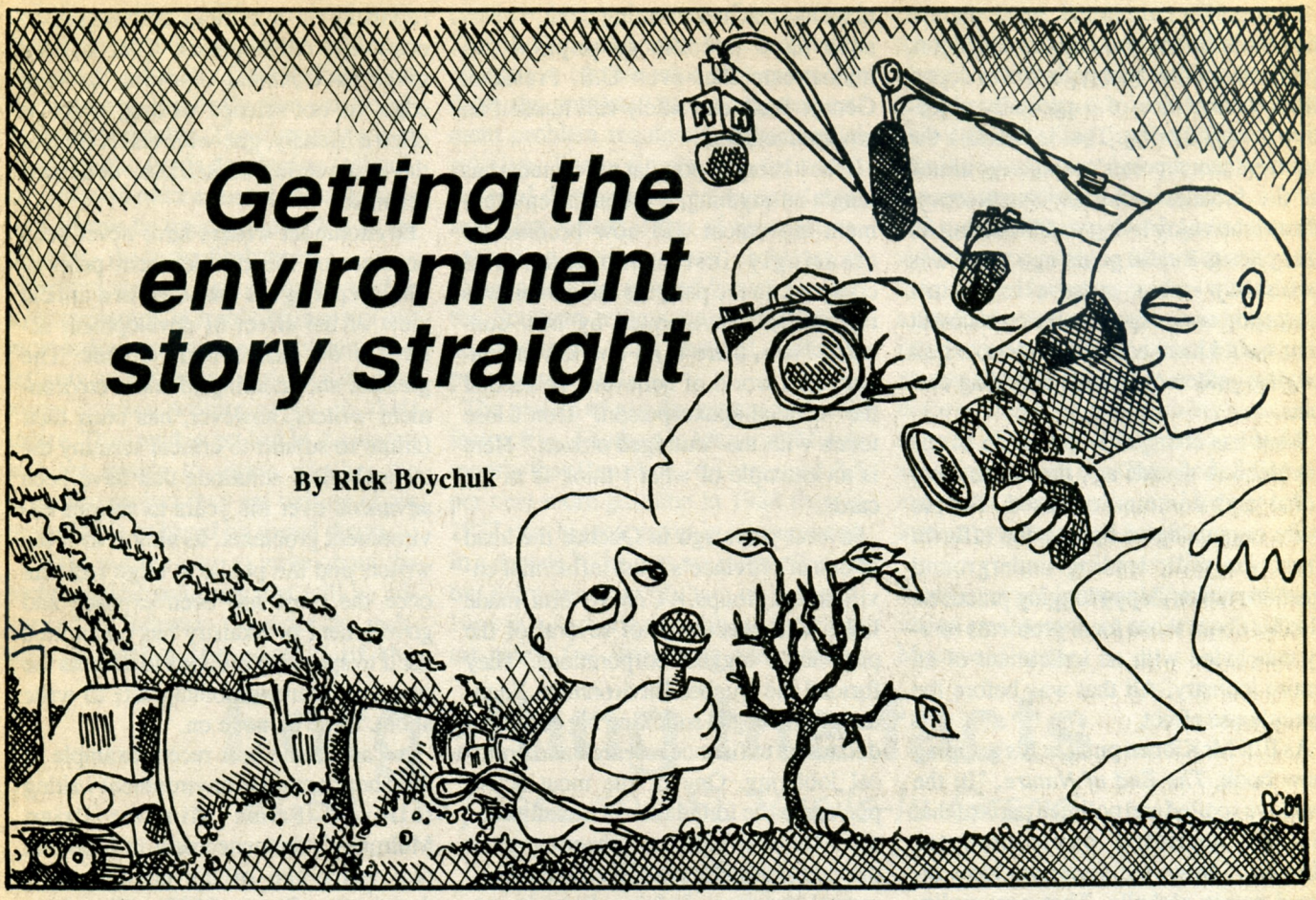
But the CRTC did send a warning to other media companies, publishing a statement outlining the kinds of benefits it is prepared to accept.

The decision stated that "The purchaser is expected to propose a package of significant and unequivocal benefits. ...Each application is assessed on its own merits and that only those initiatives that are incremental and that would not be realized without the transaction are considered benefits." ❑

Jamie Hubbard is a senior writer for The Financial Post.

Getting the environment story straight

By Rick Boychuk



Omni, the American science magazine, devoted an issue this summer to the environment. *Time*, *Newsweek* and *National Geographic* have done the same this year. *Omni* went a step further than the big three, however. It published a companion "Activist's Guide to a Better Earth." In the pull-out supplement, readers were urged to stop buying synthetic carpets and flooring, told how to make non-toxic shampoo and soap and given advice on how to rid home and garden of insects without resorting to chemical pesticides.

Raise your hands those of you who view this advice as a surprisingly fundamental challenge to the existing consumer economy. Pretty forceful stuff, when you think about it. A call to boycott shag carpeting linoleum, pesticides, shampoos, laundry soap.

I was still reflecting on the tone of the *Omni* guide when Southam published its environment series. Well written and skillfully presented, the Southam series was inserted into all of the chain's newspapers on Saturday, Oct. 7. The Southam insert also offered advice on how to save the environment. Tamer stuff though.

The Southam writers urged readers to use cloth diapers, turn the water off while brushing your teeth, buy a smaller car and protest unnecessary packaging. Not exactly on the front lines of environmental militancy. But I'm being unfair. Tacked onto the end of a paragraph was this fearless piece of advice: "Boycott environmentally unsound products." Judge for yourself what they might be.

Although most of the advice in the Southam series was action environmentalists were advocating 10 years ago, the features were up-to-date critiques of how we live, consume and degrade the environment. One of the best pieces was Margaret Munro's account of life with a suburban family. Just her description of the family's morning routine amounted to a thought-provoking assessment of middle-class consumption habits. Anne McIlroy's Human Autopsy, an illustrated feature on the chemicals in our bodies, took readers inside for a look at the effects on the vital organs of life in an industrial, consumer economy. Clever planning those two features were. They should have been juxtaposed, though, rather than separated by 16 pages of print.

As a package, and despite the milquetoast advice, the Southam series was hard on the interests of some of the corporation's major advertisers. That, like the *Omni* guide, reflects a change in the tone of environment reporting over the last decade.

Environment reporters have always had more liberty than labor, education, political or other beat reporters to depart from the tradition of supposedly objective newsgathering. That is because the environment reporter's stories are aimed at the broadest possible constituency: those who enjoy living and breathing on this planet. But 10 years ago there was probably not a mass-circulation magazine or newspaper on the continent that would have advised readers to quit buying garden chemicals and shag carpets.

What has changed is the scope of the problem. A decade ago the issues were local and community-based. People were organizing to oppose the effluent from the mill, leading underground gasoline tanks, sloppy logging practices. Stories about those local problems rarely concluded with an indictment of an entire industry. All that was before the greenhouse effect.

As Bill McKibben put it in his gripping new book, *The End of Nature*, "In the past, we spoiled and polluted parts of that nature, inflicted environmental damage." Now, we know we have altered nature globally. That new reality has, understandably, emboldened environment reporters and newspaper and magazine editors. That's why offering coy advice on how to save the planet is so ludicrous.

Who can say the interests of any one household, any one industry, any one economy, should not be subordinate to the problem of global climate change? There will always be the retrograde few -- the 12 per cent of Canadians identified on a poll conducted for Southam as "environmentally hostile" -- who think the problem has been overstated or needlessly cast in doomsday terms. But, for the most part, Canadians, including corporate leaders, take seriously the global warming problem and environmental issues in general.

The poll the Angus Reid Group undertook for Southam Inc. shows 18 per cent of Canadians are environmental activists of one stripe or another. Those poll results suggest the environment movement has reached a turning point. The issues have become so popular, so mainstream that even U.S. President George Bush can safely call himself an environmentalist.

If the history of popular movements has taught us anything, it is that the environment movement will now become increasingly institutionalized and co-opted. In the past, the movement was repeatedly reinvigorated by new converts. Now, there is no one left to convert. In a world of believers, beware of the "official spokesperson." Don't lose touch with the "outraged citizen." Here is an example of what I think is in the cards.

Several years ago in Quebec the head of one of province's most influential environment groups, *A Cours d'Eau*, made links with executives of several of the province's biggest corporations. They formed the Quebec Environment Foundation and began soliciting big corporate donations to finance research and political lobbying. One of the most active players in the foundation is Lavalin Inc., the Montreal-based engineering giant that has a subsidiary involved in environmental services. Judging from its activities so far, it has become evident that the foundation and its corporate sponsors are attempting to reorient the debate on a range of environmental issues and to advance technological solutions to those problems. That is the emerging corporate line.

What is needed are new technologies as opposed to changes in consumption habits. The big, bold headline riding above the Southam feature on industry said it succinctly: TECHNOLOGY WILL SAVE US. The authors of the feature report that a survey of corporate leaders revealed "more than 80 per cent of them believed technology can be used to protect the environment and lifestyle."

Here is where it starts to get tricky for environment writers. There is a broad consensus on the nature of the problems; there is no consensus on what needs to be done. Just as labor or education reporting is a critical examination of labor and education issues, environment reporting is a critical assessment of economic development. That is what gives environment reporting its hard edge. Its not science writing, which is often a friendly, gee-whiz celebration of the discoveries of selfless, dedicated scientists.

Environment writers have never been boosters of the development process. Their reportage is anchored in a critical view of the effect of development activities on nature and humans. The greatest shortcoming of most environment writers, however, has been their failure to submit to critical scrutiny the technological solutions that have been advanced over the years to various environment problems. Its almost as if the writers and the public at large feel that once the issue has been exposed and government or industry has committed itself to spending millions to address the problem, there is nothing left to write about. Time to move on.

In Canada the best recent example of this shortcoming in environment writing followed Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's announcement in Montreal two years ago of his government's decision to allocate $100 million for a clean up of the St. Lawrence river in Quebec. Everybody cheered. But there were almost no critical examinations. (I'm as guilty as anyone. I was the Montreal Gazette's environment reporter at the time). No mention was made of the fact that almost two-thirds of that money was to be given to the newly-created St. Lawrence Centre, whose principal mandate is to develop pollution-control technologies to serve the major polluters along the river. So more than $50-million of the $100-million will be devoted not to a clean up of past problems, but to subsidizing the development of control technologies for existing polluters. Even if you have no problem with the subsidy, you have got to wonder who will decide which research projects will be funded (the director of the Centre is the former head of Lavalin's environmental services subsidiary), whose interests the technology will serve and to what extent the river

pollution problem will be resolved. Let's face it, the simplest solution would have been to prohibit any further discharges into the river. Evidently, that was politically unacceptable. The alternative is to spend public funds developing technology that will reduce - not eliminate; there will always be trace amounts left in the effluent - the toxic discharges.

Technology is a tool. It can be useful, even necessary, in resolving many of our most serious environment problems. But let's not mystify it; write about it the way many science writers approach their topics. They tend to get lost in the jargon and are unable to assess whether the scientific project they are writing about is workable or based on sound theory.

This is not the way to write about the technological solutions that will be advanced by industry. Consider the technology within the context of the problem. Is it the best use of the money? Should the politicians be considering changes in consumption patterns to address the problem? Not every environment problem requires a technological solution. Some simply call for tough political decisions to end wasteful consumption, which is one of the most exasperating environmental problems in Canada. In a piece called *Paying the Bill*, the Southam writers state: "Canadians are among the most wasteful, polluting people on earth."

The pattern of gasoline consumption is instructive. Southam's Margaret Munro reports that Canadian "drivers used 2.5 per cent more gasoline in 1988 than in 1987, the biggest jump in consumption in a decade." The cars are more efficient but there are more of them on the road. Here is where tough political decisions are called for. Encourage mass transit; raise gas taxes. People are willing to do their bit. Montreal learned that when, after years of dragging its feet on garbage recycling, the city launched a curbside recycling project. The overwhelming response showed people were more than willing to participate.

The greatest danger of environment writing is succumbing to a sense of hopelessness and infecting readers with it. At a time when we are still absorbing the implications of global climate change, no one should underestimate the importance of countering the growing sense of despair. Focusing on solutions, without adopting the tone of a Chamber-of-Commerce-booster, may be vital for our collective psychological health. ❑

Rick Boychuck has specialized in writing about environmental concerns for The Montreal Gazette.

Forgetting the facts

PCBs, the press and St. Basile-le-Grand

By Ann Marie Wolicky

As early as 1981, residents of St. Basile-le-Grand, about 50 kilometres east of Montreal, began protesting the unsafe storage of polychlorinate biphenyls in a warehouse on the fringes of town. They feared a fire at the unguarded site would cause the chemical conversion of the PCBs into the even more toxic substances, dioxins and furans.

Seven years later, on August 23, their worst nightmare came true. A fire at the now-infamous warehouse ignited some 1500 barrels of PCB-contaminate oil, along with other chemicals, spewing a thick chemical cloud over the South Shore.

More than 100 firefighters, mostly volunteers working without protective clothing, battled the blaze. Police evacuated 3000 residents living within a 14 kilometre radius; five days later 500 more residents were asked to leave when the cloud shifted. Residents were not permitted to return home until 18 days after the crisis began.

Shortly after learning of the incident, the *Montreal Gazette* decided the fire would be a good hook for writing a "real story," according to Rick Boychuk, the newspaper's environment reporter at the time. He had followed the story for several years and was anxious to write about how warehouse owner Marc Levy managed to break several provincial laws by accumulating the large amount of PCBs with the government's full knowledge. Rather than covering the environmental implications of the fire close to home, Boychuk chose to track down Levy in Florida.

While the *Gazette*'s environment reporter chased what essentially amounted to a crime story, Peggy Curran, the senior general reporter, and others were left to sort out a complex environmental one. The paper's coverage of the fire was extensive. It published more than 100 related stories filed by 23 different reporters, editors and columnists during the 18-day evacuation.

In contrast, *The Globe & Mail* saw the story simply as another "fire story." When Montreal general reporter Patricia Poirier was pregnant and refused to go to St. Basile, it took a week before the paper sent its Ottawa bureau chief, Graham Fraser, to the scene. During the same period, the *Globe* had one-third as many articles with most originating from political reporters in Ottawa and Quebec City.

While each paper saw the story in a different light, neither paper managed to clearly explain the health and environmental implications of the fire until several days after the event. This delay is important to note because "long-term" effects and legends depend largely on how the story is handled in the first 48 hours, or in the 10 days following," concluded a study by the British Chemicals

Industries Association after a chemial leak at Union Carbide's plant in Bhopal. Myths and legends about PCBs already existed in Canadian newspapers from incidents such as the PCB spill near Kenora in 1985. However, both papers continued to perpetuate them. Many stories called PCBs "cancer-causing" and stated "evidence" linked PCBs with cancer, without explaining the dose and duration of exposure needed to induce cancer in specific animals.

In reality, not enough evidence exists to support a link between cancer in humans and exposure to PCBs, dioxins or furans. There is evidence, however, that PCBs, dioxins and furans can affect human reproductive or immune systems. Dioxins and furans have also been linked with an increased incidence of tumors and genetic defects in animals, but not in humans.

Yet, despite these more serious links associated with dioxins and furans, many early stories failed to even mention the chemicals. For instance, an August 25 Canadian Press backgrounder on PCBs in the *Gazette* headlined the "Jekyll and Hyde of modern chemicals."

Instead of sensationalizing the health effects, the papers should have reported on the environmental impact of these contaminants. Since PCBs were first discovered in nature in 1966, they have been found in the air, water and soil; often far away from the chemical source. Few stories explained that their widespread occurrence is due to the compound's physical and chemical stability; a property which, makes it an ideal cooling and insulating fluid for electrical capacitors and transformers.

There were other problems, too.

Several articles in the *Gazette* linked PCB exposure to various symptoms, notably fever, pimples and nausea, without any supporting medical opinion. Chloracne, a very severe form of acne, is the most common symptom associated with PCB exposure. As well, several *Gazette* stories mentioned PCB poisoning without ever defining what it was.

There were fewer factual problems in *The Globe and Mail*, however, one Aug. 30 *Globe* story, written by Fraser, reported a father thought his two-year-old son's convulsions were somehow linked to the fire. The child had contracted meningitis10 months earlier, but had not had convulsions in more than six months. The following day, a doctor dismissed the connection.

Articles in both papers mentioned the "testing process" but did not make clear who or what was being tested and exactly wat they were looking for.

As time passed, the coverage imporved, yet neither published comprehensive, accurate articles assessing the real health and environmental effects until 11 days after the fire -- too late to quell the mounting PCB hype.

The Gazette's Curran said she had questioned the real effects of PCBs for some time, but her curiousity peaked during the media bus tour of the evacuation zone. Journalists were warned the tour could be potentially dangerous to their health and were not allowed to open the windows, or leave the bus. Outside some people roamed about in t-shirts, and others were cloaked in Ghostbuster-type coveralls.

Later, after seeing an article in the *Journal de Montreal* quoting Stephen Safe, a PCB expert in Texas, Curran discovered most scientists believed the media and government had indeed blown the fire out of proportion. Her Sept. 3 article noted the short-term health risks had been exaggerated, and that the commonly reported itchy eyes and sore throats were most likely related to the burning oil and wood, not PCBs.

The same day, the *Globe* printed a backgrounder with scientific information, a feature article covering usage, destruction, storage and regulation, as well as a David Suzuki column.

Better late than never? ❑

Ann Marie Wolicky is writing for an environmental newsletter published by Temple Scott Associates in Ottawa. A graduate in both Journalism and Science, she is also a freelance writer.

Reporting disasters

What's the media thinking of?

By Stephen Hume

The biggest disaster story for Canada's press is the one yet to happen. On the Prairies it might be a tornado. In Halifax, a hurricane. In Vancouver and Victoria, an earthquake. In central Ontario and Quebec, a toxic waste catastrophe.

In fact, all these disasters have happened and we know for a certainty that in one variation or another they will all happen again. We also know that, for the most part, the stories told will be virtually identical.

Victims of the Edmonton tornado in 1987

Details of time, place and circumstance will differ, but the architecture of coverage will not. I'm not talking about the Who, What, When, Where, Why of every news story, but about the architecture of priorities. St. Basile le Grand, the Lodgepole sour gas blowout, the Mississauga derailment, the Turbo refinery fire, the Mill Woods pipeline rupture; plane crashes at Rae Point, Cranbrook, Dryden, Goose Bay; tornados in Edmonton, Regina, southern Ontario; drill rig disasters in Newfoundland and fishing fleet catastrophes in B.C. -- go back and read the coverage (even your own). They all seem to come out of the same cookie cutter.

The main story zeros-in on fatalities, destruction and proximity to the newsroom. These are the primary measures of magnitude. Like the Richter scale for earthquakes, perception of importance in newsrooms tends to increase exponentially with the body count. Three hundred deaths has greater emotional impact than three deaths and generally gets wider play.

In retrospect, whether the initial dead at the Chernobyl accident numbered 30 or 300, they were of negligible importance in the bigger context of a meltdown and breach of containment which put 500 million people at risk. And of far greater importance as a story was the willingness with which some Western democracies lied to their citizens about the extent and potential consequences of fallout.

There was great concern about Soviet abdication of international responsibility in the early reporting of the accident, but what about the information regarding fallout patterns and levels issued to its own citizens by the government of France?

Closer to home, when a gas well blew out not far from Edmonton, spewing deadly hydrogen sulphide upwind from the city, provincial authorities knowingly understated emission levels because (they said) they feared a public panic. In these cases, the trustworthiness of public institutions seems a story of far greater significance than the events themselves.

Hindsight is always 20/20, but ultimately the unusual deaths of small numbers of San Francisco gays a decade ago proved a far more significant event than the arrest of Wayne Williams in Atlanta in connection with the killings of 28 people. One was a complicated story of vector analysis of a new disease, AIDS, and global extrapolation hobbled by social stigmas and stereotypes; the other an isolated story of great emotive power -- the murder of children. We all know which one dominated the headlines and which one turned out to be the most far-reaching in consequence.

Secondary stories about disasters tend to follow in three phases.

First come the colorful descriptions of personal heroism, grief and suffering by individuals. Stalin shrewdly observed -- in the service of other objectives -- that while one death is a tragedy, a million deaths is a statistic. For the press, this is an axiom. Bring the story down to individuals with whom the reader will

identify. It is also a mechanism of reduction, for slicing the bad news into digestible -- and therefore more evocative -- chunks. These segments may be easier to respond to emotionally, but do they necessarily make an event more comprehensible? Does the tragedy of one person (and such tragedies are endlessly repeated around the globe each day) really help us understand the consequence of its surrounding events?

During the San Francisco earthquake, for example, television coverage involved frequent replays of the most dramatic clips -- the inferno in the Marina district; the collapsed section of the Nimitz freeway. These images became so dominant -- the fire clip continuing to show long after the fire itself was out -- that viewers could be excused the feeling that all of southern California had been razed. In fact, the effects of the earthquake were relatively localized and what we are calling a disaster was a miracle of engineering and public planning. The fatalities so far amount to about 0.001 per cent of the Bay-area population.

Next come discussions of property damage and cost. These purely linear estimates are usually relatively meaningless in strict economic terms -- are we estimating in dollars at time of purchase or construction? Present dollars? Dollars discounted for inflation at time of payout? How do these costs compare to other priority expenditures by society -- the damage in California, for example, will probably amount to somewhere around the cost of a flotilla of nuclear submarines.

Finally come the discussions of preparedness and competence of response by authorities. There's an irony to this that I'll discuss later, but even here we tend to miss the boat, looking backward to the rubble instead of forward to what happens next.

Some geophysicists believe that the most significant story out of California is not the 'quake of 1989, but that it was not the one science anticipates for the West Coast; that it was a small event considering the potential of the San Andreas fault structure; that it might be insignificant compared to the potential energy release in the subduction fault that lies off Vancouver and Victoria. To be sure, the press dealt with this element of the 'quake story, but nowhere in a central fashion. "You ain't seen nothin' yet," tended to be a cursory afterthought. This partly explained by the fact that it is always safer (and easier) to write about actual events than to write responsibly about possibilities or even probabilities.

What's going on here? Why is the coverage -- even allowing for the elementary congruence of events -- so predictable? One reason is that, generally speaking and despite our extensive experience, most of us in the media don't prepare very well in advance of such stories.

The great tradition in Canada is fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants. For disasters, we don't really plan, we react. We organize remote feeds. We line up freelancers and seek reports from witnesses at the scene. We find ways around roadblocks. We set up on-air links with ham operators. We dispatch reporters and coordinate their activities in the field. We scramble to find experts for comments. We run body counts and dollar costs.

Later we pride ourselves on our ingenuity, our tenacity, our courage, our professionalism in the face of awful circumstance.

To some extent that's what our audiences want, at least on the basic level. Naturally, they want factual information and, of course, it's our obligation to provide it as swiftly and accurately as possible. But they also want it delivered with reassuring authority, which is why there is such a frenzy among wire services to provide "accurate" body counts in the early stages. Knowing the extent of a tragedy is important, but whether precise counts of the dead serve any useful purpose is another question. Death counts from the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco vary between 700 and 2,500 -- from the vantage point of history the actual numbers mean little.

As journalists, we should be skeptical of our own acceptance of convention and reject the dogma that such approaches are dictated by demands from the audience. Approaches to coverage are also dictated by what we want as journalists. Formula, in fact, offers a shield; permits us to detach ourselves from the prospect of overwhelming human grief and tragedy.

Often we have difficulty accepting that journalism is an imperfect art practiced by human beings with feelings. In the aftermath of the Edmonton tornado, a senior emergency measures planner told me that a significant number of those seeking psychological trauma counselling were journalists who provided some of the best front-line coverage. This is not surprising. One, after all, wound up taking vital signs of victims as part of the medical triage process -- the dead and dying to be left so that the living might be saved. Yet how many senior editors have arranged in advance to provide for counselling of reporters who need help dealing with post-disaster trauma and depression? We tend to prefer an earlier era's hard-boiled myths about our self-reliance, despite the fact that police departments, fire departments, social workers and the military have all evolved a more humane sense of themselves.

In all six newsrooms in which I've worked -- including, regrettably, those I've directed myself -- I can't recall a single meeting in which we sat down beforehand to think about the unthinkable; to deal in advance with the disaster nobody could imagine happening. We operated, instead, from a body of unspoken assumptions about our priorities, assumptions that flowed from existing responsibilities.

We should have been talking, for example, about who would do what if the normal chain of command were ruptured. In what order and to what level we would delegate command functions. How we would communicate in the loss of central communications. And most important, we should have been preparing a plan for deciding how to determine

and arrive at priorities in the midst of crisis.

Yes, most of us have emergency power supplies for computers and production departments. But do we have comprehensive plans for getting out an edition or a broadcast if the regional power grid fails? Do we have fallback alternatives if that plan doesn't work?

Yes, we rely on our reporters to drop everything and dash for the newsroom at first word of disaster. Why? The story isn't in the newsroom -- it's somewhere else. If we spelled out responsibilities in advance, we could save much time. Editors, instead of struggling to organize logistical details, could grapple with the questions of priority and meaning.

In the aftermath of the tornado which flattened the eastern suburbs of Edmonton, *Journal* photographers and their independent radios turned out to be a vital informal communications network for authorities. And when editor Linda Hughes chartered a Lear jet to fly a team 180 miles south to print a special edition on the *Calgary Herald*'s presses, she was doing more than responding to simple market demand, she was also enabling Southam to fulfill the highest ethical imperatives of journalism -- serving the community in its hour of desperate need.

It goes against the grain of conventional wisdom to say so, but we might learn a lot from the emergency response teams that government organizes for disasters. Not just in big cities, either. How do volunteer fire departments organize their responses to what can't be predicted but must be expected?

Instead, too many of us are conditioned to turn up our noses at bureaucrats whose job it is to plan for achieving the most with the least in the worst circumstances. In fact, a strong argument can be made for involving senior editors, circulation and broadcast personnel in formal community emergency planning -- some of the skills at which we excel are most needed during public disasters. Who would seriously suggest that placing some of our own formidable resources at the disposal of a stricken community might somehow erode our independence and integrity? ❑

Stephen Hume is a columnist for the Vancouver Sun. *He has previously worked at the* Edmonton Journal. *His third book,* Ghost Camps, *deals with the impact of disasters on the Canadian consciousness.*

Media Literacy
Cracking the code

By Sandy Greer

Media literacy essentially involves the study of the media. It is intended to provide students with a critical awareness of the media that surround them in everyday life.

It is an attempt to understand how television, radio and print function. It conveys information to audiences.

Media literacy is an effort to analyze popular culture -- from shopping malls and Barbie dolls to rock music and celebrities.

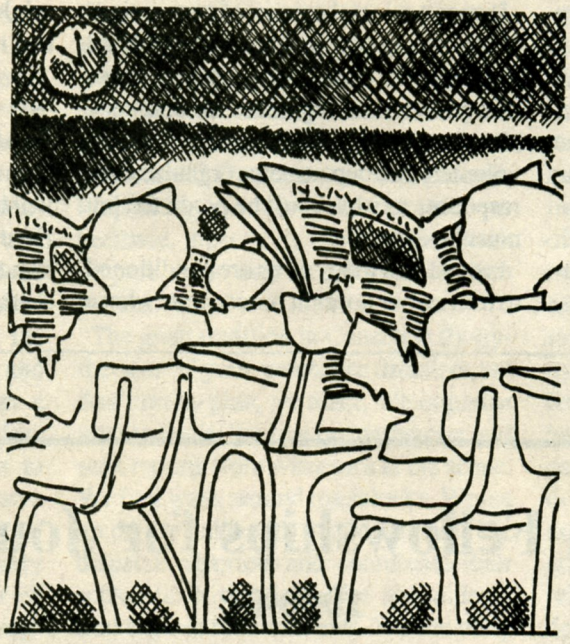
Ontario leads North America in media educaton. This fall, Ontario's Ministry of Education made media literacy a mandatory component in English school curricula from Grade 9 to Grade 12, and an optional component for an OAC (formerly Grade 13) credit, in the public and separate schools systems.

Debates about the message versus the medium and about perception versus reality have persisted as far back as Plato. "Music corrupts youth and is harmful to the state," wrote Plato in The Republic. Plato made reference to people who live in caves where fires throw shadows on the walls.

"Do they take those (shadows) to be reality or a representation of reality?" asks John Pungente, director of programs at the Jesuit Communication Project in Toronto.

"And do we take television and the other media to be a reality or a representation of reality?" asks Pungente. Marshall McLuhan raised Plato's query again in the 1960s by pointing out that each medium codifies reality in a somewhat different way.

"What we're trying to do is crack the code," says Barry Duncan, founder and president of the Association of Media Literacy. Duncan is head of English at the school for Experiential Education in Metropolitan Toronto's Borough of Etobicoke. He also co-ordinated the writing team for the Ministry of Education's Media Literacy Resource Guide, and produced Ontario's first media literacy textbook, *Mass Media and Popular Culture*, for senior high school students.



Media literacy, says Duncan, is cross-curricular and deals with subjects from gender representation and violence to advertising and the issues of Canadian content.

"Some of the most important things that are happening in the world today -- environmental issues, AIDS, women's rights -- cut across subject areas, as does media. Hence, when you are doing media study, it can even be called 'cultural studies,'" he says.

The global media education movement began in Australian schools in the 1960s. "The New South Wales Ministry of Education has said that media education is as basic a subject as reading or writing or mathematics," says Pungente, who is a media globe-trotter. He has travelled to 29 countries to investigate the various approaches to teaching media education in both Catholic and public schools.

In Germany, Pungente found evidence of one of the first practical examples of media education, which followed the publication of the oldest mass medium, the newspaper, in the sixteenth century. Johann Amos Comenius (1592-1670) believed that "a study of newspapers would benefit the development of language skill and provide basic information for current affairs and geography.

Newspapers In Education (NIE) might feel more comfortable with Comenius' rationale than with the new thrust in Ontario's educational system. For the past 20 years, the Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association (CDNPA) has provided teachers with newspaper resource kits to use within school curricula. Its primary goal is "readership development," says Joan Abeles, manager of education services for CDNPA. But she adds NIE "fits in peripherally" with media literacy.

Abeles is bothered by an exercise in the Ministry's media literacy guide which investigates "placement and juxtaposition" of news stories and photographs. Students are told to look for "any connection between apparently different stories juxtaposed on the same page." The exercise continues by asking why "this type of juxtaposition" is done. "Is it purely accidental or is it calculated? What is the effect on the reader, who is forced to make quick associations?"

"There's an insistence by the authors of the guideline," says Abeles, "that there's

a deliberate effort to manipulate the public by the juxtaposition on the front page... to create a particular impact on the reader. That simply doesn't happen."

Abeles is concerned about the literacy program's definition of media as "constructions of reality." She interprets the term "construct" to suggest "that there are dark and mysterious forces at work in the newsrooms of the nation to somehow manipulate the unsuspecting reader." What the news media do, she adds, is "take this incredible maelstrom of events that are swirling around us every day, and try to give them some sort of form."

"We want media literacy to be a critical, evaluative, appreciative approach," says Bob Fisher, acting manager of Educational Sales at CBC Television. "We want students to value Canadian media, to understand the process, to want to be part of it, frankly." Fisher, a school teacher of media for 20 years, co-ordinated CBC-TV's six-film "Inside the Box" media literacy package.

In his years as a teacher, Fisher saw examples of media literacy's other side -- media bashing -- with which he disagrees.

The purpose of media literacy is *not* "media bashing," says Chris Worsnop, a curriculum consultant for the Peel County Board of Education in Ontario. He helped the ministry develop materials for media literacy at the elementary grades. Worsnop hopes that media education not become "just another school subject where the adults tell the children what it is okay to believe, and what they must know.

Media literacy is intended to help young people recognize their own responsibilities and choices as consumers of media, says Neil Anderson, a computer resource teacher for the Scarborough Board of Education in Metropolitan Toronto. He recently wrote the textbook *Media Works* with exercises to develop oral and written skills among intermediate and senior students.

The media will be whatever we want," says Anderson. "I make that choice. I give that power to the media, if I allow the media to define my tastes. It doesn't take it. I give it."

Anderson identifies the impact of the women's movement on the media, where women now receive a higher profile and are depicted differently today. "That didn't occur because the media *chose* to do that," he says, but instead from political and economic pressure placed upon the media to respond.

Journalist Susan Coles is not convinced. She gives school workshops on a still-imperfect media world. "The notion of objectivity," she says, "is a bogus one and hurts women." The "conflict-oriented" reportage on issues does not convey people's attitudes, or facts about women's reality.

Coles contributed to sections in the Media Literacy Resource Guide that analyze rock videos and sexuality in the media.

"Media is a tremendously powerful object," concludes Peel County's Chris Worsnop, "...to encourage them to explore and discover, and figure things out for themselves. For students to create a video or radio clip or newspaper editorial rather than the old format to do an essay, can instill an awareness *how* the media work, *what* the media are. And they themselves will be changed as consumers of media." ❑

Sandy Greer is a freelance writer and specialist in educational development.

The paranoid world of journalism

By Orland French

Take cover. They have finally caught on to us. Just to prove you can't fool all of the people all of the time, Ontario is going to teach its little kiddies how to tell the difference between fact and fiction in the media.

It was too good to last, as Gutenberg said when he saw his first typo.

The new program, called "media literacy," is primarily aimed at the consumers of sight and sound. Television, video, films and rock music are about to go under the literacy microscope in Ontario's schools.

So are newspapers. That's the good news. In these days of declining readership, any publicity is good publicity. After all, the first question an illiterate kid will ask in a media class is, "What's a newspaper?".

Then, if the child has to go out and actually buy a newspaper for class, the little one might actually become interested in reading it. For life, if we're lucky. Those who toil in the medium of print may have staved off burial for another generation.

We're such a touchy lot in the paranoid world of journalism. When the media literacy curriculum was first released, there was a brief flurry of intense interest in journalistic circles. But it quickly died when reporters and editors realized they had misunderstood: the government had no intention of educating *them* to be literate.

It's the kiddies who are being warned about us. They're about to be told not to take electronic candy from strangers.

They're not going to be told we're doing anything evil or malicious intentionally. They're going to be taught that we don't always present a realistic view of the world. Television is highlighted because of the pervasive effect it has in the development of the child.

For instance, by the time Canadian children are 12 years old, they will have spent more time watching U.S.-produced television than in school. Is there any

wonder they don't know which country or culture they live in?

Television is the prime purveyor of expectations. Look at the lifestyles portrayed on television. Flip through the cable channels some evening (do not stop at Benny Hill) and see how many human beings are being blasted away by remorseless fast-quipping cops. What does that convey about the role of authority and the value of life? Check out the amount of television devoted to drooling over the lives of the rich, the powerful, the famous and the superfluous, with a heavy accent on the superfluous.

Sure, we know it's all fantasy. So do the kids. But that doesn't undercut the desire that wells up when the "fantasy" of a soap opera is replaced with the "real life" of a car commercial.

Kids watch 183 hours of television commercials a year. That's more than a solid week of watching pitchmen's hype. Most of it is pure fiction, selling not the product but the concept of happiness through possession.

But, in print, objectivity rules, doesn't it? It used to, says the Ontario Ministry of Education, but it doesn't anymore, ever since the "new journalism" of the sixties hit the front page.

Don't you believe it, kiddies. Journalism is not now, and never was, totally objective. Every story has an angle. Any time a writer is looking for an angle, facts are chosen subjectively to support that angle, and the writer is weighed down with a lifetime of acquired prejudices. Objectivity is an illusion.

Balance is a different matter. We can try to present stories with fair balance. But the Ministry of Education is concerned that, in trying to present lively and entertaining stories, we become overly dramatic. We borrow, says the ministry, "the techniques of the novelist or the poet."

That's not so bad, is it? In terms of complex issues, we're dealing with an illiterate public. We didn't invent the idea that simple, entertaining stories would get the message across. There was a fairly philosophic fellow on earth a couple of thousand years ago who chose to speak in parables to get his message across. His stories were so good they're still circulating, even in a supposedly well-educated society.

Anyway, can you blame us for trying to be entertaining? We're living in a fairy-tale world where everybody speaks in 10-second clips and is screwing everybody else,for pleasure or for profit. Print journalists have tried to compete with television, and only recently has it begun sinking into our thick skulls that it can't be done. We simply have to do a better job of doing what we do.

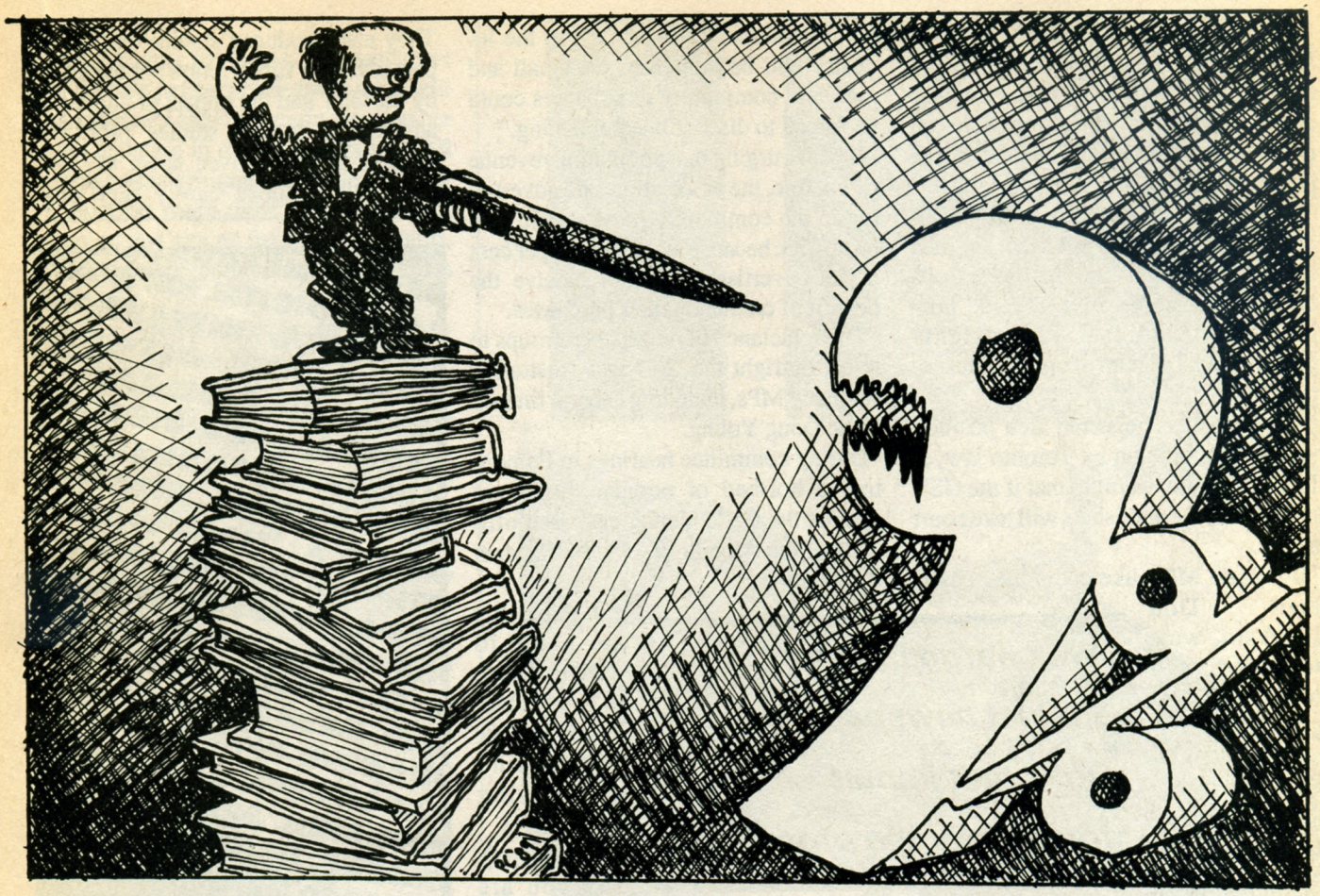
What seems to concern the Ministry of Education is not so much how we do things in our own inventive way, but how people are blind to our "press-tidigitation." If we can open their eyes, the ministry says, we can show them how to avoid being manipulated by the media.

Actually, the word used to describe what they do to the media in the curriculum is "deconstruct," which is uncomfortably close to "destruct." It means the same thing as taking apart frogs in a lab to see what makes them hop.

But that's fine. If the little beggars deconstruct what we construct, they'll find out what a tough game it is, and maybe they'll start showing us a little respect.

They might even buy a newspaper subscription someday. ❑

Orland French is a senior reporter and columnist for The Globe and Mail.



Publishers tilt at GST

Tax seen as attack on freedom of the press

By Deborah Dowling

Faced with their first-ever direct federal sales tax, Canadian publishers have lobbied the government for special treatment under the proposed goods and services tax.

A battery of publishing associations ranging from the Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers' Asssociation to the umbrella Don't Tax Reading Coalition have urged a Commons Committee not to ignore the long-held democratic principle that taxation and freedom of the press don't mix.

They also warned of dire consequences in an industry where some players are already in a precarious financial position.

"Books, magazines, and newspapers will be the hardest hit of commodities," Dan Mozersky, a spokesman for six publishing associations told the finance committee hearings into the nine per cent levy to be imposed in 1991.

"For years legislatures have accepted the principle that nothing should impede the free flow of thoughts and ideas, of education and of culture."

Currently, publishers don't pay the hidden 13.5 per cent manufacturers' sales tax on many of their major purchases such as paper and presses. This means they will not have any savings to pass on to consumers when the GST is imposed.

While they will be able to claim credits for tax they pay, they argue that both cover prices and advertising rates will have to rise by as much as nine per cent.

This will almost certainly hurt readership and profit margins, according to studies produced by numerous groups.

The daily newspaper publishers, representing 82 Canadian dailies, told MPs "a taxed press is vulnerable to interference and susceptible to political pressures on editorial content through the use of tax policy as a weapon."

While prepared to accept a tax on advertising revenue, the publishers argued it would be unconstitutional to tax circulation income because it would infringe on Canadian Charter rights guaranteeing freedom of opinion and expression.

The publishers bolstered their position with a legal opinion by Toronto lawyer John Robinette, warning that if the GST is imposed, the publishers will take court action.

But some MPs, like committee chairman Don Blenkarn, were not impressed with the legal argument.

"We charge income tax against newspapers. Does that not impair the freedom of the press? We charge income tax against reporters. Does that not interfere with the freedom of the press?" he demanded.

> ***'We charge income tax against newspapers. Does that impair freedom of the press'?***

Another Conservative MP, Rene Soetens, was more blunt. "I'm not a lawyer but I think it, (the legal argument) sucks."

The publishers also argued a tax on circulation would put newspapers in an unfair competitive situation with broadcasters because listening and viewing audiences won't be taxed like newspaper readers.

Finally, the publishers argued that when the GST forces increases in cover prices "few papers would be in a position to absorb it." There could be "significant" circulation losses. This in turn would hurt advertising revenues, with local and regional newspapers most vulnerable.

The Canadian Community Newspaper Association agreed, stating in a brief to the committee: "The damage to the industry will be immense...the small and marginal community newspapers could be forced to discontinue publishing."

Besides urging that circulation revenue be tax free, the association said advertising in the community press should also be tax free because more than 22 per cent of its advertisers will not receive the benefit of credits on their purchases.

The reluctance of newspaper groups to reject outright the GST was frustrating for many MPs, including Liberal finance critic Doug Young.

During committee hearings in Edmonton, a hot-bed of popular discontent against the GST, Young chastised officials of the Alberta Weekly Newspaper Association.

"I think you are going to have to decide to bite the bullet and join the people who are buying your newspaper(s). Say you are against the tax, period."

The Canadian Magazine Publishers Association, representing 290 consumer magazines, cited benevolent treatment bestowed on the industry in the past and pleaded to be spared entirely from the GST.

"The GST has the lofty objective of putting our fiscal house in order with one bold and sweeping step," Jeffrey Shearer, an association spokesman, told MPs.

"But we also suggest that using a shotgun to slay our own nurtured and now sitting duck, is not only cruel and unfair, but the potential for slaughter will leave Canada a lesser nation with much less of a voice of its own."

Foremost in the minds of magazine publishers is the need to maintain competitive advertising rates compared to those charged by American magazines that ultimately are destined for Canada. They also produced studies on the impact of higher subscription prices caused by the GST and the impact of depressed advertising. In case studies, profitable magazines were driven down to break even, while those barely surviving,

posted significant losses. The publishers said a nine per cent increase in price will undoubtedly lead to a minimum nine per cent decrease in demand. MPs from all parties were sympathetic to the plight of Canadian magazines. But Blenkarn warned that aiming for a tax-free status, like basic groceries, might be shooting too high.

"If we were to recommend that to the minister (Finance Minister Michael Wilson) he would probably laugh at us."

Blenkarn suggested magazines might have more luck lobbying for a tax-exempt status where readers would not be taxed, but the industry could not claim credits.

Canadian publishers were quick to remind the committee that sparing books, magazines and newspapers from broad-based consumption taxes is not a unique idea.

The United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, Norway, Iceland, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland and Ireland don't tax their publishing industries.

The Don't Tax Reading Coalition also pointed to a July Environics poll which revealed that 83 per cent of Canadians believe books should not be taxed.

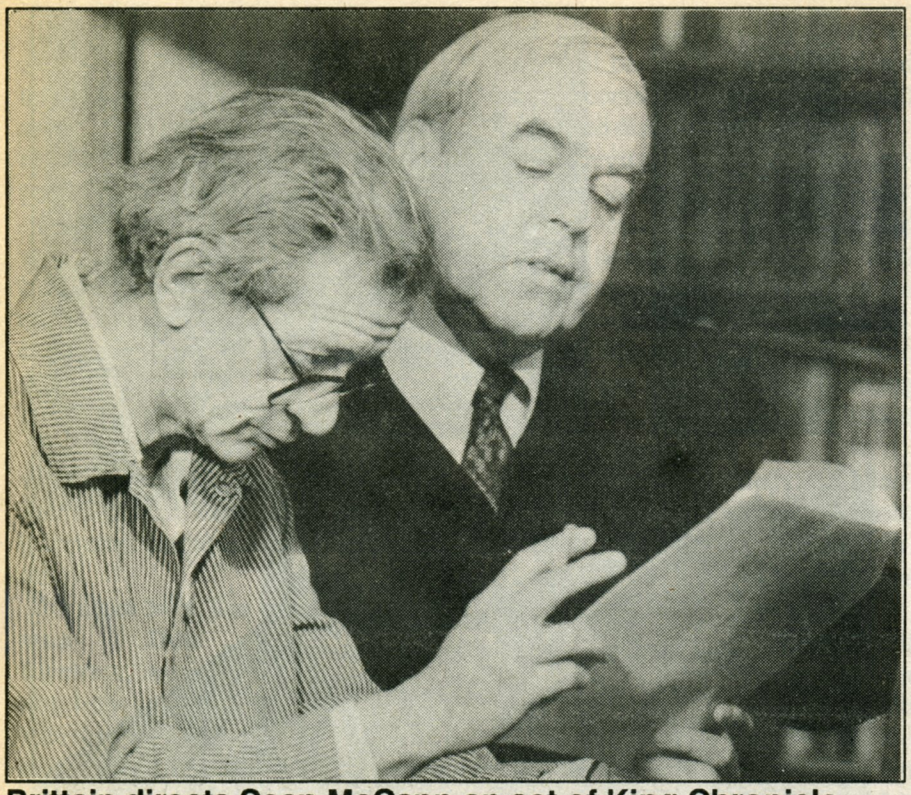
As well, the coalition reminded MPs that the tax would fly in the face of the government's objective to fight illiteracy.

"The impact of this tax on the government's own program to combat illiteracy will be negative in the extreme," the coalition's Mozersky told MPs.

"For a government that believes in universal free education and promises to combat and eliminate illiteracy, it is a sad irony that it will now put a tax on reading , on books, on magazines, on newspapers, on the essential building blocks of these programs."

The finance committee was to report its findings Nov. 28. But the government probably won't respond with its legislation until early next year. ❑

Deborah Dowling is a staff writer for the Ottawa Citizen*'s National Bureau.*



Brittain directs Sean McCann on set of King Chronicle

Donald Brittain: a tribute

-- Will we ever see his like again?

Few Canadian artists enjoyed such sustained and respectful coverage from critics as did Donald Brittain, the documentary filmmaker who died last July in Montreal.

Television and film reviewers were as baffled as anyone who knew Brittain how this rumpled and sartorially inept character produced such elegant work.

In an industry sometimes more concerned with video pyrotechnics and computer effects, Brittain's films seem visually prosaic, a compilation of old and new footage, music and interviews (talking heads if you will). This, of course, was an anomaly since he was regarded as Canada's best documentary filmmaker, perhaps even the world's best.

From the time Brittain entered the film industry in 1954, and until his death, the process of making films was virtually unchanged. Although technological advances saw the introduction of lighter cameras, faster film and lenses, and the revolutionary introduction of crystal sync sound recording, the editing process remained laboriously slow. Oddly enough, the old way worked to Brittain's advantage, providing time for the producer, director and writer to think about the story, its components and, most important, its implications. With the advent of tape mini-documentaries and the all-inclusive "news specials" much of the think time which the film process afforded the artist simply vanished.

Brittain was astute enough to know that the "quick and dirty" approach of the video documentary threatened the very essence of the film documentary.

Tape we were told would speed up editing time, which indeed it did. However, video's instant accessibility to the material created a collective panic among young documentary video makers to get the stuff on the air and fast. Even though Brittain was more skilled than most at glueing images together, it was not so much the visual impact that set his work apart. He believed that a documentary's most enduring quality was not a cinematic one but rather its most important component was literary.

If any one characteristic was reflected in Brittain's films it was comprehensibility of theme, never an easy achievement in documentary presentation and made more difficult for Brittain because of the profound subjects he chose to examine -- war, the Holocaust, and the misuse of power by higher orders in corporations, unions and government.

As the writer of film narrative, he had no peer. Brittain was candid enough to confess that writing was always a struggle and that he often spent months writing and re-writing to achieve that perfect balance required in scripted narration; cadence and tone, and again, always again, comprehension.

It was not uncommon for Brittain to spend anywhere from a year to 18 months on a film project. (Actually, he usually had three films on the go at once: one nearing completion, the second in the shooting stage, and the third being planned).

Brittain was fortunate enough to have been able to work at the National Film Board during what surely were its golden years, and in an atmosphere which encouraged and valued perfection in the documentary field -- a commitment to spend whatever it cost in time, money and manpower to get it right.

More recently, Brittain enjoyed a special relationship with both the CBC and the NFB, a unique arrangement which saw him acting as an independent producer but using the Board's production facilities and the CBC's English-language network as distributor of his films. Since Brittain left no heir apparent, one doubts whether a similar, if not privileged appointment will be made for another filmmaker. Moreover, the two men who had created this unusual network window in the mid-70s for this talented artist, are no longer with the CBC. Peter Herndorf has since gone into the world of publishing, and Paul Wright recently retired from the Corporation. Sadly, Brittain's death at age 61 from liver cancer confirmed the end of a brilliant career and a style of documentary which we are not likely to see again.

Donald Brittain was an odd combination of journalist and artist who produced an impressive body of work. By my count, 107 films in 35 years. He was a person of grace, compassion, humor and intellect. For all who knew the pleasure of his company there was recognition of his inestimable contribution to both Canadian journalism and the arts. His films will be remembered for their literary power rather than electronic cant so prized by many of today's producers of television. ❑

Brian Nolan is a respected documentary filmmaker whose films include Flight: The Passionate Affair, The Last Nazi, Tides of War *and* Lawyers. *He is on the faculty of the School of Journalism at Carleton University.*

Working on labor's image

By Ron Verzuh

The eagle-like stare of Stephen Lewis, Canada's former ambassador to the United Nations, peers into the television camera from a Toronto studio. He is about to introduce a new show called "Workweek" which promises to take the labor movement's message into the living rooms of the nation on CBC's Newsworld.

Labor usually gets into those living rooms via news reports of strikes and confrontations which give it a negative image. Lewis could be the key to changing that image, given that right and left alike view him as a man of substance, clarity and sound judgment.

Although he lacks broadcasting training, Lewis brings with him a charisma that is bound to attract an audience if "Workweek" becomes a regular feature in January. The question is, will the show -- a one-hour pilot was to appear in November -- leap all the hurdles erected by both its chief sponsor, the Canadian Labour Congress, and the CBC?

For years, Canada's labor leaders have meddled with attempts outside the movement to sustain publications sympathetic to labour but wishing to remain editorially independent. The British Columbia Federation of Labour killed a weekly paper called *Solidarity Times* in the mid-1980s when the editor refused to accept editorial dictates. And the CLC has pulled advertising when it disagrees with coverage in alternative magazines such as *Our Times* in Toronto.

The CBC, for its part, has tried vigorously to launder any left-wing bias from its programming. The most noted example was the showdown between former ACTRA president Dale Goldhawk and his superiors at the radio phone-in show he hosts. Goldhawk had to give up his union position to keep his job.

With the launch of Newsworld, however, the corporation finds itself top-heavy with business shows. "Workweek" producer Laszlo Barna is hoping the CBC will want to correct this imbalance. "They're taking heat because they have a lot of business programming and no labor shows. They need to show their audience (a potential 4.5 million viewers) that they are providing coverage of both sides of issues," says the independent Toronto filmmaker.

Maria Mironowicz, a Newsworld executive producer, says they want the show, but she thinks the name is "terrible. We're not going to call it that if we use it." She adds that the network is committed to the principle of a show on work-related issues. But the pilot will be the key factor in deciding whether or not to buy the show.

While Barna may be right that the CBC needs his show for balance, he also needs the CBC to keep the CLC at bay. "The only way this will work is if we maintain the editorial standards set by the CBC," Barna explains. "If we don't, it won't be allowed on air."

Barna hopes leaders agree that it is in the movement's best interest to produce a high-quality show appealing to a broad audience, not just labor activists. (This is the case with "Labour Forum," the CLC-produced show seen early Sunday morning in some regions.) And he has a powerful ally at the CLC.

Former *Toronto Sun* reporter Derik Hodgson is the CLC's director of public affairs. He is kicking in $65,000 of the $80,000 cost of the pilot. If it flies, he will ante up another $35,000 a week for the half-hour regular show. To do this, Hodgson raided the cookie jar set aside for the CLC's flagship publication, *Canadian Labour*.

"I'm scared to death that some affiliate will threaten to withdraw from the CLC if the show doesn't do what they want it to do," said Hodgson. "It could get killed if a labor leader wants to go on and blast some employer."

But Hodgson has cause to be optimistic. First, CLC president Shirley Carr has been very supportive and the CLC

executive seems willing to trust the editorial process. Second, he has the CBC's editorial standards to use as a solid argument against heavy interference. Third, if the CBC buys the program, it will give the congress access to a huge audience without labor incurring enormous debts to buy air-time.

Hodgson consulted Tom Fawkes, former public relations director at the B.C. Federation of Labour and the co-ordinator of "B.C. at Work," the movement's first 13-segment TV show. He came away knowing that "Workweek" had to develop the cutting edge of a newsmagazine, something "B.C. at Work" lacked.

"They're on the right track," Fawkes says. "It's going to be a much more entertaining show than ours, but they're going to have to stay away from propaganda. If they're going to sell it to the public it has to have journalistic integrity." Fawkes prefers the route he took with "B.C. at Work," that of buying the air time, because it allows total editorial independence. But he says the CLC would have to ask for a special portion of union dues to pay for it, because advertisers wouldn't purchase time on such a show.

At "Workweek," the editorial integrity rests with Barna. To achieve it, the show will team Lewis (Barna says he will be to labor what David Suzuki is to the environment) with veteran news reporters like CTV's Bodine Williams and Peter Feniak and producers like Eva Varangu, formerly of CBC's "The Journal."

They plan to air investigative items on health and safety hazards. The pilot features an in-depth piece on the funding cuts that threaten the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety in Hamilton. They will also do a regular profile of a young worker, look at harassment in the workplace and explore the sometimes shaky relationship between environmentalists and the labor movement.

If that formula works, it will help make the labor movement a credible player on the national political stage. It will also set the example for its American counterpart, the AFL-CIO. Last year, that union bought into the networks with its "Union Yes!" advertising campaign, using people like actor Jack Lemmon to attract a mainstream audience. If, on the other hand, "Workweek" fails, it will probably be a long time before the financially troubled movement gets another chance at becoming the best on the box. ❑

Ron Verzuh is content's *Little Media columnist.*

The Worthington flap

Central issues have yet to be settled

By Larry Till

Even though the "Worthington Affair" is no longer in the news, the central disputes are far from settled.

Peter Worthington says he's been libelled by a Southam News story that claims he was an FBI informant in 1968, yet he hasn't sued. Southam News continues to defend its decision to run the story without contacting Worthington for comment; many critics say Southam didn't try hard enough to contact the man who also happened to be the editor of a rival newspaper.

The allegations, first published Sept. 28, hold that the former editor of the Toronto and Ottawa Suns supplied US authorities with the names of peace activists while working for the now-defunct *Toronto Telegram.* The list, from the Hemispheric Conference held in Montreal in 1968, contained the names of 282 people, among them 80 Canadians, including writers June Callwood and Farley Mowat and abortionist Henry Morgentaler, who was then president of a humanist association.

Worthington says back then he didn't know anyone in the U.S. justice department -- which is said to have given the list to the FBI -- and that the list was public anyway.

The document on which Southam based its allegations was a memo from J. Walter Yeagley, an assistant attorney general to former FBI director J. Edgar Hoover.

The memo reads in part, "Also attached is a copy of a newspaper article written by Peter Worthington of the *Toronto Telegram.* The attached were received today during a conversation by an attorney of this division with Mr. Worthington, who says he received the copy from his own sources in Canada. He does not believe the lists have been made public."

Parts of the document, obtained by Southam Washington correspondent Peter Calamai through freedom of information legislation, are blacked out. But it contains numerous other markings, such as time stamps and handwritten notes. One such notation seems to be the word "informant" -- and it appears right next to Worthington's name.

And that's where the former *Sun* editor says the problem lies. "Southam seems to have translated the word "informant" as "informer," Worthington says, "but my dictionary will tell you they're two very different things."

Worthington will not come right out and say, "I did not...," but he does say the charges are untrue.

"I was working then on a lot of stories about espionage, and as a result I was seeing a lot of defectors. I have no idea what the people I was actually talking to might have told others."

Worthington also complains that Southam rushed the story into print without giving him adequate opportunity to respond. On vacation in France when the story broke, Worthington says Southam should have waited for his return before running the piece. But Jim Travers, Southam's general manager of news operations, says his reporters spent two full, fruitless days trying to track down Worthington. "We kept getting conflicting information about when he'd be back in the country," Travers says. "It was a little difficult to believe that an editor would be out of the country and not leave a number where he could be reached.

"We were extremely anxious to get his comments into the story because they would certainly have given it a greater sense of balance. And we would have played them high up in the story, but it would not have changed our decision to run it..."

Travers says Worthington's counterclaim that the story was calculated to embarrass him and to cut into the circulation of his newspaper is nonsense. "The Worthington story was just one part of a much larger series we were doing on Canadians who had been denied entry to the US because of their political beliefs. And when we started our investigation (in December, 1985), the *Ottawa Sun* didn't even exist."

But Worthington maintains that Southam acted maliciously. "That list was distributed at the conference. It was a very public list. You could get it 101 different ways. Mile-high stacks of them were left on card tables in churches. I find it curious that if you were going to inform (on people), you would call June Callwood a subversive. These charges are absolutely libellous."

That may be so, but Worthington has not announced whether he will sue Southam for libel. He uses the word a great deal in discussing the matter -- including in his rebuttal published Oct. 1 in the *Toronto Sun* -- but has yet to issue writs.

"If I sue them, it might take five or six years. The damage is already done to my reputation. People who want to believe the worst will." He has, however, filed a complaint against the *Ottawa Citizen* with the Ontario Press Council, which has scheduled a hearing for February. Press council records indicate this is the first case of its type to be heard.

Robert Fulford, now teaching communications ethics at Toronto's Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, says Southam didn't treat Worthington fairly. "He should have been give a chance to answer the charges in the first story. Southam tried to make us believe that the series (of which the Worthington story was part) was more important than Worthington's rights. But the dumbest

reporter in the world knows that if you ask three or four different people when someone is expected back, you're going to get three or four different answers, based on when they're expecting to see him. Surely Southam could have waited until they spoke to Worthington. He was only two days away from a phone. He hadn't gone off into the bush in Africa with an elephant."

Fulford says Southam probably ran the story when it did for fear of being scooped by other news-gathering operations.

"You never know when there's a leak in your office. But that's really no excuse. It wasn't an end-of-the-world story. It would have been much more intelligent, prudent and fair if they had waited just two days."

Worthington, who left the editor's job in Ottawa at the end of October, has never been known as a friend of left-wing causes. Throughout his tenure at both daily tabloids -- and back when he was working for the Telegram -- he developed a reputation as something of a zealous conservative. In fact he has run for Parliament twice, once as a PC candidate and once as an independent. He lost both times.

That doesn't mean, he says, that he was on a vendetta against the left. But he does believe there were, at the time of the conference, connections between the Canadian peace movement and Soviet agents. "I was attuned to how the KGB was using the peace movement," he says.

Worthington has tried to play Southam's charges as a turf battle between rival dailies, while Southam officials insist they played it straight. Says Worthington: "You have to remember that Southam is a rival chain, and that they're involved in a cat-and-dog fight with the Sun in Ottawa, as they have been in other markets. There's a certain hunger to nail you."

Jim Travers doesn't buy it. He says that the decision to run the story had absolutely nothing to do with competition. "We delayed running the story by 36 hours, waiting to hear back from Worthington. We worked very hard to get his side of the story, but the *Sun* kept telling us their editor was unavailable. I am satisfied that we handled the story properly." ❑

Larry Till is a Toronto-based freelance writer.

Judicial Inquiries

The public may have a right to know, but what about presumption of innocense?

By Jack R. London

Glue-eyed attention to the recent spate of judicial inquiries threatens to replace comic books and network soap operas as the leisure activity of choice for Canadian couch potatoes.

Images of drug-induced athleticism, corporate and governmental corruption, conflicts of interest, mistaken identity, aboriginal injustice and priestly vice have become daily fare for readers, listeners and viewers.

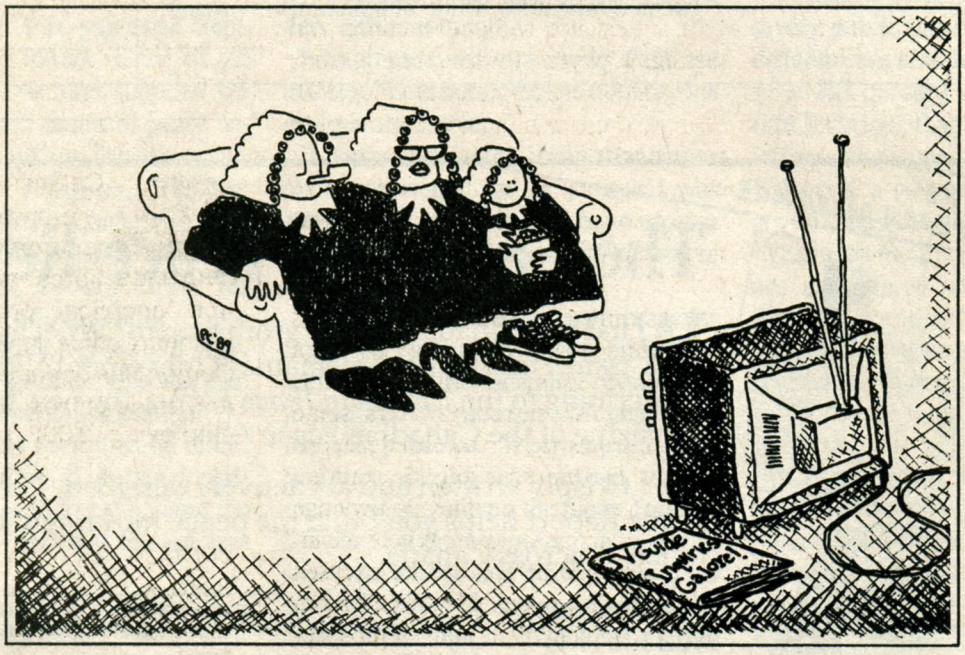
In the process, the public is being schooled and titillated, which meets the McLuhanist challenge that if you think there is a difference between education and entertainment, you don't know much about either.

As a result, Canadians are better informed and sensitized to the need for preventative action to combat the problems being so vividly portrayed in the proceedings, notably chemical abuse, racism in the justice system and the myth of the perfect priest.

Perhaps even more importantly, through the medium of community access television, the citizenry has been offered first hand insight into the inherent limitations of all fact-finding investigations, particularly the overwhelming difficulties presented by differing perceptions of so-called objective facts.

The best that can be expected of any investigative expedition is no more than logical integrity, procedural fairness and balanced commentary.

The power of judges in a judicial inquiry is restricted to fact-finding and the making of recommendations.



The inquiring judge writes a report and is done. It is then for others, notably governments, to act. Often they don't, as the shelves and shelves of volumes gathering dust so poignantly prove. Sometimes change does occur or action is taken, as in the cases of Donald Marshall or Susan Nelles, for example, but those are exceptional cases. Indeed, the cynic might argue that, for all the benefits of public disclosure, judicial inquiries, like their siblings, royal commissions, are simply mechanisms by which governments perpetually defer coming to grips with hard questions.

Perhaps for that reason, there is often criticism of the inquiry format. In Manitoba, for example, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry has been denounced repeatedly as being too expensive, taking too long, reaching into matters beyond its mandate and, even, for causing the psychiatric problems of witnesses and the suicide of a police officer whose conduct had been brought into question.

A telling criticism is that in most of the inquiries, particularly in Manitoba's Aboriginal Justice Inquiry and Newfoundland's inquiry into clerical misbehavior at Mount Cashel, longstanding constitutional rights of some individuals under suspicion are alleged to have been laid on the altar of sacrifice of the public's right to know what transpires in its midst.

No one argues with the use of the judicial inquiry to find and uncover systemic or structural wrongdoing, corruption or pervasive discrimination. But some observers, notably the lawyers of affected

clients, have argued that the widespread publication of inquiry proceedings jeopardizes their clients' rights both to a fair trial and to be able to mount a full and complete defence to any criminal charges that may be laid as a result of the inquiry process.

They argue that allegations of criminal behavior on the part of specific individuals should be examined according to the more traditional method of private, police investigation. Otherwise an accused's guilt is prejudged, they say, and the public is infected to the point that jurors cannot be found whose opinion has not been poisoned by widely reported public testimony at an inquiry. Moreover, they argue that the testimony itself, when taken in an inquiry, is inherently less reliable than that in a courtroom trial because normal legal protections, like the rule against hearsay evidence, are not observed in the inquiry process.

For example, in Manitoba, only one of the four men accused of having brutally raped and murdered young Helen Betty Osborn 20 years ago in the Pas has been convicted in a court of law. Yet, because of the inquiry, in the court of public opinion all four are clearly guilty. And, at Mount Cashel, it would be hard to find a Canadian today, let alone a resident of Newfoundland, in whose mind and heart the priests have not already been convicted.

The dilemma presented, therefore, is classic. In the age of television and mass media coverage, conflicts between public and private rights are inevitable. The public has a right to know and, in order to expose structural wrongdoing, the affairs of private individuals must be examined. On the other hand, a fundamental pillar of Anglo-Canadian democratic tradition is the presumption that we are innocent until proven guilty by the state, beyond a reasonable doubt, in a court of law. That principle implies due process and fundamental justice, litmus tests found wanting in inquiry proceedings.

On balance, for many reasons, the tension must be resolved in favor of the public judicial inquiry system. The educative value of public legal proceedings is overwhelmingly positive. There is much in Canadian society which requires the kind of systematic scrutiny offered by a judicial inquiry. Fact-finding is easier and less costly than in the real courts, even if it is somewhat less reliable. Broader societal issues can be examined. And, generations, raised on television, inevitably will have an insatiable thirst for easily accessible coverage.

When, as a result of inquiry proceedings, criminal charges are laid against individual persons, the courtroom process offers a number of safeguards ensuring a fair trial. Evidence taken at the inquiries cannot and should not be admitted directly into evidence without repetition and testing. Lawyers for accused persons have, and must continue to enjoy, full resort to cross examination and the right to present additional or contrary evidence. Judges, by their culture, are trained to exclude from their deliberations, information or lies which come to them from external sources.

The thorniest issue is finding jurors whose minds and spirits have not been contaminated by all the publicity. Canadian law currently offers some protection. Lawyers for accused persons do have a limited right to examine prospective jurors on their knowledge and belief about the case. Where a candidate fails, he or she will be excused from duty. However, there is much room for improvement. Questions of prospective jurors must now be reviewed by the judge before being asked and, often, must be submitted in writing. The constraints are overly restrictive. Because of widespread media coverage, defence lawyers must be given wider latitude and more freedom to question and challenge eligible jurors. Individual judges, hearing these cases, must develop a keener sensitivity to the problems presented by pre-trial publicity and must exercise their discretion more wisely so as to ensure that the resulting jury is not open to criticism for media-induced bias.

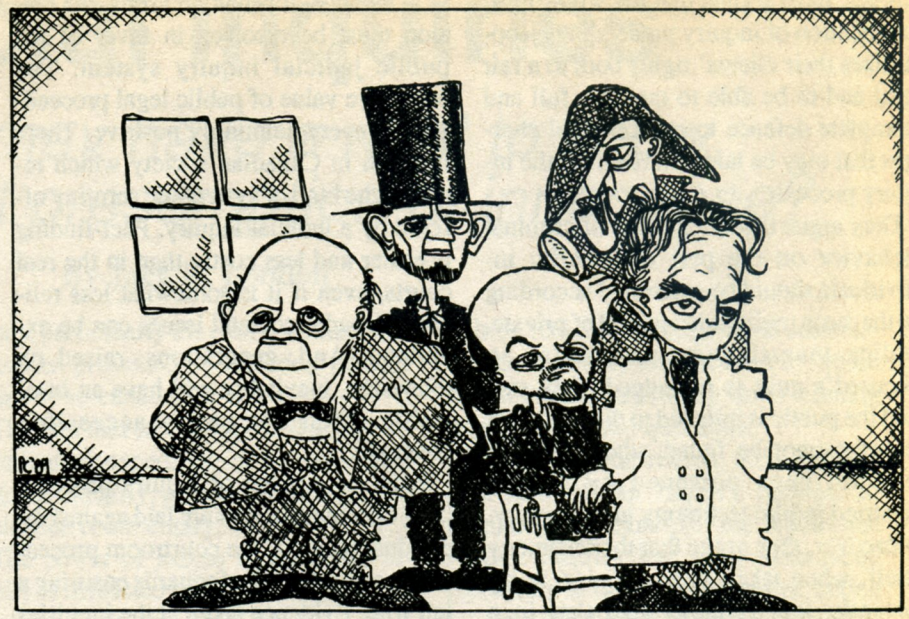
The virtue of any democracy is found always in its checks and balances. Absolutes are to be shunned. Properly appreciated, the judicial inquiry, tempered by appropriate courtroom safeguards, offers an important and viable mechanism by which the vices of a nation, and its authorities, can be subjected to stringent, but open, scrutiny and reform. That is a public right. It need not result in private wrong. ❑

Jack R. London, Q.C., is a professor of law at the University of Manitoba, a practicing lawyer, mediator and arbitrator and a well-known Canadian writer, broadcaster and commentator.

The power of the misquote

They Never Said It: A Book of Fake Quotes, Misquotes, and Misleading Attributions

by Paul F. Boller, Jr., and John George
Oxford University Press, 159 pp.



Reviewed by Harry Bruce

Trivia buffs won't need this book to tell them that in *Casablanca* Humphrey Bogart did not say, "Play it again, Sam." They already know the request came from Ingrid Bergman, the singer-pianist was Dooley Wilson, and the line was, "Play it, Sam. Play 'As Time Goes By.'"

It's also not news that Charles Boyer, in *Algiers,* never said to Hedy Lamarr, "Come with me to the Casbah."

Here are some other non-surprises from *They Never Said It:*

In none of Arthur Conan Doyle's stories about Sherlock Holmes does the hero ever say, "Elementary, my dear Watson." The Sherlock Holmes who did say it was Basil Rathbone, in a series of Hollywood films about Holmes in the 1930s and the 1940s.

In the play *The Mourning Bride,* William Congreve did not say, "Music hath charms to sooth the savage beast." He said, "Music hath charms to sooth a savage breast."

"Pride goeth before a fall" appears nowhere in the Bible. The sentence from Proverbs is, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."

In Winston Churchill's first speech to the British House of Commons after he became prime minister in 1940, he did not say, "I have nothing to offer but blood, sweat, and tears." Instead, he said, "I have nothing to offer but blood and toil, tears and sweat."

While I've known all this stuff for years, there's a lot in *They Never Said It* that I did not know. I did not know, for instance, that James Cagney never said, "You dirty rat!" I did not know there's not the slightest evidence that Abraham Lincoln said, "You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you can not fool all the people all the time."

Nor did I know just how slimy the American far right can get. The most interesting quotes in *They Never Said It* are all lies, outrageous statements that the right wing cooked up and then put in the mouths of communists, socialists, labor leaders, liberals, or indeed just about anyone they didn't like.

Consider the history of Gus Hall's strangled-to-death quote. He was general secretary of the American Communist Party, and in April 1961, *Pilgrim Torch,* run by a reactionary named Kenneth Goff, accused him of saying this:

"I dream of the hour when the last Congressman is strangled to death on the guts of the last preacher -- and since Christians like to sing about the blood, why not give them a little of it? Slit the throats of their children and drag them over the mourners' bench and the pulpit, and allow them to drown in their own blood, and then see whether they enjoy singing these hymns."

Hall's enemies insisted he made this terrible statement at a Communist convention in 1937, and again in 1961 at the funeral of Communist leader Eugene Dennis. They lied. Hall never said anything of the kind, and the quote was in fact an adaptation of something a French anti-Christian, Jean Meslier, put in his will in the 18th century.

Religious zealots, organizations as varied as the John Birch Society and the American Medical Association, assorted crazy billionaires and manufacturers, politicians as grubby as Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, and leaders as exalted as Nelson Rockefeller and Ronald Reagan have all put phony words in the mouth of Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin. *They Never Said It* observes, "In some American ultra-rightist circles Lenin comes close to being quoted as much as he is in the Soviet Union," and lists no fewer than 25 bogus Leninisms.

One of the sturdiest is this: "First, we will take eastern Europe, then the masses of Asia, then we will encircle the United States, which will be the last bastion of capitalism. We will not have to attack. It will fall like an overripe fruit into our hands."

The first person to trot this out as a statement by Lenin was probably Soviet defector Nicholas Goncharoff, while tes-

tifying before the Senate Internal Subcommittee in 1954. Scholars have been declaring it fake ever since, but it keeps coming back like a song. Ronald Reagan used it as recently as 1985.

Just last year, shortly before he left for a meeting in Moscow with Mikhail Gorbachev, Soviet journalists interviewed him at the White House, and one tried to nail him on the overripe fruit business.

Soviet journalist: "Soviet specialists, as far as I know, in the American press, and workers in the Library of Congress, qualified people, studied all the writings of Lenin and did not find one single similar quotation or something even close. Therefore, I'd like to ask you what you read from the works of Lenin, and where did you get the quotations you've used."

President Reagan: "Oh, my! I don't think I could recall and specify here and there. But, I've had a -- I'm old enough to have had a great interest in the Soviet Union. And I know that in the things I studied in college, when I was getting my own degree in economics and sociology, that the declarations of Karl Marx, for example -- that Karl Marx said your system, Communism, could only succeed when the whole world had become Communist. And so the goal had to be the one-world Communist state. Now, as I say, I can't recall all of the sources from which I gleaned this. And maybe some things have been interpreted differently in modern versions. But I know that Lenin expounded on that, and said that that must be the goal....For example, here, in our Government, we knew that Lenin had expressed part of the plan that involved Latin America and so forth. And the one line that sounded very ominous to us was when he said that: 'The last bastion of capitalism, the United States, would not have to be taken; it would fall into their outstretched hand like overripe fruit.' "

Asked to explain where he got his spurious Leninism, The Great Communicator squirms for a couple of hundred words, and ends up repeating it. For this single exquisite example of a supreme sleazeball on a roll, *They Never Said It* is worth its price of $19.95. ❑

Harry Bruce writes the column "All About Words" for the Montreal Gazette *and the* Ottawa Citizen. *He lives in Guysborough, N.S.*

Browser's paradise

Best Canadian Essays 1989

Edited by Douglas Fetherling
Fifth House, 278 pp.

Reviewed by Penny Williams

The essay has this in common with Canadian Identity: devotees seem unable to enjoy the practice of the thing without first worrying away at its theory. In *Best Canadian Essays 1989*, editor Douglas Fetherling gives us introductory theory plus his selection of 27 reasons to enjoy essays in practice. Curiously, but fortunately, the practice exceeds the theory.

Fetherling's definition of the essay is very narrow indeed:

"The essay is the instrument of independent journalism ... and mostly what distinguishes it from the article is the skill the writer has used in sneaking something of higher than average quality into the publication for which he or she is working... By finding the means to make quality acceptable to the editors and the readers, the writer scores a victory over mediocrity."

Let's walk past the blanket insult to editors and readers -- all of whom, apparently, despise and seek to protect themselves from quality. What about the definition? Is the essay limited to journalism? And, within those limits, is it distinguished from any other article only by superior craftsmanship?

Hating rhetorical questions, even those I ask myself, I checked *The Canadian Encyclopedia* and found a definition that seems a much better fit with the essays Fetherling has chosen to bring to our attention. "A brief, discursive piece of prose which develops a single theme from a personal point of view," it starts (and later states, in wonderful if unconscious cross-reference to Fetherling's definition, "in the second half of the 20th century the Canadian essay is dominated journalism...").

These essays indeed demonstrate the great power of a single theme, developed from a personal point of view. A number of them develop what might be called personal point of geography: Harry Bruce explores how his perceptions have followed his body east from Toronto to Nova Scotia. Carol Smart places herself in England, in Canada, ultimately in the rootlessness that is home to all expatriates. Elliot Halpern does a breathtaking study of the meaning of Hamilton, the quest for orientation ("knowledge of one's place in the world"). Rudy Wiebe melds geographic with cultural, historical and other orientations as he contemplates "Mad Trapper" Albert Johnson from a deeper, northern perspective.

Other essays revisit history more directly -- Silver Donald Cameron introduces us to Leon Trotsky being introduced to British justice in Amherst, Nova Scotia. The one disappointment in the collection is also historical: Elinor Kyte Senior's study of British military policy and practice, 1837-38 fits neither definition of essay, being neither journalism nor in any way personal.

But this is the only disappointment. What shines through overall is how well Fetherling has chosen. He has delivered

on his promise of browser's book of diverse topics and visions. Bob Fulford's light (but passionate) defence of his Underwood Rhythm Shift typewriter ... Margaret Atwood's passionate (but funny) account of trial by the Porn Patrol ... David MacDonald's palpably decent account of the continuum between his faith and his public service ... the pain of Claude Jutras' last years and the triumph of Rose Borris finally learning how to read ("it is hard to make people believe you can't read and write. In Toronto, It's awful."). Each essay its own voice.

But the book is also a collection, and the whole is more than the sum of its parts because -- the test of an editor -- the parts illuminate each other. Read George Grant on Simone Weil, and take more meaning from Robert Bringhurst on Canadian literature, or Robert Stewart on creativity. Bringhurst in turn bounces you back to Rick Salutin on free trade. The pity and terror of the Jutra piece connects to Elaine Johnston's description of rape: in each case the system failed the victim. And, feeling pity, reread Eamonn Callan on the moral status of pity.

Best of all, the collection pushes the reader to his or her own cross-references. I read David MacDonald's tribute to Dietrich Bonhoeffer and want to tell him about Canadian Oblate Maurice Lefebvre; Halpern pulls a switch in his Hamilton essay and the ending of John Fowler's book *The Maggot* jumps to mind; I overlay Catherine Pigott's Punjab account with my own recent conversation with a Sikh friend here in Canada ... you see? Viewed that way, Fetherling's lead essay (what else can we call it?) was the perfect introduction: it made me grab my encyclopedia, and enter the debate.

And that is the power, the magnet, of the essay. It says its own personal piece, in its own voice, by its own logic, and first thing you know, you're answering back. Nobody, I'm convinced, would be more delighted than Doug Fetherling -- indeed, he asks us to take our involvement one step further and nominate essays for the next edition in 1990. Forget what the man said, the book proves that in fact he knows readers welcome quality and, like his essayists, he trusts us to respond. ❑

Penny Williams is a Toronto writer, editor and translator. She was the program director of the magazine division of the 1989 Banff Publishing Workshop.

Peter Worthington, former deputy editor of the *Ottawa Sun*, has been replaced by **Don Hawkes**. Hawkes helped to launch the *Sun* when it began publication last year. Parliamentary correspondent **Rick Gibbons** has been appointed associate editor.

Peter Worthington

At the *Ottawa Citizen*, **Lynn McAuley** was appointed sports editor after a stint as sports columnist and feature writer.

Hugh Paterson was named business editor succeeding **Beth Bridges** who moved to the *Edmonton Journal*. **Jeff Heinrich** shifted from the *Citizen* reporting staff to the *Montreal Gazette*.

Don Hawkes

Tom Spears of the *Toronto Star* joined the *Citizen* as education reporter. **Maria Bohuslawski** switched from the *Winnipeg Free Press* to the *Citizen* reporting staff.

Angela Ferrante has left *Maclean's* for the position of chief administrative officer at The C.D.Howe Institute in Toronto. Former senior editor **Michael Benedict** has assumed her position as assistant managing editor.

At the *Montreal Gazette*, former "Living" editor **Ashok Chandwani** has been appointed to the position of senior news editor. **David Yates** replaced him, leaving his position as assistant city editor. The *Gazette* also has a new general assignment reporter, **Gayle Grin.**

Le Journal de Montreal has hired a new sports reporter, **Tom Lapointe**, who was formerly a sports reporter at *La Presse*.

Andre Trudelle, also a former *La Presse* sports reporter, is now the paper's new department head of sports. **Mario Roy** has been appointed department head of Arts, Books and Entertainment. He was a section editor in the same department. **Guy Pinard**, a former reporter, is now *La Presse*'s section editor of Living and Justice.

Francois Bourque, a municipal reporter at *Le Journal de Quebec*, is on leave to study journalism in Paris.

In Guelph, Ontario, the *Daily Mercury* has undergone a series of internal and external changes. **Mike Anderson**, former district editor, has left to assume the position of sports editor at the *Sudbury Star*. **Bonnie Pyke**, a nine-year veteran of district reporting, is replacing Anderson.

Also leaving is **Marg Boyd**, former Opinion page editor. Boyd has taken a position at the University of Guelph in public relations. City Hall reporter **Helen Gajewski** is taking Boyd's place. **Bernd Franke** is changing his desk job as well as his location. He was the city editor at the *Mercury*, and is now a copy editor at the *Ottawa Sun*. **Patricia Gillies**, former Lifestyles editor at the *Brampton Times*, is taking over his position.

A new city and education reporter has been appointed at the *Mercury*. Anne Bryan was previously a district reporter. Former summer student **Hilary Stead** is now an education reporter.

In St. Catharine's, **Shawn Berry** joins the staff at the *Standard* as a full time reporter. **Angela Murphy** has been appointed desk editor of the *Spectrum*, the

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Tom Cherrington died suddenly on October 6. Cherrington was well known in southern Ontario for his engaging style as a radio and television phone-in host. In addition to his 14 years with Hamilton's CHML radio, Cherrington also worked as a phone host for the city's TV station, CHCH from 1968 to 1971, and 1980 to 1988.

Radio news anchor **George Franks**, 55, died on September 17 after a 19-month battle with cancer. Franks was a national and local news anchor at CKO radio.

Journalist **Phil Teasdale**, 45, died at his home in Halifax on Sept. 14. Teasdale joined the *Toronto Star* in August, 1969. He worked as a copy editor, general reporter, beat reporter, and served in the Ottawa Bureau.

Del Bell, a former *Toronto Sun* associate editor died on Oct. 3 of a heart attack. Bell, 54, was a reporter and columnist for 25 years with the *London Free Press* before joining the staff at the *Sun*. He won the presitigious National Newspaper Award for investigative reporting and later went on to become the *Free Press*' Queen's Park bureau chief.

Lino DeMarchi, vice-president and assistant general manager of Thomson Newspaper Ltd., died of cancer at 56. DeMarchi started his newspaper career in the advertising department of the *Timmins Press* in 1955. Two years later, he moved to the *Sarnia Observer*, eventually becoming the paper's publisher. DeMarchi was appointed vice-president and assistant general manager of Thomson Newspapers in 1976.

George Bird, an award-winning photographer at The *Montreal Gazette*, died suddenly in November. He was 51. Over his 30-year career, he also worked at at the now-defunct *Montreal Star* and *Winnipeg Tribune*. In 1969, he won the Canadian Press Photo of the Year award for a picture of people looting a shop during a Montreal police strike. ❑

paper's family section. Murphy was a reporter for the Spectrum.

Further west, **Gillian Shaw**, former senior reporter at the *Vancouver Sun*, is now the business editor at the *Sun*.

In Saskatoon, **Richard Thomas** was named executive vice-president of the *Star-Phoenix*, moving from his post at the *Regina Leader Post*. **Ed Sebestyen** was appointed vice president of planning and corporate development.

In the newsroom, **Bob Strumm** was named sports editor. He will continue to write his sports column.

The *Temiskaming Speaker* has hired a new full time photographer-reporter, **Lee Malleau**. Malleau is a graduate of journalism from Cambrian College in Sudbury.

Rob Warner has left his position as editor of The *Napanee Beaver* and now is a reporter for The *Windsor Star*.

The *Edmonton Journal* has had a few changes in the newsroom. **Ray Wood** has returned to his post as business editor, while **Doug Swanson** has moved to news editor. **John Korobank** was named the new assistant sports editor. **Jeff Holivitsky** moved into the Entertainment editor's position, and **Bill Sass** has taken over Holivitsky's former position as Lifestyles editor.

The *Moose Jaw Times Herald* has hired **Abbie St. Rose** to replace **Rick McConnel** as city editor. McConnel has gone to the *Edmonton Journal* as a reporter. **Lisa Priest**, former police reporter, is now with the *Toronto Star*.

The *Brandon Sun* has hired a number of new reporters. **David Rider** and **Leah Bradish** are general reporters, and **Doug Lunney** and **Don Danton** have been hired as sports reporter.

The *Sun* has lost **Kevin Bell** to the Washington bureau of Thomson Newspapers Ltd., while **Jeffrey Lewis** has returned as a writer after some years away from the paper.

Also at the *Sun*, **Peter dalla-Vinci** moved from the agricultural beat to editor of the editorial page.

Juliette O'Neill

CBC radio and Southam news have both appointed correspondents to Moscow. **Jeannette Mathey** will be the new USSR reporter for CBC, and **Juliette O'Neill** will perform the same function for Southam.

Alvin Cader, former CBC radio news provincial affairs reporter in Montreal, is now one of CBC's national reporters on Parliament Hill.

Winnipeg's CKND TV has hired **Mark Millee** as a new weekend anchor. Millee is from CHAT in Medicine Hat.

Mike Pietrus is the new executive producer of CBKT-TV in Regina, replacing **Gary Fowlie**. CFRE-TV recently lost its noon news anchor, **Heather Russel**, to radio station Z99 in Regina.

Former CBO radio morning producer in Ottawa, **Heather Abbott**, has moved to CBC's "Morningside" in Toronto as a producer.

Loreen Pindera has moved from CBC radio news general assignment reporter in Winnipeg to the same position in Montreal.

At radio station CJAD in Montreal, **Jim Duff**, former editor and publisher of the *Montreal Daily News*, is replacing **Gordon Atkinson** as reader and commentator of the 6:00 PM news. Atkinson is now an Equality Party MNA in Quebec City. Former *Gazette* freelancer **Julia Matuski** is now doing weekend and overnight shifts at CJAD, and **Jack Finnagan** is doing weekend announcing. Finnagan formerly did afternoon drive shifts.

Melanie King has replaced Finnagan, and replacing her on the public affairs afternoon show is **Steve Walsh**. Walsh was a reporter and news announcer.

CBC television in Vancouver has a new current affairs department, headed by **Susan Rideout**, formerly of the CBC program "Monitor." **Mark Daily** of CBC Calgary is a reporter in the new department, and **David Paperny** is a producer.

Joining the station as a reporter is **Kelly McClughan**. McClughan is from CBC in Edmonton. **Susan Clancy**, from CBC Calgary is now a writer in Vancouver.

Obnoxious...

Media mini-baron **Conrad Black** talks about journalists in a recent interview in *The Financial Times* of London:

"Mr. Black accepts that journalists cannot be treated as just another unit of production and that even terribly unproductive journalists can be extremely valuable to readers.

'Some of them are temperamental, tiresome and nauseatingly ecccentric and simply just obnoxious but that has really nothing to do with it. They simply cannot be measured by that criterion,' says Conrad Black."

Elliot Shiff from CBC's "The Fifth Estate," has taken over a position as business reporter for CBC in Vancouver.

At CKO Radio in Vancouver, freelancer **Harly Kennedy** has been hired full-time as a news reporter.

At CBC radio in Ottawa, **Ellin Bessner**, public service reporter, has taken a one year leave of absence to freelance in Rome. **Laura Lynch** is taking Bessner's place.

Our mistake

The September/October edition of ShortTakes announced **Brian Goff's** new positon as host and producer of "Eye on Ottawa." The program was incorrectly identified as a CBC program. "Eye on Ottawa" is produced by CJOH.

At CBQ-FM in Thunder Bay, **Patsy Pehleman**, former producer of the morning show, "The Great North West," has become the executive producer of "Morningside" in Toronto. **Wendy Martin** is moving to Sydney, Nova Scotia, to work at CBC radio and television. **Kathy Leville**, former co-host of the afternoon show, "Voyage North", is travelling east as well to host a CBC afternoon radio show in St. John, New Brunswick.

Cindy Burgess has been hired as a reporter for CHEX TV in Peterborough. She is also a radio newscaster for CHEX radio once a week. Burgess used to work in Newmarket, at CKAN radio. Also at CHEX TV, **Dale Jackson** and **Carol Berset** have been hired as reporters and assistant producers. Jackson did freelance work for Kitchener Waterloo CKOC TV, and Berget made documentaries for CKVR TV in Barrie.

Rick Howe has replaced **Chuck Bridges** as news director at C100/CJCH radio in Halifax. **Doug Reynolds** is the new newsroom supervisor for CJCH, while **Peter Harrison** takes over the same position at the C100 affiliate.

Glennie Langile left C100 to join CBFT-TV in Halifax as a writer and broadcaster for the supper hour show. **Dan O'Connel** has become an editorial assistant and reporter, and **Paul Withers** is also a new reporter.

Larry Reid has left Kamloops to join radio CKCK's "Calgary Inside Out." Reid replaced **Ernest Grason**, who has joined the *Calgary Sun*'s weekly newspaper. **Joanne Hunter** was also added to the CKCK staff, as a reporter.

The Edmonton TV station CFAC appointed **Rick Castiglione** as anchor and reporter. Castiglione replaces **Steve Abraham**, who is moving south of the border to WTVJ in Miami.

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