content

for Canadian journalists

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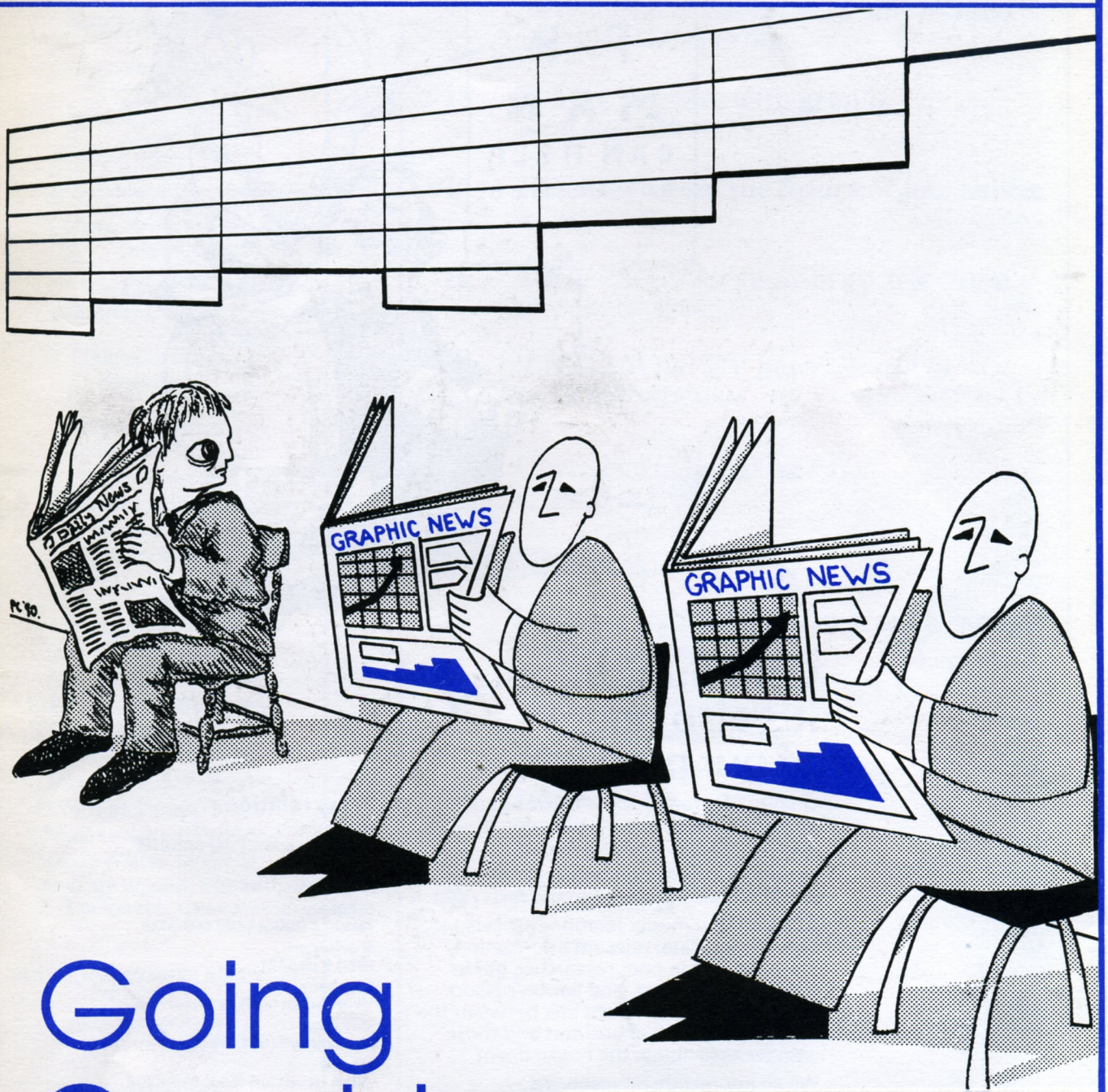
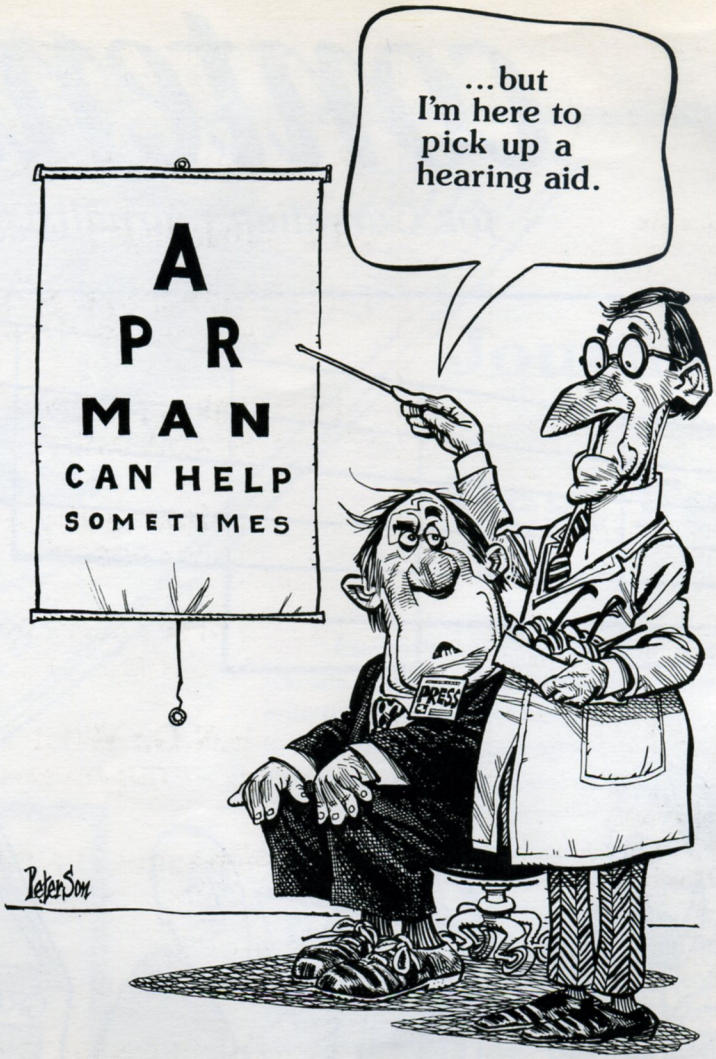
March/April 1990



Going Graphic



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Editor's Notebook

Newspapers and magazines in recent times have become enamored of information graphics — partly for hyping their layouts and partly to keep step with television. Carl Neustaedter expands on the lastest reaction of the industry to the debate over graphics. Alan Davis has examined the trends and found print organizations beset with errors and misjudgments, Graphics are good medicine, but they need care. The overall future of the newspaper concludes this segment.

Columnist George Bain monitors the current state of CBC-TV programming. Peter Trueman gives his assessment of E.N.G., CTV's television newsroom drama.

Global TV, after a three-way stock fight, comes forth under Izzy Asper with the new network ideas and programs. Greg Quill, *Toronto Star* TV and radio columnist, measures Global's future.

Canada's business press assumes a new face, as *The Financial Times* is swallowed by Thomson Newspapers.

The changing nature of *The Jerusalem Post*, after the takeover struggle by Conrad Black, is described by former *Post* writer Nomi Morris, now of the *Toronto Star.*

Ted Moser, former managing editor of *The Globe and Mail* and a publisher of a small weekly in an Southern Alberta, offers his assessment of Richard Doyle's *Hurly-Burly*, an account of Doyle's days at Canada's "national" newspaper. ❑

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Thank you!

In the last few months ***content*** magazine has sent out renewal notices to many of our readers. To all of you who have sent in renewal cheques we thank you. It is the continued support of you--our readers and our advertisers--that keeps ***content*** publishing the quality "content" you have come to expect.

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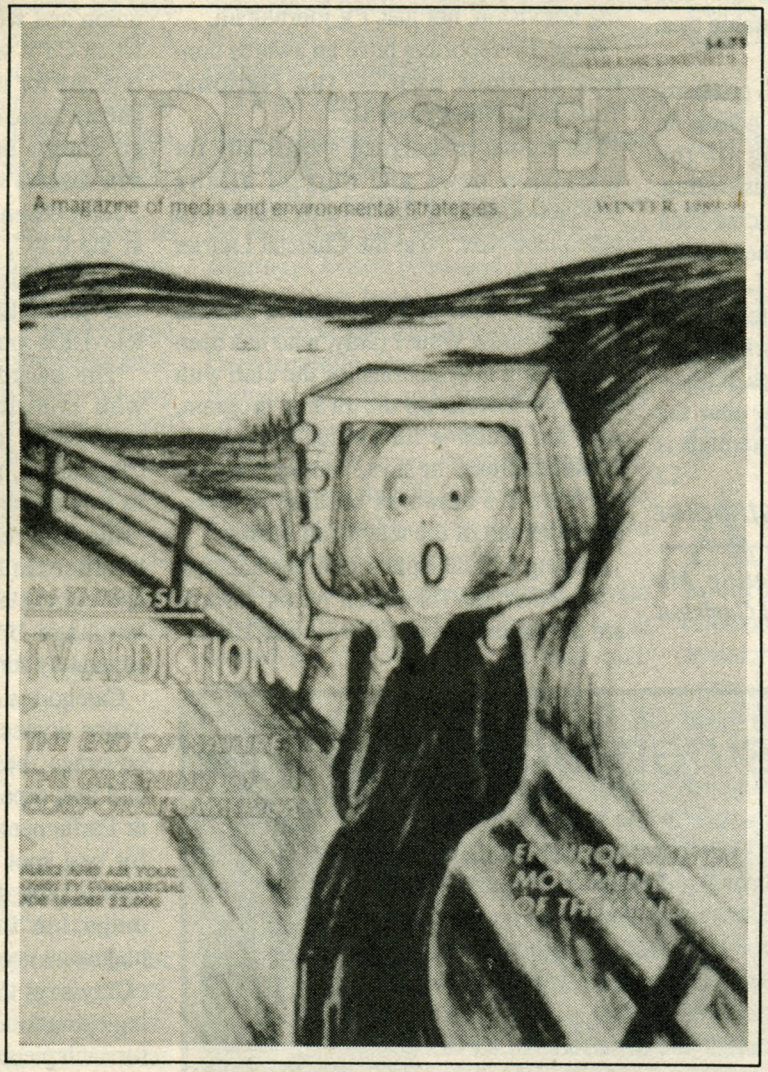
Who ya gonna call? Adbusters!

In 1988 Vancouver filmmaker Kalle Lasn produced a television commercial that accused the B.C. forest industry of over-logging forests — a rebuttal of that industry's "Forests Forever" commercials. When he tried to buy time to broadcast it on CBC television in Vancouver, the network refused, saying the subject was too controversial.

Lasn's request prompted the CBC to pull "Forests Forever" off the air, but Lasn did not want to let the issue drop. He and a dozen other filmmakers, artists and writers established The Media Foundation to further the cause of alternative advertising. The result is a new magazine, *Adbusters Quarterly.*

"When we were unable to buy time for our spot, we realized there was a freedom of speech issue to be fought," says Lasn, who is the co-publisher and editor of *Adbusters.*

"Why can't any group walk into a TV station, put their money on the table, and get air time? Why should social and environmental groups be relegated to waving placards and handing out leaflets?"



While the forest ad never made it to air, Lasn says the "storm of public protest" over the issue convinced the foundation there was a bigger market for its message. The foundation decided to expand its newsletter to a magazine format. The current issue, the second in the new format, runs 96 pages without advertising, and at $4.75 a copy, had a circulation of 11,000 copies.

The first two issues were distributed mainly on the West Coast, but *Adbusters* recently secured distributors for central Canada and the United States. The foundation hopes to attract advertising to cover the $20,000 it costs to produce each issue, but it now relies solely on donations, newsstand sales, and money from its 1,000 subscribers.

Adbusters' mission is to make people aware of the connection between the mass media and environmental degradation. Lasn says most advertising promotes rampant consumerism that contributes to pollution and the depletion of the world's resources.

"People don't like 12 minutes of consumption messages every hour on TV," he says. "We would like to see the 12 minutes filled with ads that sell ideas, not products."

The Admarket, a regular section in *Adbusters,* encourages organizations to create and air their own alternative commercials. The winter issue features ads about recycling, consumerism's adverse effects on the Third World, and deforestation. Readers are encouraged to donate money to produce and buy air time for the commercials.

The foundation has received $2,000 in donations for its campaign against TV addiction, called Tubeheads. It used the money to buy eight late-evening time slots on CBC Vancouver. The first commercial aired March 16.

"Eventually, we want to run the spots every weekday for a month in our target markets of Vancouver, Toronto, Los Angeles, Boston and New York," Lasn adds.

In February, the CBC approved three of the four Tubeheads commercials, but the committee that screens ads for private broadcasters has asked the foundation for further documentation to back up the claims in the ads. The commercials feature people trying to pull televisions off their heads, or sitting like zombies in front of their sets. The one spot rejected by the CBC was turned down because the broadcaster felt the closing message of the ad, "TV addiction — North America's number one mental health problem," was unsubstantiated.

John Davis, CBC's advertising standards manager, says that while he accepted the ads, he is concerned about the publicity tactics The Media Foundation used before the ads were approved. An *Adbusters* article, published before CBC's decision was made, claimed the network had already rejected Tubeheads. "Obviously, they are trying to create an issue around this," Davis says. "The publicity is probably more valuable than the commercials themselves."

"Our strategy is to get as much publicity as possible," says Lasn, who admits in retrospect that the wording of the Tubeheads press release was misleading.

But it was the desire to publicize their message that initially inspired the foundation to start *Adbusters*. Says Lasn: "If our spots are not broadcast on television, then at least the scripts will be printed and people would get used to the idea of alternative ads, and come to know that the marketplace of television commercials is not free." ❑

—Carl Neustaedter

Carl Neustaedter is completing his Master of Journalism degree at Carleton University.

TV news awards set up

For decades television journalists have watched from the sidelines as their colleagues in the print media honored their own through national awards competitions. Contests for TV journalists, on the other hand, tended to be tacked on to awards competitions honoring television, not just TV journalism.

Now, TV reporters have an awards contest all their own — the National Television News Awards.

The format is designed specifically for television news and current affairs production and the first awards dinner will take place Nov. 10 at the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa.

Ottawa's National Press Club is the host of the awards. Walter Gray, who has been conducting negotiations for the club with the TV networks on the awards program, says the deadline for entries is June 15. "This deadline," he says, "has been agreed upon by the networks because it represents the end of the television season."

Judging will take place over the summer

The National Television News Awards are the brainchild of Peter Rehak, the executive producer of CTV's current affairs program W5. Rehak says previous attempts at rewarding excellence in television journalism have been unsatisfactory.

For years, he says, there were the ACTRAs, but they were sponsored by a union and were no longer representative when CTV withdrew from the competition. As for the Geminis, broadcast journalism represents only a small section in an entertainment-based academy.(The new awards will not affect the Geminis.)

John Owen, director of television news at the CBC, says he's very enthusiastic about awards that recognize "not only the star journalists but the entire craft of television journalism."

"The awards will recognize all those who contribute to a good piece of television journalism, including the cameraman, the editor and the producer as well as the reporter."

National Television News Awards will be offered in 15 categories, covering news and current affairs. English and French-language broadcasters will compete separately for each award.

Categories include best spot news on a major domestic story, best spot foreign coverage, best photography and editing and best reporting about the government or Parliament. There will also be awards for best spot news in local and regional newscasts, best live or taped news magazine interview, and best news magazine investigative piece.

Gray says the awards are a self-financing operation. There's an entry fee of $30 for each piece, and there is no limit on the number of entries from each news organization. Unlike the National Newspaper Awards, there are no cash prizes for the National Television News Awards. Winners will receive a plaque.

As *content* goes to press, organizers of the awards dinner were working on the possibility of televising the event on Newsworld, the CBC all-news channel. Owen says he will make a strong recom-

content *has new chair*

Tim Lougheed, science writer in the public relations department of Queen's University in Kingston, Ont., is the new chair of the board of directors of Friends of *content*. He was elected by acclamation at the annual meeting of the board on Feb. 9 at Carleton University. Lougheed, who has served on the board since early 1989, succeeds John Marshall, who resigned for health reasons.

Other changes to the board include the departures of Kevin Cox and John Spears of Halifax and Carole MacDonald of Ottawa. Ron Verzuh of Ottawa and Murray Goldblatt, editor of the magazine, have been added to the board, and board member Anthony Westell is the new vice-chair. Diane Sims was elected treasurer of Friends of *content* and Bob Roth secretary. Sims and Roth are the magazine's business and advertising managers.

In honor of Marshall and his service to *content*, the board agreed to establish an annual prize for an unsung hero or heroine of journalism. ❑

Tim Lougheed

mendation to Newsworld head Joan Donaldson to broadcast the event.

Rehak says entries will be judged according to journalistic criteria, including the impact, content and clarity of a story. The judges will be journalists.

Rehak says a piece produced for CBC's *fifth estate* a few years ago on the tainted tuna scandal is a classic example of a story that would be rewarded by the new awards but was ignored by the Geminis. He says the piece did not win a Gemini because it was poorly produced, yet it had a tremendous impact on the country and almost brought the government down. It would be a sure winner in the new contest, he says.

The awards will be run by a board of governors, which is being assembled now. Gray says the board will be chaired by Bruce Phillips, former CTV reporter and spokesman for Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and now Canada's assistant privacy commissioner. Eight other members will be named from the English and French networks and the National Press Club. ❑

—Marie Lafaury

Marie Lafaury is completing the Master of Journalism program at Carleton University.

Networks challenge CRTC rule

On May 4, a hearing to decide the constitutionality of a CRTC regulation governing political coverage on television is expected to wrap up in a Toronto provincial court.

The hearing is determining the right of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission to regulate political content on television.

The case is particularly interesting since the regulation isn't being defended by either the commission or the Attorney General of Canada, but by an agent of the Green Party of Canada, Greg Vezina.

The hearing itself is the result of a court action taken against CBC, CTV and the Global Television Network by the Green Party in late May, 1988. The Greens allege that the networks violated Television Regulation No. 8, which guarantees that all political parties have some access to the television medium during elections.

In the last federal election's televised leaders' debate, only the leaders of the three major political parties were invited to attend. There are a total of seven registered federal political parties.

"All we wanted," explains Vezina, "is to either participate or be given equal time on another night."

The CRTC agreed there was a breach of the regulation and recommended that the Attorney General prosecute. He declined.

"They don't have to give any reason," explains Elizabeth Gilhooly of the Justice Department's Communications Legal Service. "It is my understanding that they only intervene at a higher court level."

The CRTC's own legal counsel, Bill Howard, says the CRTC didn't prosecute because "we believe it is the prerogative of the Justice Department."

This left the Greens to begin a private prosecution, paying the legal fees to defend the regulation out of their own pockets.

Vezina and the Greens have other complaints about the lack of news coverage of minor parties, except for the Reform Party of Canada.

"The airwaves are public property," Vezina says. "I think it's only reasonable that they be used for the benefit of all Canadians."

The three networks launched a constitutional challenge to the regulation, arguing that it infringed on their right of free speech and freedom of the press. The challenge has suspended the trial.

A constitutional ruling at the provincial court level will only have precedential weight at the lower court, but the wording of the judge's decision could lead to a lengthy appeal process.

"If the judgment focuses on how we enforce our regulations," explains Howard, "then it won't touch on our power to regulate."

The CRTC has sent Howard to Toronto where the Commission is now a party to the action.

"I may ask to speak to the case depending on how the hearing progresses," Howard says.

Vezina fears the networks want to eliminate all content regulations.

"This is all about who owns the airwaves, the public or the licence-holders," says Vezina. ❑

—Scott Whitfield

Scott Whitfield is completing a Master of Journalism degree at Carleton University.

Computerized access system criticized

A new computer system designed to co-ordinate the federal government's response to access to information requests has drawn criticism from some of the journalists and researchers who use it.

Some fear that the new system may block the release of information. Others say the easy availability of printouts from the system means that reporters may have to change the way they make requests if they are to maintain their competitive edge.

The Co-ordination of Access to Information Requests (CAIR) system was introduced in five government departments last August and has expanded to cover 38 departments and agencies. It now tracks 10,300 access requests, says Jocelyne Sabourin, an access worker with Supply and Services, the department responsible for setting up the system.

Access workers in individual departments or agencies use the system to find out whether a person filing an access to information request has made similar requests to several different places. If they discover multiple requests, they are en-

couraged to consult with access workers in other departments to "co-ordinate" the responses.

"I don't like the idea that some bureaucrat can be given the task of co-ordinating responses," says David Vienneau, the *Toronto Star's* legal affairs reporter who has made more than 300 access requests since the law came into effect in 1983.

Globe and Mail reporter Richard Cleroux says that in the past, reporters had a better chance of getting government information because departments have some discretion in deciding what to make public. Information withheld by one department based on its interpretation of the access law's exemptions might be released by another department which has a different view of the law.

Now, Cleroux says, "The lowest common denominator will determine the response."

Access expert Ken Rubin, a freelance researcher who has made hundreds of access requests and studied the effectiveness of the law, says the CAIR system is a "technological overlay to what already existed."

Under the old system access workers in different departments often consulted with each other to decide how to handle similar requests. As a result, he says, the tendency for the lowest common denominator to decide the result "has always been a problem."

Peter Gillis, chief of the Treasury Board's information policy group, confirms that access workers have long tried to co-ordinate their responses. He says there is nothing sinister in making sure that the government gives a consistent response to access requests. And he adds that Rubin and others have sometimes criticized the government for its lack of consistency.

For journalists trying to keep ahead of the competition, the CAIR system presents another problem.

Information in the system is available to the public. This includes a summary of the details of each request, as well as the date the request was received and the department that received it.

Some access workers will give away printouts of CAIR information informally; others want an official access request first. Gillis says the printouts are popular with journalists, who use them as a way of checking up on what their colleagues are investigating.

"It's tipping the hand of others on what you're after before the information is out," says Kirk Lapointe, a reporter with CBC Newsworld and a frequent filer of access to information requests.

This means some journalists may change the way they file requests, Lapointe says. He thinks they will word their requests in vague, loose terms, then fill in the details with a telephone call to the access worker.

"I've gone from being precise in order to explain myself to being vague in order to conceal myself," he says. ❑

—*Tom Onyshko*

Tom Onyshko, a graduate in law with a special interest in access to information issues, is enrolled in the Master of Journalism program at Carleton University.

MacPherson joins select ombudmen's club

On March 5, long-time *Ottawa Citizen* editor Bill MacPherson joined a very small group of Canadian newspaper employees when he began work as the *Citizen*'s first ombudsman.

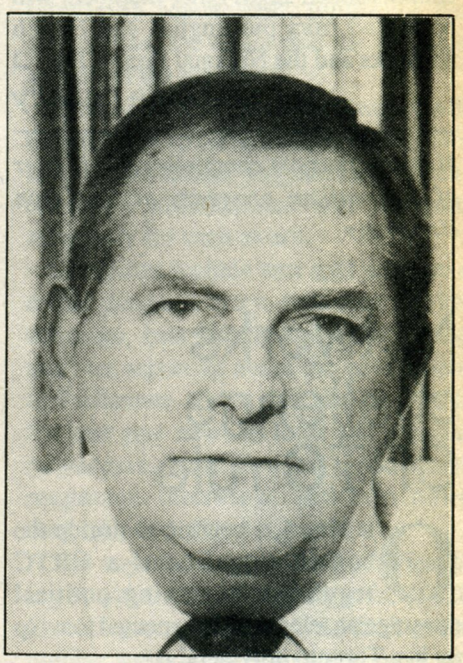
MacPherson is the seventh ombudsman to be named at a Canadian daily and his appointment represents a major shift in policy at the Southam-owned *Citizen*.

Former publisher Russ Mills, now president of Southam News, was against the idea of an ombudsman at the *Citizen*. But Clark Davey, who took over as publisher last summer, thinks it's a good idea.

The ombudsman's ability to deal with the public effectively at arm's length is important to a newspaper, Davey says. In addition, the record shows that newspapers with ombudsmen are less vulnerable to being taken to court or the Ontario Press Council by readers or sources.

Citizen Editor Gordon Fisher, in a March 3 column discussing MacPherson's appointment, notes, "We have appeared before the Ontario Press Council 13 times in nearly four years. Of the 12 council decisions, only four vindicated *The Citizen*."

Davey says an ombudsman won't remove "a reporter's or editor's responsibility to deal in the first instance with the public." To this end, *The Citizen* will publish the names and phone numbers of key editors and departments, including Fisher's home phone number.



Bill MacPherson

Davey says it took him some time to come around to the idea that an ombudsman could be good for a newspaper. When he was managing editor of *The*

Globe and Mail he opposed having someone between the public and the newsroom to resolve complaints.

"I felt the people at *The Globe* were able to deal effectively with the public," he says. But he changed his mind after becoming publisher of the *Montreal Gazette* where there was an ombudsman already in place. While at the *Gazette*, Davey had a high profile in the community, which he says made him sympathetic to people who complained about being misquoted or misrepresented by the media.

MacPherson, 62, says although few dailies have ombudsmen, appointing one is a progressive step. "Everybody from the publisher down at the majority of newspapers says, 'I don't need an ombudsman. I'll answer to the public myself.'"

MacPherson, who has been with the *Citizen* since 1962, will write a weekly column about his work.

He will be responsible for publishing all necessary corrections and clarifications in the paper. In the last year, the *Citizen* published 298 corrections, editor's notes or clarifications.

"These corrections don't make me happy, I'm embarrassed about them," Davey says. "The amazing thing to me is not that we do so many things wrong. It's that we do so many things right."

MacPherson says that in his first week on the job he received about 50 phone calls or letters of complaints from readers about everything from the paper's news values to the comics page. He expects the number of complaints to slowly increase as readers learn they have an ally at the paper.

MacPherson is free of all editorial control and answerable only to the publisher. He adds he's prepared to become an unpopular figure in the newsroom. "After a while when you've had to reprimand, even mildly, the newspaper, people tend to turn away from you in the newsroom." ❑

—Chethan Lakshman

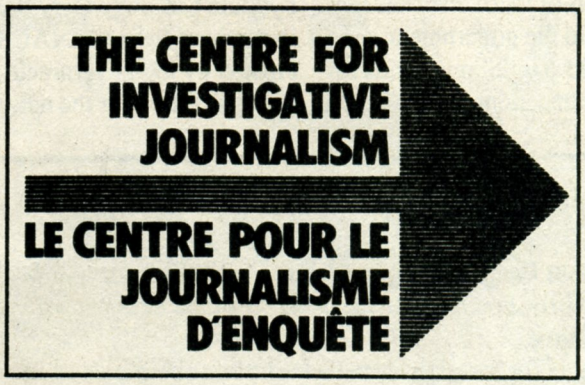
Chethan Lakshman is finishing his Bachelor of Journalism degree at Carleton University.

What's in a name? CIJ starts debate anew

The Canadian Association of Journalists.

That's the name some members of the Centre for Investigative Journalism want to see on that association's front door. And if CIJ treasurer and past-president Don McGillivray has his way, it will happen at the June convention in Winnipeg.

"It's an issue that has been kicking around for a few years," says McGillivray, a columnist with Southam News.



He believes that while the group has not lost its edge in the world of hard-nosed reporting, a new name is needed to keep the association abreast of the diversity of its membership.

The name change was endorsed in an 11-3 vote by the CIJ board Jan. 14 and recommended to the convention. The motion approved by the board noted, however, that the original and current objectives of promoting investigative journalism should be maintained.

McGillivray says the problem with the current name is that some potential members think it's exclusive. "I think there's reason to have an organization of journalists that includes all types," he says.

McGillivray adds that with a larger mandate, the group could more effectively make presentations to government on matters affecting the news media.

But *Montreal Gazette* editorial writer Edie Austin, who thinks the current name should stick, says it's wrong to assume that the term "investigative" applies only to journalists who spend months poring over secret documents.

"All journalists, no matter how junior, should take an investigative philosophy to work," says Austin, who is also a CIJ board member. "It's important to have a word in the (group's) name that conveys a sense of journalistic values."

Changing the name would mean altering the CIJ's constitution. That requires a two-thirds majority vote from a quorum of 10 per cent of the membership.

The organization first met in Montreal 12 years ago after two journalists realized they had doubled up on work that could have been carried out cooperatively, says John Stevens, CIJ executive director.

He says the association is aimed at "journalists helping journalists become better journalists." The organization does this in a number of ways, including organizing seminars on issues facing the profession, sponsoring an awards competition and organizing an annual convention.

McGillivray says the name change issue was to be discussed about four years ago at a meeting that didn't draw a quorum. "There was a lot of opposition to the idea then, but things seem to have changed," he says. "I think this is likely to be accepted by the members." The motion will be put to a vote June 2. ❑

—Tina Reilly

Tina Reilly is a staff writer with the Ottawa Citizen.

Cuts to native programs spark protests

Protests against federal funding cuts to the native press and native community broadcasting are slowly getting off the ground.

Rob Belfry, executive director of the National Aboriginal Communications Society (NACS), says the native community is beginning to organize protest on both a regional and national basis. Meanwhile, the Centre for Investigative Journalism has publicly condemned the cuts and the association representing directors of schools of journalism has sent a letter of protest to the government.

Approximately $5.6 million in funds for the Native Communications Program and the Northern Native Broadcasting Access Program were lost when Michael Wilson brought down his budget February 20.

The federal funds were the only source of money for 12 newspapers. The budget cuts will also eliminate the maintenance budgets for 90 native radio broadcasters. They can continue operating as long as their transmitters work, but if the equipment breaks down they'll be off the air.

Belfry says protests against the cuts have been slow off the mark because of delays by State Secretary Gery Weiner in releasing exact figures. NACS, which was created by the government as an umbrella organization for the native press, didn't receive a budget breakdown until two weeks after budget day.

"They've been doing their best to keep a lid on this," Belfry says. "Weiner's being tight-lipped on specifics and saying that the native budget (overall) went up."

Belfry is also tight-lipped. He won't say much about what NACS plans to do to protest the cuts, since he doesn't want to tip the native community's hand.

Support for native Canadian journalism is also being organized outside of the native community.

On March 12, the CIJ released a letter to the prime minister saying the cuts mean many native newspapers will have to shut down, "effectively silencing an important voice for native Canadians...."

Peter Desbarats, Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of Western Ontario, sent a letter of protest on behalf of the Association of Directors of Journalism Programs In Canadian Universities.

But as Desbarats concedes, there is little he or the journalism faculties can do beyond making public statements. "Financially, there is nothing we can do, and that, of course, is where they need immediate help," Desbarats says. ❑

—Scott Whitfield

Scott Whitfield is a Master of Journalism student at Carleton University.

CP establishes native scholarship

The Canadian Press has begun taking applications for a new scholarship in honor of Gillis Purcell, general manager of the national wire service for almost 25 years.

The scholarship is for a native Canadian who has completed at least one year of university and is studying or planning to study journalism.

The winner will receive a $4,000 scholarship and the offer of a summer job with the company, says Norman Graham, manager of employee relations for CP.

Graham says the scholarship was approved by the CP board of directors in 1988 to honor the memory of Purcell, who was general manager of the company from 1945 to 1969. Purcell, known to a generation of Canadian reporters and editors simply by the initials GP, died in the fall of 1987.

The winner of the first Gil Purcell Memorial Journalism Scholarship for Native Canadians will be chosen by the end of July.

Drawing the News

Information graphics are worth a thousand words. Sometimes.

by Carl Neustaedter

When *USA Today* hit the newsstands with a splash of color and graphics in 1982, newspapers around the world took a fresh look at how they were presenting the news. Whether or not they liked *USA Today*'s controversial style, many editors saw the potential for communicating information in a more visual and exciting fashion.

Until then, the term 'informational graphics' was virtually unknown. But *USA Today* and other groundbreaking papers showed that some subjects could be better explained using maps, charts, graphs

diagrams. But at the same time they gave informational graphics a bad name by producing a lot of gratuitous, over-decorated, and meaningless graphics.

The quality of informational graphics has since improved, and graphics have become a fixture in many newspapers, especially in the United States. Canadian papers have been experimenting with graphics, too. Stories now include maps to show us where Khazakstan and Azerbaijan are. Full-color diagrams explain how Toronto's SkyDome opens and closes. The business section is crisscrossed with charts and graphs explaining how the stock market performed, and how the GST might affect retail sales.

But as the use of graphics rises — and editors agree they are not just a passing fad — questions still remain about their quality and usefulness. How do readers react to them? How are they affecting, and affected by, newsroom practices?

Informational graphics must be seen as a major element of the trend among newspapers to become more "reader friendly" as circulation dwindles or stagnates in most major markets. Studies show that readers vary widely in the ways they read newspapers. Some start with cutlines, others with headlines, photos, or leads, and so on. Today's newspaper designers say this necessitates giving readers as many "points of entry" to a story as possible. The traditional inverted-pyramid news story is but one of these.

To this end, summary decks, at-a-glance fact boxes, chapter headings, indexes, and icon-like story identifiers are some of the new techniques creeping on to the front page along with informational graphics.

The London Free Press decided to redesign using some of these new ideas, and immediately caused a storm of controversy. The American consultant who did the redesign, Robert Lockwood, commented later that Canada has one of the most conservative newspaper communities in the world.

Lockwood shifted the entire editorial process away from reporters and writers in favor of editors. Only editors, he says, can balance the different modes of communication.

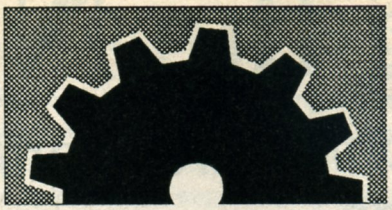
But most papers are adopting informational graphics in an *ad hoc* approach, which is causing headaches for editors, artists, and reporters alike.

Artists complain that they are not asked until the last minute to produce graphics for a story that had been in the works for weeks. It's no wonder, they say, that they are criticized for low quality work.

Reporters complain that graphics people are forever badgering them for information and wasting their valuable time. Moreover, they see graphics as competition for space in the restricted news-hole.

Editors who have worked most of their lives in the word world often find it hard to adjust to thinking visually. More importantly, they find it difficult to judge the quality or newsworthiness of a graphic.

Worse, many editors who don't understand the informational value of graphics see them as a quick and colorful fix to sagging circulation and boring grey pages. They often let the graphics lead the information, rather than the other way around.

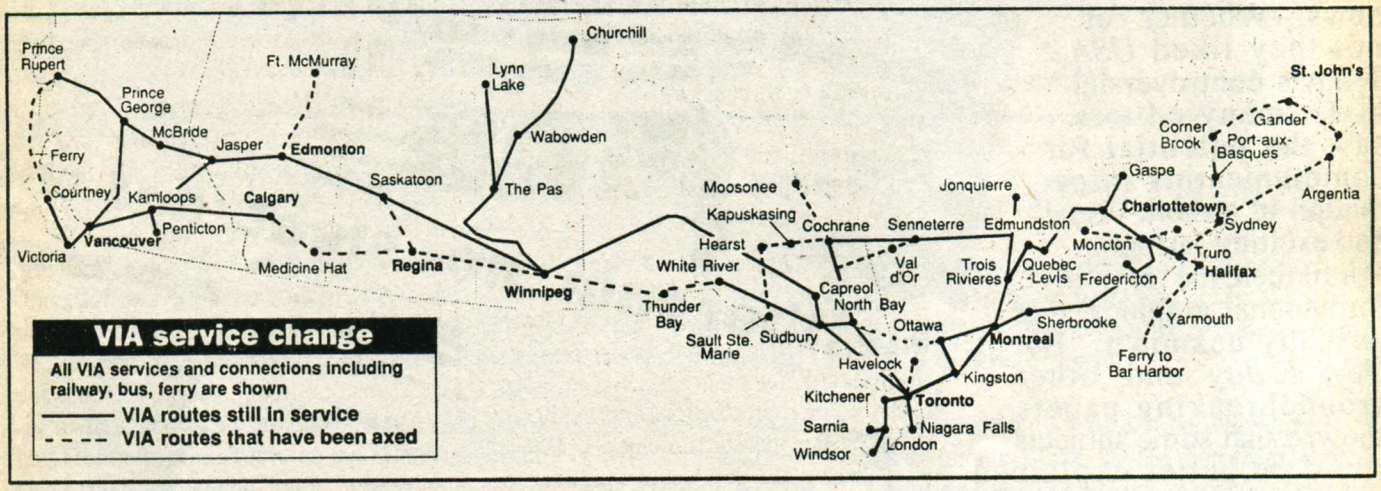


REMAKING MEXICO

In power since December, 1988, the administration of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari has committed itself to a radical restructuring of Mexico's closed economy, so far with mixed success.

PART 1

The helpful . . .

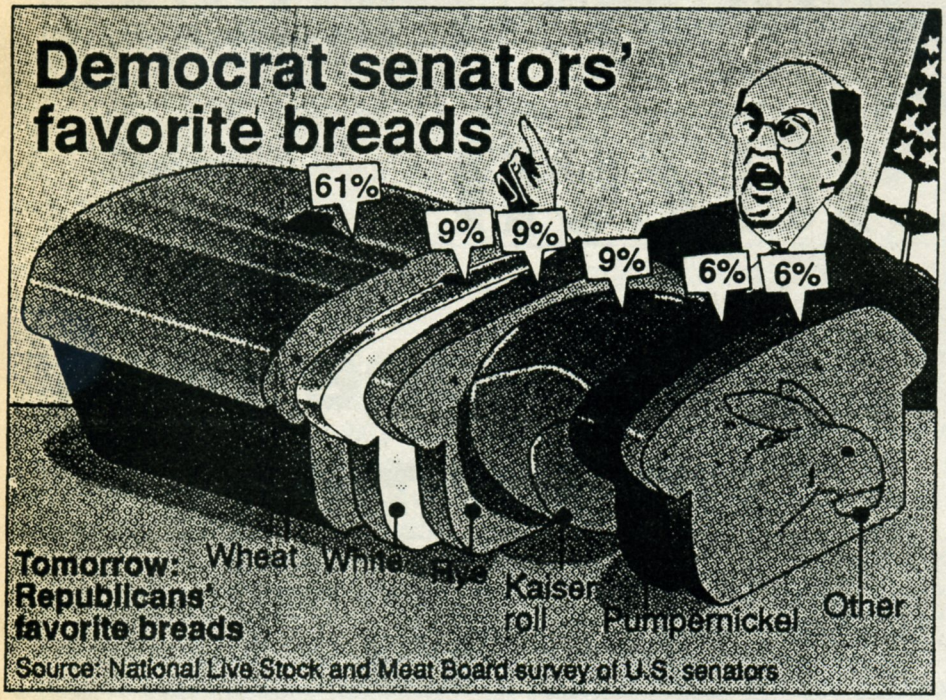


On the eve of cuts to VIA Rail, the Toronto Star used this graphic to help explain a complex issue

. . . and the banal

USA SNAPSHOTS

A look at statistics that shape our lives



Time magazine graphics director Nigel Holmes' favorite bad graphic

The solution to these problems lies in establishing a graphics philosophy and set procedures to be followed by all newsroom staff, says George Rorick. Rorick has set up the graphics departments of USA Today, the Detroit News, the St. Petersburg Times, among others, and now heads the Knight-Ridder/Tribune News graphics network.

Rorick says newspapers should treat graphics as an equal to the news desk, not as a service department.

Graphics advocates have come up with a number of solutions to these newsroom headaches:

- Graphics editors should have the same clout as news editors;
- Graphics people should be involved from the inception of the newsgathering process by attending daily news budget meetings and advance planning meetings;
- Researchers and graphics reporters should be hired to gather information specially for the graphics department;
- Graphics request forms should be mandatory;
- Graphics should be seen by editors as they are produced to ensure accuracy and quality.

Graphics editors say that reporters should not worry about losing word space to graphics. By taking statistical and locational information out of the text, the reporter has more room to get to the meat of the story. By helping to write the concise copy needed for graphics and fact boxes, the reporter can get a clearer idea of the story.

Better and faster graphics computers, better color reproduction, and the desire to increase readership among people who were raised on the visual language of

Southam starting graphics network

Growing demand by Southam newspapers for information graphics has prompted the chain's news service to start its own graphics network. Southam News Graphics will produce news graphics in Ottawa, and will edit and redistribute graphics from member papers. Network editor Rob Ludlow says the service will make its debut in early June.

Southam's will be the second network in Canada. The Canadian Press started the country's first network last summer. Graphics networks, which allow papers to share and buy graphics via computer, were first established in the United States by AP, Knight-Ridder, and the New York Times service, among others.

Graphics are transmitted digitally, allowing subscriber papers to manipulate the size and content of network graphics for local needs. Subscribers also have instant access to thousands of images stored by the networks.

Most Canadian dailies already subscribe to one or more of the American networks, but have had no source for graphics for national stories. The CP graphics network has received mixed reviews for its efforts to fill this need. Some graphics editors have criticized CP's work as low in quality, and blame the problems on the limited resources and large demands CP has allocated for the graphics network.

Southam News Graphics will serve 22 subscribers with an editor, two artists, a researcher, an image library, and the contributions of Southam graphics desks across the country.

New staff, new equipment, training, and buying time on the PressLink computer network add up to an investment estimated at several hundreds of thousands of dollars. Ludlow credits the growing awareness and potential of infographics among Southam editors and management for the commitment. ❑

Suns, flags and maps...

$150-million upgrade set for 'killer' Hwy. 17
No Queensway construction until July
B1

THE GST
Wilson gets an earful A3

THE OTTAWA Citizen

LOW -17, HIGH -5

FINAL EDITION TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 1990 50 CENTS/$2.50 WEEKLY DELIVERED

Afghan coup thwarted
Defence minister reported on run

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) — The Afghan defence minister today tried to overthrow the Soviet-backed government in Kabul today but failed, Kabul radio said.

There were reports of fighting at Kabul airport and a bombing raid on the palace of President Najibullah.

The broadcast said Defence Minister Shah Nawaz Tanai conspired with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the leader of a major Pakistan-based guerrilla group fighting to topple Najibullah.

The radio later broadcast a speech by Politburo member Mohammad Aslam Watanjar, who said he was replacing Tanai as defence minister.

The radio said Tanai escaped, and security forces were searching for him and his backers.

Najibullah has been president since 1986. There has been a civil war in the country since his People's Democratic party of Afghanistan seized power in a 1978 coup.

U.S.S.R
Kabul
Jalalabad
AFGHANISTAN
PAKISTAN
INDIA
MAP AREA

Refugee plan in turmoil

By Iain Hunter
Citizen national staff

The first step in the government's controversial refugee backlog clearance program has been ruled illegal by a Federal Court judge.

Immigration lawyers said the judgment Monday by Associate Chief Justice James Jerome means the entire program, already well behind schedule and over budget, has been dealt a

What the ruling means

■ BACKLOG: An estimated 100,000 claimants awaiting a hearing can no longer be processed under the special program set up last year.
■ DEPORTED: Those claimants who have been rejected and deported can return to Canada and get another hearing on grounds they were unfairly dealt with.

Minister Barbara McDougall last criteria immigration officers must

Child

LENIN GETS THE HOOK

Use of a number of visual devices makes for a busy front page

television have combined to impel newspapers to use a more visual approach. Some research has been conducted into how well graphics are done, but only now are studies being done to gauge whether or not readers like or even understand the graphics they see.

Preliminary results of a study by University of Florida professor Pegie Stark found that readers remembered a story more accurately if it was accompanied by a graphic and a photo.

Research aside, informational graphics have been criticized for being overdecorated, uninformative, confusing, gratuitous and even misleading. But as graphics gain credibility and acceptance, those who produce them are learning to be more careful and responsible.

Mario Garcia, a noted designer who recently redesigned the *Montreal Gazette*, says graphics should be very simple and only include three or four basic elements. He is disturbed by some of the 'mega-graphics' that have appeared in many newspapers.

Mega-graphics often take a full-page to explain how something works, like a volcano, or to provide an overview of a situation such as in the Russian republics. They contain block after block of information, often at random, with no starting or ending point to lead the reader as a word story does.

For Canadian newspapers, being a few years behind in the graphics explosion means skipping the era of overkill that occurred in the United States in the wake of *USA Today*.

But the battle to produce quality graphics is far from over, and one of the biggest problems for newspapers is finding people skilled in graphics *and* journalism. The last decade has spawned new careers with titles like graphics journalist and graphics reporter. But journalism schools are slow to pick up on the trend, and few pay any attention to visual communication. Only one North American journalism school, at the University of Florida, offers a course about informational graphics. A handful of others, but none in Canada, cover the topic in other courses.

Stark, who teaches the U of Florida course, suggests that in every reporting course students should be required to suggest an idea for a graphic along with their stories.

Perhaps editors should ask the same of their reporters. ❑

Carl Neustaedter is a graduate student in journalism at Carleton University specializing in the use of graphics in the print media.

Taking liberties

Editors don't bring same sense of literacy to graphs as they do the printed word

by Alan Davis

Publications that would never print ungrammatical, dishonest or unintelligible prose proudly display graphs that are misleading, distorted or hard to read. These graphs reveal a disturbing ignorance of graphing fundamentals among designers and editors.

That faulty graphs frequently appear in print does not imply that graphs are inherently unsuitable for the popular press. On the contrary, well-designed graphs may communicate more effectively than text or tables. However, because graphs can create a powerful visual impression of data, they demand thought and careful preparation.

Some graphs support the text, offering additional detail. Striking design or dramatic data can make a graph an attention-grabber, much as a headline or photograph. Of course a graph may simply be the best way to present data or reveal underlying relationships.

Graphs can also set the tone of a publication. For some newspapers and magazines, such as *The London Free Press*, graphs are part of a shift towards a more visual way of presenting information.

Finally, graphs provide a medium for some designers and publications to show off their creative flair, often without sufficient regard for either the data or the reader.

Graphs come in a range of styles. At one extreme is the *USA Today* approach: cartoon-like graphs that present little information in a space filled mainly by decoration. Artists at *USA Today* take pains to use stylized human figures and common objects in place of simple lines and shapes. The data are often difficult to distinguish from the decoration.

The work of *Time Magazine*'s influential Nigel Holmes is in the same vein. In a graph showing "monstrous costs," Holmes used the long pointed teeth of a fanciful monster to represent U.S. election campaign expenditures. Holmes leads a course in graphing at the Rhode Island School of Design (sponsored by the Society of Newspaper Designers) and has published a book that advocates heavy decoration of graphs.

Just as a good journalist can write a complex story in simple and direct language, a graph designer can use a simple design to depict complex data. Instead, many use complex design to present simple data. Graphs in *The Economist* exemplify simple, effective design. They are undecorated and compact, neither confusing nor misleading readers, and never making a story look like it belongs in a comic book.

Effort devoted to excessive decoration may be at the expense of care and accuracy, leading to errors. The decoration may then obscure the mistakes as well as the data. Nevertheless, even undecorated graphs with serious distortions get published.

Plotting errors are the most basic form of distortion in a graph. For example, a graph **(Diagram A)** in *Maclean's* showed increasing house prices. The latest figures were for the **middle** of 1988, but were plotted as if they corresponded to the **end** of the year, cutting the slope of the curve in half for the most recent period and masking a significant acceleration of prices.

An illustration **(Diagram C)** in the July 14, 1989 *Toronto Star* purported to show how estimated completion costs of Toronto's SkyDome had skyrocketed. A jagged line rising at roughly 45 degrees connected 11 dates and costs (in $ millions), giving the false impression of a generally steady increase. Lack of any consistent scale rendered every slope along the line meaningless. For example,the $7 million per year growth rate to 1983 appeared about the same as the $125 million rate after May 1987, which is 18 times greater.The "graph" was really nothing more than a list of dates and costs with an arbitrary and misleading line through it.

In the graphs of house prices, volunteerism and SkyDome costs, proper design and plotting would have strengthened the writer's point. A journalist whose thesis is weakened by poor

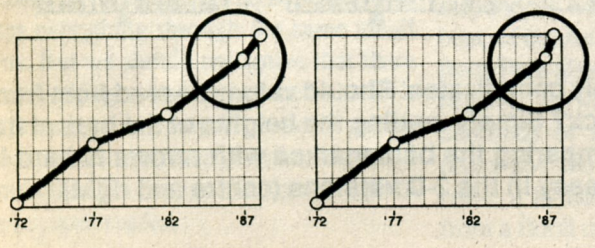


Diagram A

A simple plotting error (left) masks the true acceleration of prices. (Based on *Maclean's*, August 15, 1988). Even when plotted correctly, a graph's design may distort the visual impression of the data. Graphs with non-zero baselines distort by exaggerating the apparent ratio of larger entries to smaller ones (if the baseline is greater than zero)

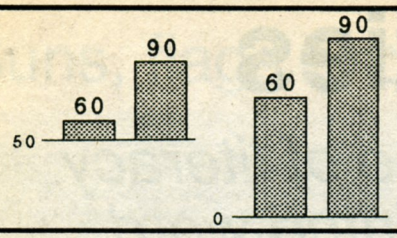


Diagram B

The non-zero baseline on the left exaggerates the apparent ratio of the heights. The true ratio is 1.5 to 1 (right) but a baseline of 50 (left) makes the ratio look like 4 to 1.

graphing has every right to be annoyed at the artists and editors responsible. Since graphing errors frequently blunt a story's point, the problem is not in deliberate distortion but rather insufficient skill,knowledge or care.

Many graphing errors are easy to recognize and avoid. A common temptation is adding an unnecessary third dimension to a graph. The 3-D effect can create ambiguity about how to read data against scales and can make comparisons difficult. **(Diagram D)**

The popularity of 3-D graphs traces in part to software that makes drawing an extra dimension easy. Another factor could be that some editors insist on flashier graphs without appreciating the implications for the reader.

Grouping graphs increases the demands on designers and editors. An effective group of graphs facilitates comparisons. Colours or shading should retain their meanings throughout. Ideally, scales should be consistent, although this is not always feasible. Proportionate changes should be comparable from graph to graph; for example, a 40 per cent change in a graph of supplies and a similar change in an adjacent graph of costs ought to look equally significant. Without special care, visual comparisons become almost impossible. That is ironic, since a primary purpose of graphs is to allow for comparisons that are visual as opposed to numeric.

Not all types of graphs lend themselves to comparisons. Groups of pie charts should never be used to compare data or show trends. Slices do not line up; moreover, keys and labels become confusing. Stacked bar charts are better.

Business Week often groups graphs, placing each beneath one part of a multipart headline such as: As Oil Supplies Build...Oil Prices Lose Ground (September 26, 1988). Sometimes the graphs cover different periods; in the pair under this headline the first covered two years, the second only six months. Visual and verbal cues implied that the graphs coincided, and that visually super-imposing them would be meaningful. This kind of deception ought not to be tolerated.

Editors and publishers must ensure that graphs are honest and readily understood. A key first step is to recognize the issue as important. The next step is to find good guidelines and share them with not only designers but also editors and writers. Some questionable advice has been published, but several good books and articles are available, notably E.R. Tufte, *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*, and H. Wainer, "How to Display Data Badly," *American Statistician*, May 1984. By understanding the fundamentals of good graphing, wirters, editors and designers can capitalize on the power of graphs and improve the quality of their publications. ❑

Alan Davis has written on the use of graphs and has presented seminars to students, journalists and designers.

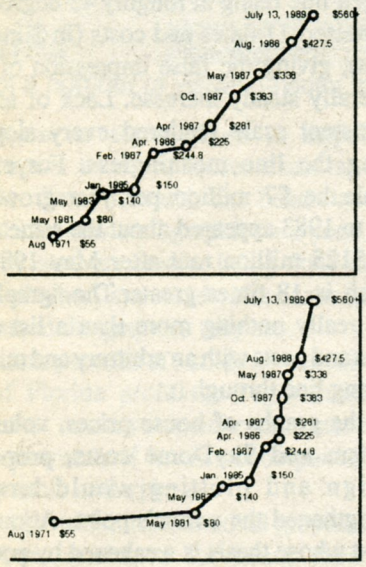


Diagram C

The meaningless curve that was published (top) lacked any consistent scale and distorted the growth. The correctly scaled curve (bottom) looks very different. (Based on the *Toronto Star*, July 14, 1989)

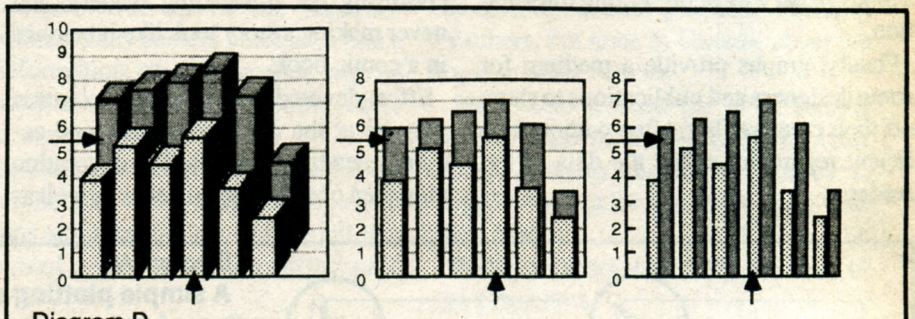


Diagram D

The 3-D effect merely complicates. Should values be read from front of the bars or the back? Simply reading the heights of the bars at the back is difficult. Comparing the bars marked with arrows is hard in the 3-D graph (left), easy in the 2-D versions (centre and right).

The newspaper's future

by Jay Rosen

My topic is the future of the newspaper, but I have no marketing studies, census data or computer projections to present. I offer instead some ideas about the kind of environment in which the newspaper of the future may flourish. Journalists have some ability to shape such an environment, and it is to that ability that I address myself.

My first suggestion has to do with information. Is it true that what the newspaper does is provide information? In the future, it will be less true. All kinds of information will be implanted in people's minds by computers, television, and an even more omnipresent media environment. Information will be atmosphere in which people live.

Increasingly, then, the newspaper's job will be to reduce information, to cut through the clutter and isolate the important facts. A good example of this is a typical service piece, like "The 10 best steak houses in Des Moines," which reduces what economists call "the search costs" in looking for a good steak.

Of course, the value of good service pieces is already well known. But there are other ways of reducing information and making the newspaper more valuable to readers.

One simple-minded way of reducing information is a conspiracy theory. Conspiracy theories often appeal to people because they cut down on the number of facts that need to be regarded as significant. Fixed ideologies do the same. It is easy to ridicule the true believer, who sees everything through the same small lens. But we should recognize that there is something sound in the true believer's approach to the news. The world makes sense to a true believer; it is intelligible. I doubt that the same is true for the typical newspaper reader.

The solution, of course, is not to hire more paranoids and ideologues, but to take up the task of making sense of the world. And making sense involves reducing information. Let me give an example of what I mean. Last August 13, the Sunday *New York Times* ran an extraordinary story about farmers in Peru who are cutting down the rain forest and planting coca bushes in order to meet the rising demand for cocaine. The story also explained how chemicals dumped into the water supply by cocaine processors are poisoning the Amazon basin.

This was an amazing tale because it brought together two of the biggest news stories of the past few years - drugs and environment. It turns out that these seemingly separate issues are in fact related, that the social disintegration on the streets of our cities is a factor in the destruction of the world's environment, that the flood of news about crack, homelessness, and AIDS and the flood of news about water pollution, deforestation and global warming are actually two branches of the same story. The two branches came together in Peru and probably in other places around the world, as well. "The global costs of excess," might be a name for this story.

Who on the newspaper's staff has the job of searching out possible points of contact between stories? At present, it may be no one's job, but in the years ahead there will have to be a "connections beat" - people who monitor the flood of news, looking to connect one stream of data to another. *The Times* correspondent was not on the connections beat, of course. He was merely reporting from Peru about the situation there. His report, however, said more than hundreds of stories I had read about drugs and the environment. Why? Because it isolated a few connecting facts from a flood of repetitive data.

In the future, journalism will become, even more than it is now, a thinking profession. Reporters will have to be skilled in recognizing patterns, spotting connections, isolating and integrating key facts. The mind of a thinking journalist is an excellent device for reducing information, and this will be a vital service in the years ahead - reducing, rather than providing more information. ❑

Jay Rosen is an assistant professor of journalism at New York University and an associate at NYU's Center for War, Peace and the News Media. This is an excerpt of an essay which appeared in ASNE's The Bulletin, December 1989.

More for fewer

Defending the idea of elitism in television

by George Bain

This, I know, could lead to my being drummed out of the club, media people being egalitarian above all, but I think it would be a good thing if somehow we are to find a way to smother the prevalent notion that elite, elitism and elitist are dirty words.

There are, of course, elites and elites, some of which have not a lot to be said for them. but there are others, among them a poorly-defined elite that is to some extent driven by that disinterested intellectual curiosity that English historian, G.M. Trevelyan, called the lifeblood of real civilization.

If we interpret disinterested intellectual curiosity generously so as to embrace everyone who has a chronic itch to know and understand more, we have an elite which, far from being scorned, deserves positively to be respected, especially by journalists, whose natural audience it should be.

But the media have become transfixed with the work "mass" in "mass media." They do not do justice to this amorphous elite. They can't — not at the same time they are paying expensive market analysts to tell them what the largest number of readers read, to ensure they can be given more of the same.

In those circumstances, it becomes an act of high dedication by an editor to choose to make difficult but essential information comprehensible, rather than to settle simply for selling made-for-easy-reading excitements. That is so because the 35 cents, or whatever, of Reader A, who is of an inquiring mind, is no better than the 35 cents of Reader B, who is a boob — and there are rather more of Reader B.

But the medium that is most market-driven is television. What viewership ratings count are pairs of eyes. It doesn't matter what goes on behind the eyes, if anything, so long as the eyes are fixed on the TV screen and their owners are able to tell the poll-taker's head-counter the approximate name of the show being watched.

The theory is that if the viewer is alert enough to absorb that much, the name of the product being advertised may even spring to mind the next time the viewer goes to the beer store. What content is, then, is what keeps the screen from going black — and the viewer from dozing off — between commercials.

It would mean giving up sports and some local programming

The effect of these practises is to produce media that are to an unacceptable degree designed by and for a boobocracy.

It is not to make excuses for newspapers, the proprietors of which show the same instinct for survival as the brontosaurus, to say that responsibility for the emphasis on "mass" belongs to TV. Television is dominant. It not only says what the story is, but how big it is and for how long it is worth going on with.

When television came along, in the late 1940s in the United States and in the early 1950s in Canada, it was wholly new. Consequently, there was no one to say what was good and what was bad television. But it first became commercially big in the United States, where all broadcasting at the time was commercial. Its main function was to sell things — "good" became whatever the greatest number of people could be made to watch in the hours and half-hours of so-called prime time.

Everyone was relieved of the necessity of trying to measure anything so elusive as quality.

Television began in Canada with a great advantage — a public broadcasting system already established. What publicly-supported television exists for, anywhere, is to do what commercial television will not do, and to be different and better. That is the rationale for spending large sums of public money on it.

I have no quarrel with the rationale. My occasional wavering about CBC-TV arises from doubts about whether it is either different enough or better. In the beginning, I think it tried, but it long ago succumbed to the ratings game. In good times and bad — the two here defined in terms of the annual Parliamentary appropriation — the corporation has not since seriously tried the alternative of giving a smaller audience qualitatively more, which would make it culturally distinctive.

This can't be an eccentric qualm of mine. In some border cities, stations of the American Public Broadcasting System (PBS) draw up to half their members from Canada; WNED in Buffalo, N.Y., is an example. Voluntary contributions to WNED from Canadian viewers amount to about $2 million, 15 per cent of its budget.

This surely says those contributors find something lacking in what they get from their own public television. That something, to my mind, is programming in general, both entertainment and information, that is out of the run of ordinary North American commercial network fare.

It would be necessary to poll all those Canadians who make donations to PBS to

determine if they find it simply different, or better. My own view is that there is more on PBS that is meatier. For example, leaving drama out of this, such series as The Public Mind and World of Ideas presented by Bill Moyers; the Lewis Lapham series, America's Century, the Fred Friendly seminars; Front Line with Judy Woodruff and, perhaps especially because it is nightly, the second, or analytical, half of the MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour.

The National, on CBC, more comprehensively covers the day's news than MacNeil-Lehrer, but The Journal suffers in comparison with mainly interview portion of that show. It does so by being less dedicated to eliciting information from knowledgeable guests — the presumable purpose in having them — and more to the old, old, old television idea that nothing keeps customers awake like confrontation. On almost any question of domestic politics, The Journal can be counted upon to be calling someone to account; the tone is prosecutorial.

To break out of the mold of being just another North American commercial network, with a slight Canadian accent, eh, CBC-TV would need to become less popular, in the sense that popular is defined as "suited to or intended for the general masses of the people." In other words, it would have to become more elitist.

The best reason for doing that — apart from the basic one that a superior product is what the taxpayer is paying for — is that there is not now, never has been, and never will be, enough money to enable the CBC to wrench the mass audience from not just one, but all the American networks together, plus CTV, plus Global, plus various cable services.

That being impossible, the logical course seems to me to be to adopt a less-is-more, or perhaps a more-for-fewer, philosophy, and head resolutely off upmarket. If is something distinctively Canadian that is wanted, that would do it.

It would mean giving up some things — sports, say, and some local programming — and adopting a shorter broadcasting day. I accept that Canadian sports are a part of the national culture, and I watch sports myself, but there is not much the public network can bring to them that a private network can't and won't. Also, the essential part the CBC has to play as a national institution in binding the country together — which, incidentally, I don't think it performs very well — will be discharged mainly through programs that are national in scope.

Canada is at or near the top of the tree in the Western world in the amount per capita spent on higher education. If that is producing the results it should, instilling in people a degree of intellectual curiosity, public television should bear them more in mind. If education in not doing that, it would make a useful series for someone to try to find out why. ❑

George Bain is a columnist for Maclean's, and former director of the King's College School of Journalism.

E.N.G. good P.R.

by Peter Trueman

There have been sitcoms about TV and radio newsrooms, but the Canadian-produced E.N.G., which stands for Electronic News Gathering, is what might be called the first sitdram with TV news as a theme.

I have to confess that as a viewer in search of escape, I don't find E.N.G. as addictive as I once found Hill Street Blues or St. Elsewhere.

That's probably a reflection of the show's overall quality; but it may also be because a TV newsroom is no longer my idea of a good time, and it's been a while since I found Toronto, where the series is shot, exotic.

I find it hard enough to watch newscasts these days, never mind subjecting myself to the behind-the-scenes torment -- even dramatized torment -- of the process necessary to get news on the air.

E.N.G. makes me squirm. I suspect, because it accurately portrays what a TV newsroom ought to be like and usually isn't. It should be required viewing for station managers and some news directors as well.

In the last program I watched, a reporter wants to take a short cut that a wiser producer won't tolerate. She's cautioned not to take things at face value, and to check and double-check.

In the same episode, another reporter and a camera are assigned to do a story on city ambulance services, and are riding around with a typical ambulance driver and his partner.

As in real-life Toronto, hospitals are overtaxed amd emergency services strained to the breaking point. The ambulance crew finds itself with a critically ill patient no one wants.

Jake Antonelli, the brash young E.N.G.

cameraman who is more interested in pictures than journalistic purity, tells the ambulance driver not to take no for an answer.

"They'll take us if they see the camera," he says, at which point I find myself talking to the TV, making noises like the newsroom spoil sport.

When they barge into the hospital, a harrassed doctor says he thought they'd been told to go somewhere else.

Antonelli, of course, unnoticed by the doctor, is rolling, and when the reporter questions him about whether "this" happens a lot, the doctor innocently asks what.

"Turning patients away," the reporter says.

The doctor finally understands that he's being taped, realizes he can't win and motions the stretcher into emergency.

That material is eventually edited out of the item, but when the rough cut is screened, Ann Hildebrandt, a savvy executive producer and Antonelli's lover, senses that the camera has been used as a bludgeon and confronts Antonelli.

"You interfered," she says accusingly.

"What do you mean?" complains Antonelli. "The guy was going from grey to green and they took him."

The item is dropped.

Even the show's anchor is believeable, if no more admirable than Ted Baxter, the airhead announcer on the old Mary Tyler Moore show.

While talking to some people in the newsroom about a favourite subject, himself, the Channel 10 anchor muses out loud about the way his own warmth is transmitted by the cameras.

"That whole thing comes across on TV," he says. "I'm a friend."

I don't know what it is about anchors, but at some stage in their careers, too many of them become intoxicated with their own magic.

TV news people polled in Toronto ridiculed E.N.G., but I think they protested too much. Much of their criticism was directed at Antonelli's unlikely derring-do, for example, plunging into a burning building to shoot a fire and trying to cover a hold-up in progress.

So it uses poetic license. But I know a photographer who went into a flaming embassy to get news pictures and I know a TV cameraman who taped two guys stealing appliances.

The important thing, however, is that E.N.G.'s producers and writers know something about reporting and ethics and make their characters behave like responsible journalists.

As a result, E.N.G. is good P.R. for a trade with a credibility problem and might do for TV news what Hill Street Blues and St. Elsewhere did for law enforcement and medicine. It would be like looking a gift horse in the mouth to knock it too savagely. ❑

Peter Trueman is an experienced journalist and television anchorman, now working as a freelance journalist.

Global News is changing

by Greg Quill

No one is happier than Howard Bernstein to see Global TV's ownership problems settled.

Fop the regional network's first permanent news director, "just trying to figure out who owned the place" was what most hampered Global's news operation in the first years of his tenure.

Now we actually have an owner and we're hopeful there will be a change," he said in a recent interview. "Global now has a real chance to be Canada's third network."

Bernstein, 40, was appointed in February 1988, almost two years before a long and bitter ownership dispute was settled in a court-ordered closed auction last December. Western broadcaster and major shareholder Izzy Asper paid between $85 million and $105 million for the 38 per cent of Global shares held by his former Toronto partners Paul Morton and Seymour Epstein.

The southern Ontario network, Canada's third largest, is valued at between $225 million and $275 million.

Since the sale, Asper has been strangely circumspect about specific plans for Global. But already Bernstein, who heads the network's 140-person autonomous news operation -- the country's biggest -- is working on a massive restructuring plan that, he hopes, will forever end the prevailing TV industry notion that Global can't really compete in the national news arena.

"Some changes have taken place already, but none that you'd notice on air," he said. "My biggest job was to set up a proper chain of command so that people know once and for all who they're working for.

"They've had four bosses in two years. Many projects had been started that were never finished because of organizational problems. There was no real order; now there is."

Izzy Asper

As a regional system, Global has long been considered the third contender in the national news stakes behind CBC and CTV, which maintain bureaus in every major centre in the country. Worse, and despite its $13-million annual budget, Global is also seen to have abandoned blanket local news coverage to CITY-TV. A hybrid until December, the short-reaching network was either too big or not big enough to be an effective news force on either front.

But all that is about to change. Bernstein, who came to Global after a year as producer of CBC Radio's Sunday Morning and three and a half years as producer of CBC-TV Toronto's local evening news (now known as CBC at 6), doesn't buy the third man theory.

"It's a problem of perception. News is habit, and the networks naturally attract a larger audience. Still, Global's is the only Canadian TV newscast that has consistently increased its ratings over the last two years. We have had some incredible numbers, around 450,000 and sometimes as high as 600,000. We are beating CBC's local news in most periods, based on the assumption that about half their audience is in Toronto. CITY's numbers indicate their news audience is tumbling. And we're putting such a dent in (local CTV affiliate) CFTO's audience that I hear they're considering changing their news time to 5:30 to go head-to-head with us.

"Yes, we're squeezed perceptually, but I think the ratings tell another story."

Global's news stock went through the ceiling when Ottawa bureau chief Doug Small broke the federal budget leak story last year, after it had been "turned down by the other networks that were simply too lazy or too afraid" to follow up leads that had been offered them first, Bernstein said.

"The calls we got at the time indicated about 55 per cent of Canadians thought we shouldn't have broken the story; we were called dirty names. But after Doug was charged (the case is still pending), there has been a 90 per cent turnaround. The perception now is that the federal government victimized Global for reporting the news."

The network has broken other major stories in recent months, he said, "in advance of print and radio...."

Bernstein does admit that there are "black spots" in Global's national operation, particularly in Vancouver, were the network has yet to establish a fruitful liaison with a local affiliate, and in Montreal, which is covered "at a stretch" by the Ottawa staff.

"We have no sister station in Edmonton, and Newfoundland is also difficult," he said. "We often send teams of reporters there from our Toronto or Ottawa offices.

"Even so, we have excellent relations with many stations across the country, including MITV in the Maritimes, CFAC in Clagary-Lethbridge, and with Izzy Asper's stations in Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Regina."

Quebec will soon be covered under a new deal with the international French-language network TVA, which will spe-

cialize in English and French issues in Canada and is now based in Montreal, Bernstein said.

Other proposed improvements await Asper's approval.

"Overall, we've settled on a method of dealing with foreign and domestic stories that will enable us to compete effectively with the networks. Foreign coverage is the most difficult to assess: We can get the major stories from U.S. service, but can we trust them?

"We justify our coverage and expenditure by asking ourselves whether Canadians require a different perspective. In Nicaragua, for instance, we know we couldn't trust the American networks for unbiased election coverage, so we sent our own people. On the fall of the Berlin Wall and in the Moscow upheaval, we felt we also had to send our own people, because Americans have a different slant.

"Disasters, on the other hand, don't need interpretation. And the fall of the Israeli government can't be covered for Canadians better by anyone other than the Americans. That's how we try to make those decisions."

Bernstein's decisions haven't always seemed so simple, or so popular. A recent rash of so-called defections from Global's news team focussed a media spotlight on the man who was once accused of neutralizing Sunday Morning's allegedly sympathetic handling of anti-conservative political stories, but who also worked for three years as a producer for CBC TV's The Journal, for a year as news specials producer for CTV and almost four years as producer of CTV's Canada AM.

In February, top-rated reporter Joy Malbon jumped from Global to a national news job at CTV, a move Bernstein calls "perfectly understandable". And in mid-March, three other reporters -- Mitch Azaria, Christine Gaynor and Dave Hatch -- left Global's news team, two for non-news-related assignments at other stations, and one for a press attache's job in Ottawa.

It was rumored that Bernstein's new regime was the cause of the four resignations and that he had been actively seeking new recruits from among CBC's local news team.

He denied both claims.

"Joy is a wonderful reporter and I was sorry to lose her," he said. "But the chance she was offered was too good to pass up. The decisions of the other three came as a complete surprise; I had no idea they'd leave, but it seems to me they'd long ago lost interest in reporting. As news director, I was probably the last person they'd discuss their plans with.

"In two of the three cases, there was an obvious lack of commitment and I can honestly say I'm not sorry they're leaving Global. I got on with two of the three (he won't identify them), and I believe only one of them is making a mistake in leaving TV news.

"As for the accusations that I've been raiding CBC, I can say that when I first left the network, I spoke with one CBLT staffer, an incredible reporter, about leaving and he wasn't interested. To this day neither of us can remember who placed the call.

"And last August I called another CBC person who, I was told, was very unhappy. He told me he wasn't looking to leave, and that's where the matter rested.

"I've never raided. I don't believe in it. And I'm not going to start now."

The biggest change in the long-range view, however, is a philosophical one.

"We're moving inevitably towards a beat system," Bernstein said. "We're making a deliberate effort to break stories, rather than following newspapers, by developing specialists in certain fields -- a permanent environment reporter, a permanent education reporter, one in Queen's Park, one in health, another in crime.

"The idea, of course, comes from the concept of newspaper beats, where contacts are encouraged and stories are tipped. To my way of thinking, it works; Global will soon have fewer general reporters and more beat people.

"That way we can stay ahead of the news." ❑

Greg Quill is television and radio critic for the Toronto Star.

Problem is overinterpretation

To the Editor: Your review of Margin of Error in the January/February 1990 edition of Content has been brought to my attention. In your review you state that, "a consistent reading of the copy and statements that accompanied polling data between the elections of 1984 and 1988 would have revealed interpretations, particularly those from Gallup, of quite staggering banality."

You should be aware that we at Gallup believe that a consistent danger in polling is the over-interpretation of polls rather than a lack of interpretation. Obvious examples were predictions made by political commentators and other pollsters prior to the 1988 election suggesting that Canada was moving to a two party system with the NDP as official opposition.

You should also be aware that we at Gallup believe that the important story of any poll is the survey results, not the pollster's interpretation. It was the importance attached to the electorate's views by Dr. Gallup that led to the formation of the Gallup Poll in 1932.

Given that we believe the pollster's views and interpretation are of secondary importance, I cannot agree that "for the average reader of *Margin of Error* the most useful information will be found in the profiles of the leading pollsters."

I would strongly recommend that you read Dr. Gallup's *The Sophisticated Poll Watcher's Guide* for a better understanding of the role of polling in a democratic society.

Lorne Bozinoff Ph.D.,
Vice-president,
Gallup Canada, Toronto

Too many students

To the Editor: I enjoy reading your publication immensely, but I am puzzled by the dominance of articles written by Carleton University journalism students and staff.

While the production of *Content* magazine is assisted in part by Carleton's school of journalism, that does not give them the authority to enforce a monopoly of student journalistic opinion.

As a journalism student at another post-secondary institution in Ottawa, I would think journalism students across the country would at least be invited to express their ideas in a publication that excels in offering diverse views and opinions on all facets of the media.

Bernard Potvin
Algonquin Times, Ottawa

Business journalism

After the sunny '80s, winter may be just around corner

by Don McGillivray

When the glitzy monthly *Canadian Business* celebrated its 60th anniversary in 1988, it called the special issue Guts, Greed and Glory.

It was a hymn of praise to "the ever-renewing spirit of enterprise itself."

But on the last of its 226 ad-filled pages was this estimate of the business people it had chronicled since 1928:

"All of them weren't necessarily nice people. In some cases they had an almost total disregard of the feelings of associates and the well-being of employees. Many times they weren't very honest or even very bright. They did, however, attack the job at hand and they did have the nerve to take risks."

It's no easy task for financial journalists to report such people to themselves in publications that live on the advertising revenue they provide.

In mainstream journalism, we often recite that old bromide about it being the job of a newspaper to "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." But what if the comfortable are not only the news sources but the subscribers as well? It's harder then to be a critic rather than a cheerleader.

Business journalism is more like running a small-town weekly than a big-city daily. You're liable to meet the mayor in the barbershop the day after you've snarled at him on the editorial page.

But that said, Canadian financial journalism hasn't exactly covered itself with glory in reporting the greed decade of the 1980s.

Pandering to the business community is a pervasive problem. Many business people are seemingly not bright enough to know that the corporate sector needs trenchant critics much more than it needs soft soapers. The common attitude is that of the executive who reportedly went to Ken Thomson, owner of the *Globe and Mail*, to say, "Fix it or sell it." He wanted it to be less critical of business. Business wants to be reported by adoring people who "believe in the system."

So does Brian Mulroney. So do we all. That doesn't mean we should be.

A second fault of business journalism has been its hero-bum syndrome.

One month you see "Retailing Emperor" Robert Campeau or "Auto Parts Czar" Frank Stronach grinning at you from every cover. The man can do no wrong. He has the magic touch. A month or a few months later the hero has become a bum. Now, instead of being the great turnaround artist, he's the reason the XYZ Corp. needs a "white knight" or other savior.

A third fault is that instead of making things plain, business journalists often make the complex even more complicated. Perhaps it's because some of the journalists involved don't really understand what they're writing about. They're afraid to drop the jargon lest their ignorance be exposed.

But even with these shortcomings, the 1980s turned out to be a decade of great growth for Canadian financial journalism.

There are now some 133 business and financial publications in Canada, with a combined circulation of nearly three million.

This includes the *Globe and Mail*'s *Report on Business*, with a circulation of 330,000 but not the business sections of such daily newspapers as the *Toronto Star* and the *Montreal Gazette*. Half the business publications in the nation are published in metropolitan Toronto, including such biggies as the ROB and the *Financial Post*, which has a circulation of 57,000 for its Tuesday-to-Friday tabloid and 200,000 for its weekend broadsheet.

Montreal is the second most important business publications centre. Fourteen publications serve Quebec's burgeoning business community, mainly in French. The leader is *Les Affaires*, a weekly with a circulation of nearly 100,000.

Local business magazines have developed in most of the larger cities. In Vancouver, there's *B.C. Business*, *Equity* and Vancouver's *Business Report*, each with a circulation in the 25,000 to 30,000 range.

Calgary has *Calgary Commerce* (15,000) as well as such specialized oil-patch magazines as *Drillsite*, *Octane* and *Oil Week*.

Edmonton has *Alberta Business*, *Edmonton Commerce* and *Commerce News*. The Jim Pattison Group of Vancouver publishes *Saskatchewan Business* in Regina and *Manitoba Business* in Winnipeg as well as *B.C. Business* and *Alberta Business*.

The Brunswick Business Journal (8,000) is published in Moncton by Laurentian Publishing.

Business publications (and broadcasting aimed at business) have proliferated in the sunny times of the 1980s. But winter may be on the way. Tougher times are forecast. And the first apple to fall from the tree may prove to be *The Financial Times* of Canada, sold by Southam Inc. on Dec. 11, 1989 to Thomson Newspaper Corporation which turned it over to the management of the Toronto *Globe and Mail*.

The sale price wasn't announced, but was reported in the $3 million to $10 million range. That's a firesale price from some points of view. The mere physical assets, including a sophisticated new editorial computer system, were probably worth the lower figure.

But Southam couldn't expect much for a paper that lost $7 million in 1988, about

$4.5 million in 1989 and that expects losses of $7 million this year.

These losses, confirmed by Roy Megarry, publisher of the *Globe*, were part of the price Southam paid for having the weakest of Canada's financial newspapers at a time of tough competition and radical change.

Historically, Canadian financial journalism -- apart from the business ghettoes at the back ends of the dailies -- was a weekly affair with the main competition between the dominant *Financial Post* of Toronto and the Montreal-based *Financial Times*.

In the 1960s, a new dominant player entered the game when the *Globe* launched the *Report on Business*, at first a couple of days a week moving to six days a week by 1979.

The *Post* continued as a weekly and the *Fintimes* slowly oozed Southam blood.

The *Fintimes* had come into the hands of the Royal Bank in 1961 and had been passed on for a song to the Southams because the bank didn't think it should be running a financial weekly. The world in which financial journalism is practised had changed by the 1980s.

The *Times* moved to Toronto from Montreal in 1975.

The early 1980s added the worst recession since the Dirty Thirties. Economic news migrated from the back pages of mainstream dailies to Page One. The *Globe*'s *ROB* stayed stodgy. It began to look as though there was room in Canada for a second national business daily.

In October 1987, Toronto Sun Publishing Company announced that it had bought the *Financial Post* and planned to launch a new tabloid daily as a companion to the continuing broadsheet weekly early in 1988.

The *Fintimes* saw a chance to get a real hold on the weekly market. So it went to Derek Ungless, the New York art director who designed *Rolling Stone*, for a complete remake.

The new *Financial Times* was launched on Jan. 18, 1988, a couple of weeks ahead of the new tab *Financial Post* which hit the streets Feb. 2.

The *Fintimes* was different. Its front page was canary yellow, later toned down to a more subdued shade. It had a gossip column called Buzz, a weekly survey of business opinion, and a new lineup of columnists including Robert Fulford, the urbane former editor of *Saturday Night* who went to the *Fintimes* as a refugee from the Conrad Black regime.

The new *Times* was more magazine than newspaper. They called it a "publication" or a "package".

Dave Tafler, publisher at the time but destined to disappear from the masthead in 1989, told readers the new *Fintimes* would "combine the authority of the *Wall Street Journal* with the pizzazz of *Rolling Stone* magazine" and would be "better packaged and easier to read" than the old paper. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

From there to the sale to the *Globe* it was a rocky ride. People came and went, as did the new features. Circulation rose a bit, from 110,000 to about 118,000 but not enough. The "package" never achieved its declared goal, to become "Canada's leading business publication."

And the Southam board, trimming expenses to fend off possible takeover grabs, began looking at the *Times* with ever more beady eyes. So, on Oct. 26, 1989, Southam put it up for sale. The *Globe* and *Financial Post* both looked at it and the *Globe* took it.

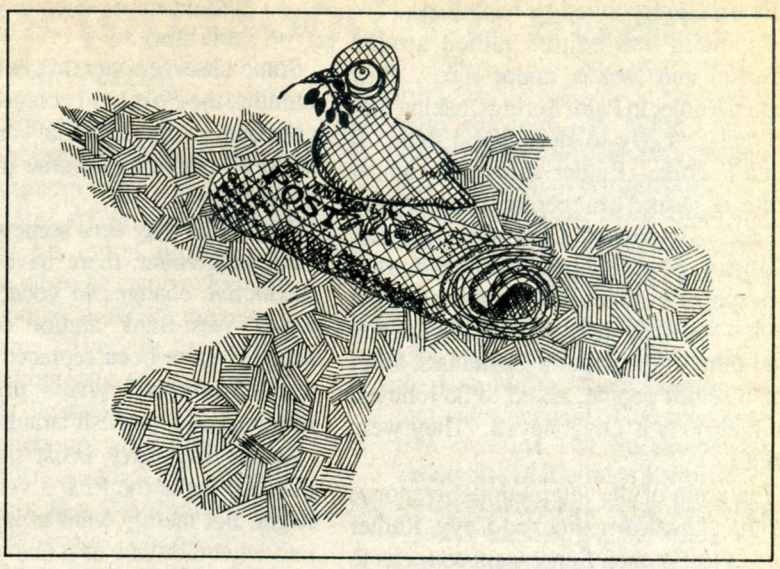
Megarry said at the time there was no point in buying it to kill it or fold it into some existing *Globe* publication. The only point would be to see if it had a niche or could develop one that would serve both readers and the advertising market.

Since the sale by Southam, morale at the paper has fallen as Barbara Hyland, the new publisher, trims staff and other expenses. The face of the paper has turned grey after her decision to abandon the yellow front and thereby save a reported $75,000 a year. All this is bad news for the paper. But it's far from certain yet what role the *Times* has in Megarry's planning. Perhaps it will have a new birth as a challenge to the weekend *Financial Post*, the source of cash to keep the struggling tabloid daily *Post* alive. ❑

Don McGillivray is national political and economic affairs columnist for Southam News and former president of the Centre for Investigative Journalism.

Death of a dove?

by Nomi Morris



David Gross was the first editor to sit me down when I walked in to the *Jerusalem Post* in 1984 looking for work. A man of long beard and few words, he handed me a printout of the Hebrew wire service Itim and said, "What does this mean?".

Gross is now the managing editor of the *Jerusalem Post*, appointed after a series of shocks and jolts that began with new Canadian owner Hollinger Inc. taking control last July. The height of the drama was when editor Erwin Frenkel and 30 of the *Post*'s nearly 90 journalists resigned in early January.

What exactly happened at the small but influential paper known to many journalists by "its good reputation?"

The controversy centred on the issue of editorial interference and fears of an ideological shift to the right. The situation has sparked debate in the international Jewish community as well as the journalistic community. Canadians have a particular interest in the story, since our very own media magnate Conrad Black is the principal shareholder in the company which bought the newspaper.

The *Post*, founded in 1932 as the *Palestine Post*, has a daily circulation of 25,000 which rises to 50,000 on weekends. Within Israel, it is dwarfed by mass appeal Hebrew dailies: *Yediot Aharonot*, *Maariv*, the tabloid *Hadashot*, and even the high-brow *Ha'aretz*.

But as Israel's only English-language daily, it is widely read by the Middle East diplomatic corps, U.S. policy makers and the intelligentsia in Israel and Arab countries. It provides a weekly international edition that reaches 75,000 homes and a feature service whose articles appear in local papers like the *Canadian Jewish News*. It is cited extensively by foreign press based in Israel and is widely read by Jewish people around the world.

The *Post* has lost money. In 1988, when it was owned by Koor Industries, a subsidiary of the broadly-based Histadrut labor federation, losses were $1.5 million. Koor and the labor party, while loosely aligned with the paper, were invisible owners in a rare journalistic arrangement where the editors and top managers at the paper enjoyed virtually total control over editorial content.

Last spring, the *Post* was put up for sale. Yehuda Levy, a former army officer who spent a few years in Vancouver as a representative of the Jewish National Fund, called up his friend David Radler, president of Hollinger Inc., and suggested the company buy the paper.

They did. In April, Hollinger paid an astounding $20 million for a 75 per cent interest. By July, Levy was installed as publisher and president.

At first, staff at the *Post* were pleased. They had been worried the paper would be taken over by British publisher Robert Maxwell, who had a reputation for editorial interference.

But these fears were quickly transfered to Black, Radler and mostly Levy.

The new publisher was quoted in Jerusalem weekly on July 14 saying, "If the editor takes a line which is not balanced, I think it is my right and my duty to straighten him out." He also let it be known that as a former Israeli Defence Forces spokesperson during the 1982 massacre at Sabra and Shatilla in Lebanon, he felt news coverage of that event was "distorted."

Alarm bells rang and Levy soothed the staff by saying he was quoted out of context, then signed a letter of intent not to change the paper's "dovish" editorial line.

In August, a labor dispute arose when 70 employees, 25 from editorial, were identified for dismissal or early retirement as part of a push to bring budgets into line. Ari Rath, who had been co-editor of the paper with Frenkel since 1976, was nudged into early retirement.

Then in late November, Frenkel wrote a stong editorial defending the *Post*, and the news media in general, after they had been criticized by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. Levy wanted it to run as a signed op-ed, so the opinion would not be identified with the paper. As a compromise, Frenkel ran the piece unsigned in the daily but kept it out of the international edition.

Two weeks later came the final blow. Levy applied to sit on the Israeli Editors' Committee, a group which meets regularly with top politicians. According to protocol, the application was sent to Frenkel, as the top editor of the *Post*, and in this way he learned of Levy's intention "to become involved to the greatest extent...(in)...everything to do with editorial matters." Levy went on to say that he avoided "at this stage" appointing himself executive editor "so as not to harm the standing of the present editor, Erwin Frenkel."

Frenkel's responded by resigning.

Reporters and editors rallied around Frenkel and took a major risk. They called Radler in Palm Springs, asking him to replace Levy to show good faith. It didn't work. Radler found the whole furor an absurd exaggeration and refused to act. He backed Levy 100 per cent. Conrad Black, busy with his own newspaper troubles in Britain, stayed out of it -- publicly at least. Approximately one-third of the paper's journalists, all of them senior people, asked to be relieved of their jobs if Levy stayed. They were let go.

The scale of the international response to the showdown shocked Levy, Radler and even Frenkel. Some went so far as to say the dispute was over "the soul of Israel."

Throughout, an incredulous Radler and Levy said they were driven by economics, not ideology.

Radler said the ruling editorial elite at the *Post* just couldn't cope with the modern reality that publishers have every right to be involved the content of their newspapers.

Frenkel responded by saying attempts to personalize the conflict "trivialized" the real issues involved. He wrote a journalistic manifesto published in many papers, saying, "While the proprietor may own the newspaper, he does not own the minds of those who make it."

There were other incidents which reportedly took place before the mass exodus:

- Radler suggested that Frenkel should write an editorial saying Labour Party leader Shimon Peres should concentrate more on his economic portfolio than foreign policy.
- Levy suggested to weekend magazine editor Joanna Yehiel that she do profiles of high-ranking military men, and provided her with a list of several he had in mind.
- When the paper vigorously pursued the story of a tax revolt in the West Bank village of Beit Sahur, the reporter was called into Levy's office to discuss whether the *Post* should cover such an uncomfortable story.

Some observers say that in the past two months, the *Post* has become softer in its coverage of the Intifada -- and that the editorial page has become more sharply conservative.

While this may be a somewhat conjectural judgement, there have been some distinctive changes in vocabulary. The terms "West Bank" and/or "occupied territories" have been replaced by "Judea" and "Samaria," terms preferred by religious and hawkish Israelis.

Radler and Levy insist they have no plans to make the *Post* a vehicle for the Right, but merely want to inject balance into what they saw as a one-sided paper.

The former *Post* staffers, on the other hand, say their only allegiance is to the tenets of truth and disclosure that motivate journalists the world over.

Today the original dissident group has signed a memorandum of understanding with a European-based Jewish financier to start a new paper. The paper, to be called *Israel Times*, was slated for an April 1 launch.

Other disenchanted staffers who have left since the original exodus have joined an English news weekly modelled on The Economist and to be called Jerusalem Report. This publication is being started up by Hirsh Goodman, a former Post military affairs writer who left several years ago.

There is no question that the departure of such a large percentage of the newsroom staff is bound to cause a fundamental difference in the product, especially if there is a coincident shift in editorial policy. What remains to be seen is whether the Post will retain its place in the Israeli media scene. ❑

Nomi Morris is a Toronto Star *reporter who wrote for the* Jerusalem Post *in Israel for a year and was its news stringer in Canada for three years.*

AIDS column wins top Goodwin award

by Ron Verzuh

As Canada's alternative press enters the 1990s, some observers are wondering about not only its ability to take up the challenge posed by the well-entrenched right wing, but on its very survival.

Regina's *Briarpatch* continues to be threatened with the loss of its charitable status, which would undermine its fundraising capabilities. Toronto's *This Magazine* has had bad luck on some of its subscription drives, leaving it with not other choce than downgrading its appearance.

Feminist magazines continue to bite the dust with Toronto's *Broadside* succumbing after 10 years. Ottawa's *Breaking the Silence* is also rumored to be dead. And Halifax's *Pandora* recently ran a front cover headline that asked, "Is this the last issue?" However, it appeared again in March for International Women's Day.

(*Ms.* in the United States has also been living on the edge. But with Gloria Steinem back in the masthead and poet and 1960s radical feminist Robin Morgan as editor, the middle-of-the-road magazine promises to return to its alternative roots.)

Women's media and native media were victims of the latest Tory budget, fueling fears that other alternative media might be targets for future annihilation at the hands of the federal slashers.

Indeed, as arts councils and the Canada Council tighten their belts, and as the post office cuts subsidies to magazines, the alternative press can hardly be blamed for thinking it is under siege from all sides.

Given all this fear and loathing, one would expect a less than bumper crop of articles for the fourth annual Goodwin's award for excellence in alternative journalism.

But, there were 60 submissions this year and the judges had the usual frustrating time deciding which one would get the $300 prize. They chose Chuck Grochmal, the AIDS victim who wrote a brutally frank and fascinating column in *Xtra*, the gay tabloid in Toronto.

I say "wrote" because Grochmal died on Feb. 4. His column was a source of courage for many AIDS sufferers and Grochmal took his moral support role seriously. Once when he came in to write his column, notes a *NOW* magazine obituary, he appeared very ill, but Grochmal wasn't having any of it. "They'll think I'm dead," he said.

The first runners-up were Linda McQuaig and Neil Brooks for "O.K. Michael Wilson, Here's the Alternative" in Toronto's *This Magazine*. The article outlines several fairer ways to raise funds than the Tory Goods and Services Tax, and has become one of the main resources of the anti-GST forces.

Second runner-up was Kathryn Morse for "Net Results -- Sorting Through the Fisheries Tangle," in Halifax's *New Maritimes*. Morse's timely piece told of the woes of the Atlantic fishing industry.

Joyce Nelson took third runner-up for pieces in Ottawa's *Canadian Forum* and Toronto's cultural magazine, *Fuse*. The first, "The New Global Sweatshop," is on how multinationals maintain an economic stranglehold on the Third World. The second, "Packaging the Populace--Polling in the Age of Image Politics," is an excerpt from her new book on the public relations industry.

This Magazine's Paul McKay took fourth runner-up for "Snow Job--Doing the Uranium Hustle in the NWT," an exposé of how the federal government and a German consortium tried to convince the Inuit that they should allow a uranium mine to be built.

"The irony is that this peaceful, non-polluting people is being poisoned by the plume of a distant industrial society that is the very antithesis of their own," writes McKay.

Honorable mentions went to;

- Linda Clow for "Never Meant to Happen," the story of how she robbed and killed a man in Toronto's *Borderlines*.
- Tom Wayman for "What Use is Canadian Culture," an essay which also appeared in *Borderlines*.
- Barbara Carss for "Food, Class and the World-Class City," an analysis of economic disparity in Toronto's *Kick It Over*.
- Adrian Paavo, John Warnock and Cheryl Stadnichuk for "With a Little Help from Their Friends," a fact-filled account of the conservative Institute For Saskatchewan Enterprise in Regina's *Briarpatch*.
- Paul Hardman, Reg Phelan, Anders Sandbergh, Jo Stern and Bob Wall (the Volvo Research Group) for "A Little Bit of Sweden," a well-documented critique of the foreign car maker's Nova Scotia operations which ran in *New Maritimes*.
- Larry Kuehn for "Living and Prospering Without Growth," a constructive comment on the New Democratic Party's failure to develop a strategy which ensures that "the cost of clean environment is paid from corporate profits not from workers' pockets." It was published in Vancouver's *New Directions*.

The MacDonald Citation, named after *Content* founder Dick MacDonald, is awarded to the alternative publication which either shows the most improvement over the year or provides extraordinary coverage of an issue or event.

This year it is shared by *Briarpatch* for its coverage of the Grant Devine government's drive to privatize Saskatchewan, and *New Maritimes* for general improvement. Honorable mention went to *Alternatives*, for its environmental humor issue.

The judges were *Sources* publisher Barrie Zwicker, former Ottawa *Citizen* reporter Katie FitzRandolph, former *Globe and Mail* labor reporter Lorne Slotnick, and myself.

❑

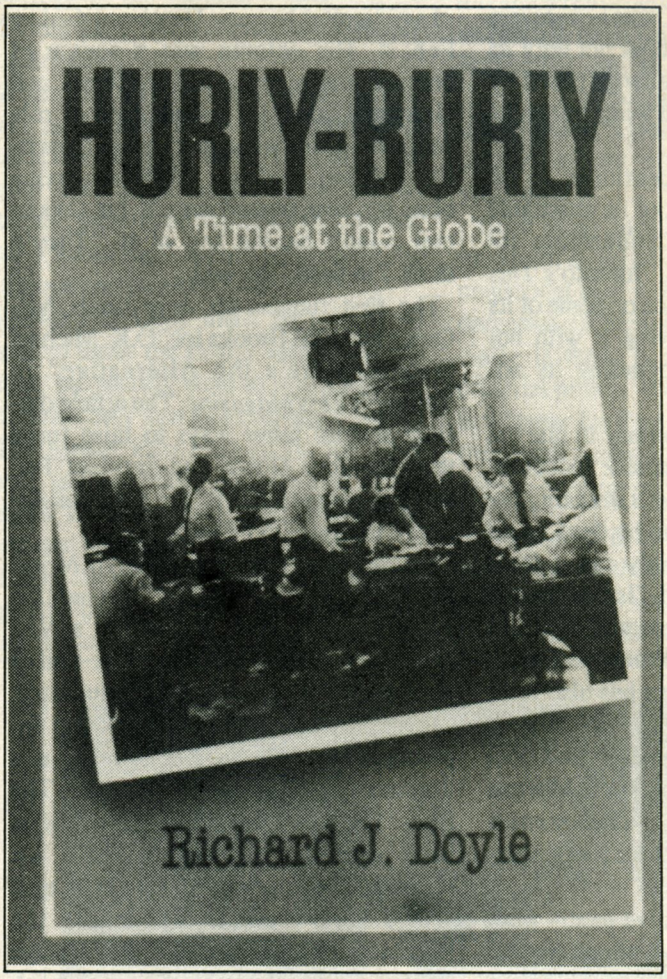
Ron Verzuh is Content's Little Media columnist.

Calling all newspaper junkies

Hurly-Burly: A Time at the Globe

by Richard J. Doyle
Macmillan, 528 pp.

Reviewed by Ted Moser



Arguably, he is a fool who reviews a book by a former boss and friend, a book, moreover, in which the reviewer has a bit part.

Here writes a fool.

So, reader, this is no disinterested dissection of Dic Doyle's *Hurly-Burly* but a partisan review. I was predisposed to love the book, and did.

Any chronicle has shortcomings. If comprehensive, it is too long; if of readable length, it has omissions; if it pulls no punches, it appears vindictive. *Hurly-Burly* is of readable length, and rarely vindictive.

It is a book for journalists and newspaper junkies. Its focus is probably too narrow to give it wide appeal, but for those in the field it is the next thing to required reading.

Doyle's writing ranks with the best of the excellent craftsmen to whom he was mentor. Mostly it is deceptively unobtrusive, punctuated with wit, incisive turns of phrase and self-effacing humor. The mannered style that on occasion infected his otherwise excellent Globe and Mail columns after his retirement as editor-in-chief and before his appointment to the Senate is not found here. Easy reading, this, and most enjoyable.

Those who have worked at the Globe during Doyle's tenure will, as they read, see him striding through the newsroom to his office, seeming lost in thought, reading glasses atop his head, jacket open (almost never in shirt sleeves). Hey, the most formidable editor in the land looks almost ordinary.

Some of his most marked characteristics can be sampled in or deduced from the book: His deft mind, probing at issues from all sides, his tendency to play the devil's advocate to determine the strength and validity of a line of argument, his deep compassion for the underprivileged, especially abused children; and his strong sense of social justice, his determination to get his way on matters of deep concern to him.

Usually he did get his way (except in choice of federal governments) but not by *diktat*, which he seldom employed. He ruled by logic and persuasion, a side to him that may not come through in the book, and that helps explain the enduring respect his employees had for him; it is much more pleasant to be cajoled than commanded.

Doyle skips through his *Globe* years from episode to episode, tracing the principal stories and editorial issues. Inevitably, some stories and issues must be ignored. The word is that Doyle had to trim his first manuscript drastically, which may explain some of the missing events.

There is, for example, no mention of Hugh Winsor's thalidomide stories. Winsor joined the *Globe's* investigative team in the early 1970s. (As Doyle notes, the team was established long before Watergate made such teams *de rigueur*.) He was assigned to investigate a suspicion by publisher James Cooper that Canada's thalidomide victims were getting the same pathetic settlements from the offending drug companies that were making headlines in Britain. As it turned out, the terms of the settlements muzzled the victims, but after three months of diligent digging Winsor produced shocking stories that led to substantial increases in settlements.

Another absence in the book: In the mid-1970s Gerald Seniuk, a soft-spoken Saskatchewan lawyer, joined the investigative team. He was sent to Elliot Lake where claims by the uranium miners' union that the high death rate from lung cancer was job-related had gone unheeded for years. His mix of

human stories and investigations of mine safety led to a provincial royal commission that in turn led to much stricter mine safety legislation, and belated recognition by the (then-titled) Workmen's Compensation Board that lung cancer was job-related. Unfortunately for journalism, Seniuk left the *Globe* after only a couple of years to accept a judgeship in Saskatchewan.

Doyle is proud of the national-newspaper concept first enunciated by *Globe* founder George Brown, and its evolution to full realization 140-odd years later in Doyle's last years at the paper. It is one of the book's continuing themes that will fascinate newspaper junkies.

Another is the publisher-editor relationship. As editor, Doyle worked with (not for) three publishers. He had high regard and affection for James Cooper, a newsman before he became publisher.

He writes of Brigadier R.S. Malone with a certain amount of affection. He never says so but leaves the impression (which I suspect he tried to avoid leaving) that the brigadier was a bit of a light-weight.

He seems impressed by current publisher Roy Megarry's business acumen and daring, and he worked well with a man whose business-school management approach didn't appeal to him.

His story of the corporate struggles that led to the Thomson take over of the *Globe* is perhaps the most intriguing in the book. He offers some detail of the *Globe* staff's successful battle to keep the paper out of the hands of Conrad Black and in particular John Bassett, a battle led by himself and Megarry. *Globe* veterans will revel in the evocation of those heady, frightening and ultimately triumphant days.

Most of the *Globe* editorial staff had little regard for the editorial quality of Thomson papers, but sensed that, if Howard Webster couldn't reclaim control over the *Globe* from the faltering FP chain, then Thomson was the best choice, that Thomson wouldn't tamper with the *Globe* and would give it the financial backing it needed, and so it has proved.

A personal note here: I was extremely grateful to Ken Thomson for saving the *Globe* from Bassett's clutches, but since my return to Alberta I have seen the results of a more typical Thomson takeover. The *Lethbridge Herald* was one of the papers sold by FP along with the *Globe* to Thomson. It was one of the country's best small daily newspapers. Within a few years it had fallen deep into mediocrity, its only saving grace a thoughtful editorial page.

Doyle started his career on a Thomson newspaper. Perhaps Thomson ownership wasn't as debilitating in his early days, but the side of the schizophrenic Thomson organization that encourages mediocrity rather than excellence isn't brought out in *Hurly-Burly*.

In an epilogue Doyle sketches the events leading to the dismissal of editor Norman Webster and managing editor Geoffrey Stevens, but those looking for a detailed accounting of it, together with a suitable biting Doyle commentary, will be disappointed.

To be expected, perhaps; Doyle cares too much for the *Globe* to reopen healing wounds a year or so after their infliction. And he doesn't believe Megarry and his new editor, William Thorsell, will change the *Globe* into a specialized publication like the *Wall Street Journal*.

His main concern in the epilogue is with the growing trend for political reporters to judge as well as report. The *Globe's* editorial page "might one day, like the human appendix, become useless to the newspaper anatomy, something to be extracted if it twinges. Should that occur, I will weep, for that tendency to slant the news took hold in my time at the paper and I did not root it out."

Maybe not, but he has elevated the practice of journalism in Canada in other ways. In engaging fashion, this book tells how, and why. ❑

Ted Moser served as national editor and managing editor of the Globe and Mail. *He is currently publisher of* The Pass Promoter *in Blairmore, Alberta.*

Training the journalistic poodle

Managing the Media

by Ed Shiller
Bedfordhouse, 209 pp.

Reviewed by Rae Murphy

One approach to *Managing the Media* may be to imagine a poodle reading Barbara Woodhouse or a speckled trout reading any issue of *Field and Stream.* There's a sense of melancholy in the realization that even the yappiest poodle can be trained, the most worldly trout made powerless to resist the shining lure, and that the media can indeed be managed. How easy it is! Just follow the steps Ed Shiller outlines in his seminars and now recycled in this "how to" book.

There's little time wasted here on insights into the evolution from what we have come to call "media relations" to actually "managing" or "controlling" the media. No search for the primal press release: "God announces ambitious plan to part the waters." Nor is there any apparent thought given to the implications of the notion that news is a product and the media its market. Instead there is merely the untenable assumption that media relations has something to do with the dissemination of truth.

Shiller's premise is that the disinterested reporter left to his/her own devices will almost always get the story wrong. "How do you pick the best candidates for political office when you don't have a decent understanding of the issues upon which the parties are campaigning?" he asks. "Decent understanding" is then provided by the spin doctors. And independent political reporting, as thin and endangered now as the ozone layer, is even further undermined.

It is, of course, quite natural for every profession and occupation to boast of its

socially-redeeming qualities. And the less these qualities are apparent, the more vigorously one tends to proclaim them; but Ed Shiller does get carried away by his own enthusiasm.

"Inaccurate and misleading journalism also erodes the underpinning of our economy. The business decisions that all of us *(sic)* make...are based in large measure on the information we glean from radio, television, daily newspapers and specialized magazines.

"If we don't have truthful and complete information, the quality of our decisions will suffer.

"The price of substandard media coverage, therefore, is paid...by those who rely upon media for the information needed to function effectively in a highly complex and ever-changing political and economic climate.

"Looked at from this perspective, then, managing the media is not an option. It's an imperative."

The tobacco industry, at least, should agree completely.

Once upon a more modest time, effective PR could boast not of turning robber barons into philanthropists but merely of appearing to do so once in a while. But no longer are we dealing with illusions: now the whole weight of the world economy, and even democracy itself, rest on the frail shoulders of a coterie of unappreciated flacks. Indeed, as Shiller warms to his topic, he addresses the distressing fact that the PR person gets no respect, even inside the company being touted. A mere dispenser of "bullshit," the PR person is the victim of lousy PR. Physician heal thyself! Clearly Shiller has committed one of the cardinal errors of media relations: he has misdirected his message. *Managing the Media* should be directed at the boss, not at the ink-stained wretch who writes his speeches.

To dispel the "myth of the modern public relations practitioner as a sleazy hack..." he advises getting a bookcase for the office and filling it with "...books, magazines and brochures of PR topics." One could also read them, he suggests.

Once safely ensconced in office with bookcase, the job begins. Here we need a plan, and Shiller sets one out, recapitulated in point form at the end of each chapter. This public relations by numbers covers the entire territory, starting with press releases: (tense--present; verbs--active) make those releases like news stories and they'll get printed, unsullied by copy editor, unquestioned by hack or hackette. Shiller moves along to more sophisticated deceptions such as planting whole stories. "Your contact must not only be trustworthy, he or she must also be a good journalist. There is no sense in planting a story if the reporter is going to get it wrong."

Frustrating indeed. Actually, in Shiller's ideal world, the journalist would disappear completely. But until then, he advises on the care and feeding of the species, including what to do if you don't want to answer some questions or disclose certain facts -- don't let yourself be intimidated, change the subject and follow your own agenda.

Yet with all this, his overriding concern is with various examples of "poor reporting" and what remedial action can be taken. Shiller has an easy time defining when the media get it wrong. They get it "right," apparently, when they share the viewpoint of the press release or speech and get it "wrong" when they don't. Obviously when the media don't interpose themselves at all -- when the story is published as planted, the release untampered with or the questions soft enough -- the media are well-managed and doing their job. Thus, in however many re-formulations, the notion that good media relations and good journalism are the same thing.

But it's not until page 186 that Shiller unloads his manifesto: "The underlying goal of any media relations program is to instill positive attitudes among key publics, so that these people will respond in favourable ways as situations arise in the immediate, intermediate and distant future."

Instilling positive attitudes is not the goal of journalism. Just as snapping at the shining lure is not in the best interests of fish. ❑

Rae Murphy teaches journalism at Conestoga College.

Donna Logan has been appointed vice-president of CBC English Radio. She will be responsible for all CBC English language radio broadcasting on two national networks and 31 stations. As program director of CBC radio since 1984, Logan has brought significant changes and improvements to the network. Under her leadership, CBC radio enjoyed its highest ratings to date last fall.


Donna Logan

Dick Thompson, executive vice-president of the *Regina Leader-Post*, is now executive vice-president of the *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*. He has been replaced by *Leader-Post* business manager **Ed Schultz. Ed Sebestyen,** the former executive vice-president at the *Star Phoenix*, is now Armadale's Executive Director of Corporate Developmental Planning.

Peter Calamai has been named editor of the *Ottawa Citizen*'s editorial page. He has served as Washington correspondent for Southam News. The *Citizen* has also named its first ombudsman, **William MacPherson**. He has been the *Citizen*'s assistant editor since 1977.

At the *Gazette* in Montreal, former editorial writer **James Ferrabee** has moved to the position of business editor. He replaces **Hugh Anders**, who has taken over the post of editorial writer and business columnist.

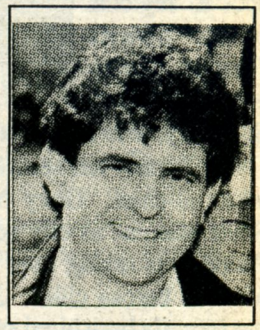
Also in Montreal, **Pierre Paul Gagne**, former assistant managing editor and news editor of the Sunday *La Presse*, become editor-in-chief of the news desk. He is replaced by **Daniel Marsolais.**

J. Jacques Samsom has become interim editor-in-chief of *Le Soleil* in Quebec City, replacing **Claude Gravel.**

The Record in Sherbrooke has a new sports editor, **Bruce McFarlane.** McFarlane is from Bishop's University, and replaces **Scott David Harrison**, who went to the *Oshawa Times* as a sports reporter.

There have been quite a few changes at the *Vancouver Sun* in recent months. **Mike McRanor** has moved from assistant managing editor to the new position of executive editor. **Shelley Fralic**, former special project editor, has also moved into a newly created position, that of deputy managing editor. **Paul McElroy** has taken the post of deputy business editor.

There have been a number of shifts among senior editors at the *Whig-Standard* in Kingston. Entertainment editor **David Prosser** is now the editor of the editorial page. **Noreen Rasbach** and **Norris McDonald** join him as news editors, replacing **Doug Ronson.** Ronson is the new sports editor, and former sports editor **Doug Graham**


David Prosser

-30-

Frederick McClement, a flamboyant Toronto journalist and author, has died at 73. He worked at the *Toronto Star* for 17 years, and was a founder of the Toronto Press Club. McClement's books earned him an international reputation, and his articles appeared in *Time, Life, Reader's Digest* and *MacLean's.*

Jim Rennie, former deputy managing editor of the *Toronto Star*, died in a car accident February 26. Rennie, 49, came to the *Star* from the *Toronto Telegram* in 1968, left to become executive editor of the now-defunct *Ottawa Journal*, then managing editor of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. He returned to the *Star* in 1988, and helped set up the paper's newsroom computer system.

John (Bud) Wild, 72, has died after a short illness. He was a journalism professor at Western University for 36 years before retiring in 1983. He helped establish its Master of Arts program, and freelanced for *Time, Life* and *Fortune* magazines. Wild began his journalism career in high school, working at the *London Advertiser* and *Free Press*. He was chair of Western's journalism department from 1952 until 1972.

Bob Matsyk, news editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, has died of a heart attack. Matsyk, 43, began his career as a copy boy at the *Free Press* 20 years ago. He became news editor last year. ❑

has become sports columnist. Long-time reporter **Lynn Messerschmidt** is the new city editor. **Steven Bonisteel**, previously regional editor, has become systems manager for the newspaper. His spot as regional editor awaits former city editor **Gillian Sadinsky**, who is now on leave.


David Warren

Nick Palmer has become the *Sun*'s new editor-in-chief. **Gary Mason** replaces **Scott Macrae** as city editor, and **Keith Baldrey** is taking over the position of Victoria bureau chief. **Justine Hunter** has recently been hired as a reporter in the Victoria bureau.

CKVA radio station in Edmonton has a new announcer/producer, **Michael Short.** Short was formerly at CKO-FM radio in Edmonton.

At the *Kelowna Daily Courier*, **Ted Jacobs** has joined the news team as a reporter. **Pat Bulmer** has also joined the news team from his position in sports.

Richard Mason is moving from CKAT radio in North Bay to CJLB radio in Thunder Bay. And former CJLB reporter **Dana Wilson** is moving to CFCH, CKAT's AM station.

Sue Sgambati is a new reporter at CHUM in Toronto. **Robbie Evans** changes from the station's weather specialist to its traffic reporter.

David Warren, editor of *The Idler*, joins the paper as political editor while city columnist **Judi McLeod** and veteran reporter **Mary Lasovich** have left the paper. Lasovich has joined the Charlottetown-based women's publisher Ragweed Press/gynery books.

At the *Tillsonburg News* in Ontario, **Ian Robinson** was hired as editor January 1. Robinson was formerly editor of the *Times*, based in Simcoe. **Wendy Kudeba** became assistant news editor, moving from the *Sunday Times* regional.

Red faces: The sequel

Content would like to correct errors made in the previous issue of Short Takes. At the *Calgary Herald*, **Susan Ruttan**, the new lifestyles editor, was previously assistant news editor, not a reporter. New travel editor **Margaret Sharp** replaced **Dave Pommer**, not **Ron Nowell**. Nowell was, and still is, business editor.

At CBC television in Calgary, **Kathy Daley** came from Winnipeg, and was not a current affairs writer at the Calgary station. The new reporter at the station is **Russell Oughtred**, and the senior producer of current affairs is **Sydney Suissa.**

To clarify, **Carolyn Purden** remains editor of the *Anglican Journal*, and is joined by news editor **Vianney Carriere.**

We extend our apologies for these errors, and thank the individuals who brought them to our attention. ❑

Soviet exchange

The Canadian-Soviet Media Interchange Committee will select five Canadian journalists to visit Moscow and three other cities in the USSR as guests of the Soviet Union of Journalists. Domestic costs are covered. Participants in the exchange pay their airfare and a $75 fee. To apply, send a CV, three to five samples of recent work, and 500 words on why you would like to be chosen, before April 30, to Kathy Lieber, national coordinator, 4208 Beaconsfield Avenue, Montreal Quebec, H4A 2H3. Three copies of each application document are requested. ❑

ANNOUNCEMENT

FOUR-MONTH FELLOWSHIPS

MICHENER

In the late 1960s, when he was still Governer General, the Right Honourable Roland Michener established an annual award for "meritorious and disinterested public service in the field of journalism." In 1982, the Michener Awards Foundation was set up with the principal purpose of perpetuating this special award which has been made to print and broadcast organizations for two decades now.

The Foundation seeks to advance education in this field. Its aim is to foster journalism that promotes the public interest and demonstrates high social values of benefit to the community as a whole.

The Foundation therefore invites mature journalists interested in public service through journalism to apply for one of two study-leave fellowships. These are awarded annually and are worth **$20,000** each.

Applicants are asked to submit proposals describing how they would use **four months** of out-of-office study time at a university of their choice, and how this would enhance their competence as journalists.

It is expected most applicants will wish to be attached to a university for the period. Applications to cover other planned projects of research and study will also be considered.The study may be carried on outside Canada if the recipient has the necessary resources.

Five fellowships have been granted in three years: a project to study and report on media ethics in Canada, the U.S., Britain and France; a study of Third World issues; a study of biotechnology and biotechnology research in Canada; a study of magazine supplements for daily newspapers; and a study of public policy on abortion in Canada, including comparisons with Sweden, France and the U.S. Two of these projects were for publication or broadcast in French, three in English.

Applications should be sent by May 31, 1990 to:

The Michener Awards Foundation
151 Sparks Street, Suite 309
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 5E3

Letters of application should set out the following information:

1. **Academic background of the applicant** (Include programs followed at university and academic standing on graduation or in last year.)
2. **Other Interests**
3. **Work experience** (Include the kind of journalistic work you have done and the main areas you have covered. Specify organizations worked for.)
4. **Achievements** (Outline your most successful efforts in journalism. Attach six to eight clippings, photocopies, scripts or cassettes of some of your best work.)
5. **Plans for leave** (Outline what you propose to do if you receive a fellowship. Provide some evidence of proposed attachments to university if possible and practical. If university is not involved, describe your plans for research and study. There is no objection to you writing on the results of your work for broadcast or publication.)
6. **Support of employer** (Attach a sealed letter from an appropriate representative of your employer giving an assessment of your potential, agreeing to the necessary leave and indicating any additional support through part salary or travelling expenses.)
7. **Evidence of approval** of the study leave by the university where the studies will take place.

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