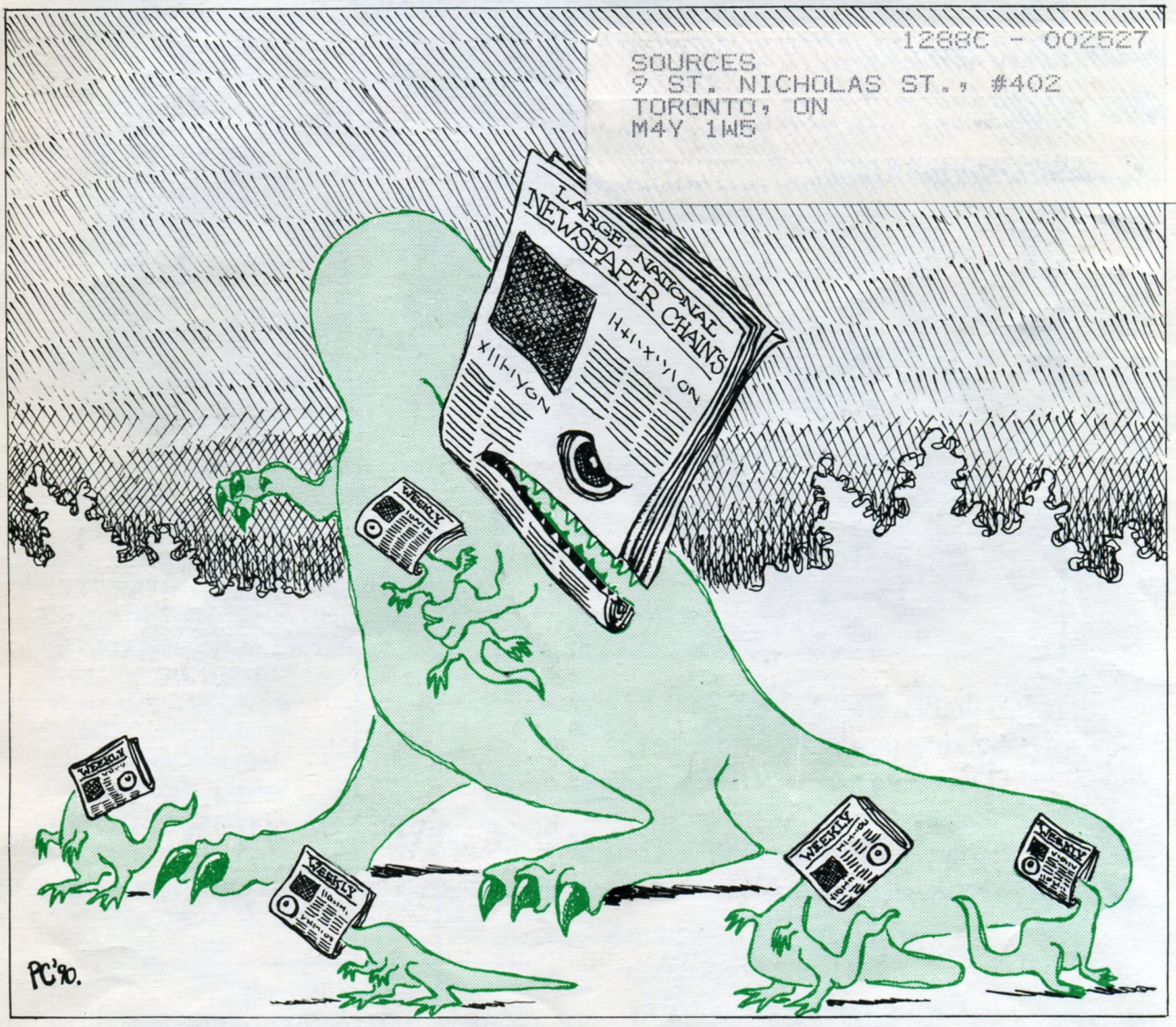
content

for Canadian journalists

$2.50 *July/August 1990*

Endangered Species



Media disdain for the little party/CIJ now CAJ

QUALITY CHILDCARE
A CAW Priority

CP PHOTO

In 1987 the CAW negotiated funding for childcare from the Big Three auto makers. The first fruit of that funding is a new childcare facility, the first of its kind in Canada, located in the city of Windsor.

A special feature of the centre is the extended hours of operation – 6:00 am to 1:00 am – required by shiftworkers. Three-year-old Melanie Roach (above) gives CAW president Bob White a tour of the centre at the official opening in April.

CAW TCA
CANADA

National Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers Union of Canada, (CAW-Canada)

Contents

content
for Canadian journalists

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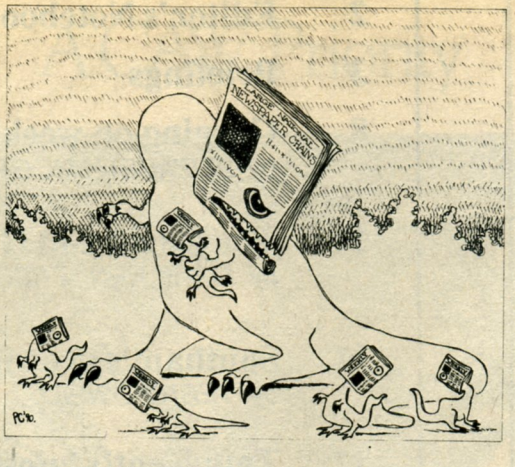
Editor's Notebook



Newspaper conglomerates have continued to grow despite warnings, Senate inquiries and Royal Commissions. The latest invasion of independent papers has been manifested in weeklies and community papers.

Elizabeth Moore has sketched developments reducing the number of weeklies and community papers on a nationwide basis. Mark Henderson has given a personalized account of what happens when a newspaper group moves in on an independent. The bruises don't fade in a hurry. And Southam, Inc. has demonstrated what happens in a province such as British Columbia.

Senator Keith Davey and Tom Kent, authors of studies into newspaper ownership, reemphasize what impact growth can have on smaller enterprises.

Elsewhere in the magazine, Doni Eve discusses the changing role of women in the media.

Ken Regan describes the arrival of Murdoch Davis as bustling managing editor of the *Edmonton Journal*.

Don Gibb contrasts the redesigned *Globe and Mail* and other more upbeat papers such as the *London Free Press*, the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Calgary Herald*.

Media treatment of small parties is analyzed by Bob Roth, the refurbished CAJ, with its new name and new policies, is given a review by Lawrence McMahen and regular columnist Ron Verzuh looks at who critiques the media. ❑

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(This issue released for distribution in August 1990)

CP modernizes photo service

Faster and better! It may sound like an advertising slogan, but that's what many Canadian newspaper photo editors are saying about EPDs — electronic picture desks.

Over the next few months, dozens of Canadian daily newspapers will be installing EPDs in their photo departments. The move is prompted by a decision by The Canadian Press to change its wirephoto service from an analog to a digital signal on Jan. 1, 1991. Starting that date, the 78 newspapers subscribing to the service won't be able to receive the pictures unless they have an EPD.

The reason for the change?

"The industry is going into digital information," says Jack Picketts, chief of pictures at the CP head office in Toronto. "The electronic equipment that newspapers are using for pagination requires a digital signal."

Another reason is cost. "One digital signal is substantially cheaper than four analog channels (currently used) because of what satellite companies charge for space," Picketts says.

CP has agreed to make a bulk purchase of Crosfield EPDs and install them at member newspapers at a cost to the newspaper of $18,000 a unit. The newspaper can either pay CP in full at the time of installation, or through a four-year, lease-to-own arrangement.

CP vice-president Jim Poling says many wirephoto subscribers have already placed orders. "Thomson newspapers has asked CP to begin the installation as quickly as possible," he says. So far, only one subscriber has indicated it won't buy the system. (It is looking at other kinds of EPDs.)

The Crosfield EPD consists of two computer-like monitors plus a keyboard and mouse control which are jointly used to direct the flow of photos through the system and to make changes to individual pictures, such as image enhancement, cropping and sizing.

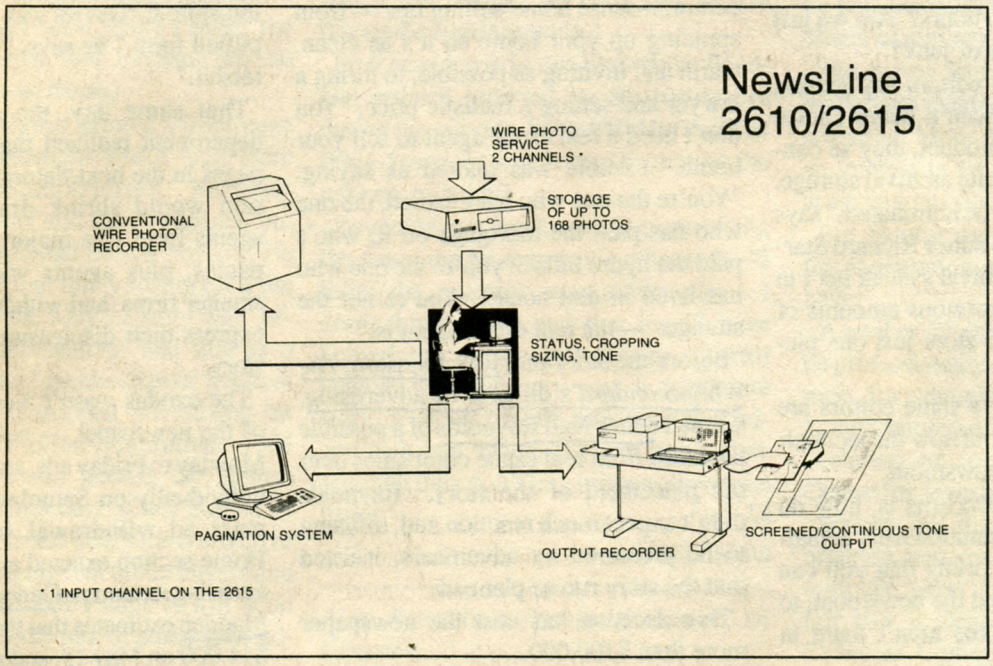
Photos the newspaper wants can be saved in the computer or printed out on laserphoto paper. The basic EPD can store 120 pictures, or about one day's worth of transmissions. Once storage is full, new pictures over-ride the old ones and unless an editor has saved a picture electronically, the image disappears. Enhanced storage is available, at an extra cost, and CP recommends that newspapers buy as much as possible.

CP contends that newspapers will recover the start-up cost for using EPDs in a few years through savings in laserphoto paper, the "hard copy" many newspapers use for editing and production purposes. The wire service estimates that most small newspapers now spend at least $8,000 a year for the paper, copying up to 100 pictures a day. If the EPD reduces the number of photos printed out to about 20 a day, the saving would be $6,800 a year.

Some photo editors aren't convinced that the savings will be that large. Steve Mackras of the *Edmonton Journal* says his paper will have to spend a total of $51,000 to get the Crosfield system plus a digital receiver, a digital printer, software and memory to produce the hard copy it needs. Mackras says the alternative would be to hire a full-time EPD editor to select photos for printing, as opposed to letting the laserphoto machine print out all the incoming pictures.

Yet savings in other areas are predicted in the long run. At the *Hamilton Spectator*, where an advisory board is still debating which EPD system to use, photo editor Jack Hourigan says he will use the system to digitize local photography as well, eliminating the cost of darkroom work.

Newspapers which currently subscribe to Associated Press's Photostream will soon receive the service via CP. Steve



How an electronic picture desk works

Mackras says this will save his paper between $16,000 to $20,000 a year.

At the *Victoria Times-Colonist*, photo editor John Colville says that when CP goes digital, he'll need someone to operate the paper's year-old EPD full-time.

But he also has questions about quality and quantity with the new service. According to CP, images which took up to eight minutes to transmit along analog lines will be sent digitally in under a minute. Color images which now take about 30 minutes to send will take only five minutes. Colville says he'll get his usual daily total of pictures in less than three hours. "What happens with the other 21 or 22 transmission hours? Are we just going to get 21 hours of junk?"

While many photo editors say getting more pictures will mean a better choice and a better quality product, they're concerned about inadequate archival storage.

"Hard copy will not be eliminated," says *Ottawa Citizen* photo editor Richard Starnes, "because the archival system isn't in place yet. It takes enormous amounts of digital information to store just one picture."

CP's Jim Poling says some editors are also apprehensive about how the technology will change the newsroom.

"One of the main concerns is, how do you make the transformation from actually having a stack of prints that you can handle and pass around the newsroom, to EPDs where the photos aren't there in hard-copy form?"

The *Citizen*'s Starnes says EPDs will mean big changes.

"As EPDs begin to integrate with pagination, they'll become a production hub. As composing rooms and the production side shrink, so the responsibility will shift to electronic picture desks and picture desk people for picture output, picture quality and picture everything, between the newsroom and the presses." ❑

— Stephanie Chamberlain

Stephanie Chamberlain is a freelance journalist living in Ottawa.

Realtors flex muscle over 'offensive' story

On Saturday May 12, the *Kingston Whig-Standard* published a story entitled "Selling it Yourself" on the front page of its Homes section. The story, by staff reporter Murray Hogben, profiled Dr. Lynn Larabie, author of a book called Sold By Owner!, a do-it-yourself manual for people wanting to sell their house privately, without the help of a real estate agent.

The piece outlined some of Larabie's common-sense home-selling tips — from sprucing up your home so it's as clean, warm and inviting as possible, to hiring a lawyer and setting a realistic price. "You don't need a real estate agent to sell your home," Larabie was quoted as saying. "You're the one who has cleaned, the one who has paid the mortgage on it, who's paid the hydro bills ... you're the one who has lived in that house. You're not the stranger — the real estate agent is."

Before the story ran, Ray Johnston, *The Whig-Standard*'s director of advertising, warned editor Neil Reynolds of a possible backlash from real estate companies over the placement of the story. Reynolds didn't expect much reaction and, refusing to be pressured by advertisers, insisted that the story run as planned.

That decision has cost the newspaper more than $100,000.

As Johnston predicted, the reaction from Kingston realtors was swift and vitriolic. Word soon got around that the incensed realtors were planning to protest the story, perhaps through some kind of boycott of the newspaper.

On Thursday May 17, Reynolds, Johnston and publisher Michael Davies attended a weekly gathering of about 150 area realtors. During a question and answer session, some agents complained, among other things, that the Hogben story was in poor taste, that it was a non-story and wasn't worth running in the first place, and that it seemed as though *The Whig-Standard* was trying to put already hard-pressed real-estate salespeople out of business. Davies said that while he understood why the agents were upset, the newspaper could not sacrifice its editorial integrity by promising that such stories would not appear in the future.

"There was no question that these people took deep offence at the publication of this story," Reynolds says of the meeting. One prominent broker who was there offers a more graphic description of what transpired: "Davies was like chicken in a pitbull farm," he says. "They tore him to ratshit."

That same day, the newspaper's ad department realized that the number of pages in the next Saturday's Homes section would shrink drastically. Sales agents from five major real estate companies, plus agents with a handful of smaller firms, had withdrawn their ads to express their displeasure with Hogben's story.

The exodus wasn't a complete boycott of the newspaper — nobody pulled any Monday to Friday ads, and agents decided individually on Saturday ads — but the mass ad withdrawal from Saturday's Home section exacted a hefty toll on advertising revenues. General manager Fred Madden estimates that the newspaper lost $14,000 on May 19, and a similar amount on the next two Saturdays.

The loss was particularly painful in light of the fact that the newspaper was already under some financial pressure, as evidenced by a hiring freeze imposed earlier in the year.

The beneficiary on the protest was *Kingston This Week*, a twice-weekly paper owned by Torstar's Metroland subsidiary. It prints a weekend real estate ad supplement with ad rates roughly half those of *The Whig-Standard*.

One Kingston broker, Bill Murray, of Pratt & Murray Realty Ltd., insists that the partial boycott was not an attempt to exert influence over the editorial content

of the newspaper. The issue for realtors wasn't so much the content of Hogben's story — which Murray admits was fairly innocuous — but its placement, right in front of all the real estate ads.

Murray also says many independent agents felt "betrayed" by the newspaper. He says that when *Whig-Standard* representatives proposed the Homes section ideas to local realtors a year ago, they indicated "it was a complement, you know, to complement the real estate industry, not to knock it. ... If they wanted to put that story in another section, hey, there was nothing wrong with that. But to put it in the section that was supposed to be designed to complement the industry, then I think that was what really caused the furore." (Madden and Johnston say no such promise was made.)

On May 29, Davies printed a front-page Publisher's Statement which said there had been "some friction" between Kingston realtors and the newspaper, but denied that there had been a boycott. He acknowledged that many realtors felt the publication of the May 12 story was "offensive and provocative" and that as a result, some had "exercised their freedom of choice" and stopped advertising on Saturdays. Davies concluded: "*The Whig-Standard* will publish the Homes section every Saturday. It has proven itself in the past as the area's most effective vehicle for bringing real estate buyers and sellers together, and I hope it will soon return to its normal mix of stories and advertisements."

Not yet.

Advertising director Johnston says that by mid-July, the Saturday ad volume still hadn't returned to the levels before the story, although some of the agents have started buying "token" ads on Saturday. He figures that the newspaper has lost approximately 65 pages of ads since May 12, representing $120,000 in ad revenue.

But Johnston says that realtors' ire over the story may not be the only reason for the drop-off in ad sales. First, he says, the housing market is soft and interest rates high, so realtors may simply be placing fewer ads. Second, realtors may have chosen to stick with *Kingston This Week*, which has cheaper ad rates and "a less rigorous editorial stance."

Fred Madden says that despite the financial setback incurred by the newspaper during the episode, he's confident that *The Whig-Standard* will "come back over the next six months."

Reynolds says he doesn't regret running the story, but he regrets the aftermath. "I think the response was unfortunate. I don't think in the end that it will have helped the agents sell houses. I still believe that the story was a legitimate story. ... What I really believe is that advertisers buy space. It's that space they buy, and they don't buy influence over the paper." ❑

— Alec Ross

Alec Ross is a freelance writer in Kingston.

Journalism teachers eye association

Should journalism instructors at Canadian universities have their own association? If so, what kind of organization should it be?

Journalism teachers are being invited to a meeting in Toronto this fall to begin working on answers to these questions.

The meeting follows up on a survey of university journalism faculty organized by the association of deans, directors and chairs of university journalism schools.

The survey found strong interest among journalism faculty in the creation of an association. More than 40 people indicated an interest in joining an association and attending meetings.

But faculty were sharply divided over the orientation the association should have.

A total of 27 felt the association should be professionally oriented, so that it might meet, for example, in connection with the annual conference of the Canadian Association of Journalists (formerly the Centre for Investigative Journalism).

Sixteen felt it should be academically oriented, perhaps meeting in conjunction with the other "learned societies." Six felt that it should be a section of the Canadian Communications Association,

the academic organization representing scholars in mass communication.

Preferences tended to break down along institutional lines, says Carleton University's Anthony Westell, who conducted the survey. He says faculty at schools like Carleton and the University of Western Ontario tended to be divided over whether the organization should be academically or professionally oriented, while faculty at more professionally oriented schools, such as Ryerson, were strongly in favor of a professional association.

There was also division on the question of membership: 12 respondents said membership should be restricted to faculty of university-based journalism schools; eight supported including university faculty plus community college journalism faculty; and 21 thought membership should be open to all university and college faculty teaching journalism-related courses.

Peter Desbarats, dean of journalism at Western, says a "rump Parliament" of the association of journalism school deans, directors and chairs decided at a meeting following this year's CIJ conference that the question of forming an association should be discussed by as many faculty as possible. The directors selected Saturday, Sept. 29 as the date for the session. John Miller, head of the journalism program at Ryerson, will be the host.

Desbarats says one of the major attractions in creating an association is giving faculty a chance to get together and exchange information. The chairs and directors of Canadian journalism schools have had an informal association for about six years, he says, and he finds the information exchanges at their meetings to be extremely valuable.

Desbarats says the morning session of the September meeting will include panels on education issues and topics of interest to teachers. The afternoon will be devoted to talks on the role, scope and purposes of an association.

He doesn't see the meeting as "a make-or-break debate" on the idea of academic versus professional orientation.

"When the time is right for something to happen, it happens. This meeting will be held to gauge whether this is the right time for this association to happen." ❑

— Catherine McKercher

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

Report urges j-school for B.C.

British Columbia desperately needs a university-level program in journalism, a new report on higher education says, but instruction in the field should be in the hands of journalists.

"Leave the teaching of journalism to journalists — that's the key," says Gerald Porter, chairman of a task force which studied journalism education and author of its report, entitled A Blueprint for Tomorrow.

In journalism parlance the report, commissioned by the B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training and released this spring, opens with a punchy lead, lamenting the province's "flagging" journalism schools, which comprise a "minor league" training system that is "falling apart in some areas."

Journalism training is too important to ignore, the report says. "Journalists — reporters and editors — shape our world, color our perceptions, tell us what to think about. They have enormous power — the power of selection."

The report makes a number of recommendations, including:

- The creation of a school of journalism that would grant undergraduate university degrees;
- A marriage of the existing radio-television program at the B.C. Institute of Technology and the print program at Vancouver Community College;
- Enhanced journalism education in Northern B.C.;
- More and better-targeted funding for journalism education;
- The establishment of a centre for journalism studies, which would serve as a resource centre for working journalists, media scholars, business and government policy makers and members of the general public.

British Columbia offers no university degree in journalism and its two-year college programs are underfunded. The report says that despite improving job opportunities, employers in both print and broadcast media are dissatisfied with the quality of B.C.'s graduates, in terms of general education and practical training.

The state of journalism education in B.C. is a disadvantage, both to aspiring journalists and to media outlets. That's why the province needs a "free-standing professional school" affiliated with an accredited university, but with strong input from the industry. The report says people from the journalism business should be in the majority on both curriculum and admissions committees.

"Journalism education is too important to be left strictly to the academics," it says.

Bruce Strachan, the province's advanced education minister, has given the proposed University of Northern B.C. in Prince George his support as the site of the journalism school.

But Porter has trouble with the idea. "There's a problem with Prince George," he says. "It's not just that it's in an odd place (800 kilometres north of Vancouver), it's that we need a program now, as soon as possible, and Prince George doesn't even have any buildings yet."

Simon Fraser University in Burnaby has also expressed interest. Its department of communication is now writing a draft proposal. "We have everything in place to handle it," says department chairman Martin Laba. "We're the most appropriate place for a journalism program."

Porter says he's of "a mixed mind" about the idea because a journalism program at Simon Fraser would be a branch of the school's communications department, not

a free-standing school. The task force report says journalism education is a field of study unto itself, "not the step-child of another discipline."

Porter denied suggestions that his report is anti-academic in its vision of the ideal program.

"We try to make the point that a good education is fundamental," he says. However, he favors a program controlled by people who have "major experience as journalists" and are also trained as educators. ❑

— Mike Gasher

Mike Gasher is a Vancouver freelance writer and a graduate student in the department of communication at Simon Fraser University.

Defence college wants you!

Picture this: 10 months away from the daily grind of the newsroom. Ten months spent meeting with experts in defence, social policy, economic policy and foreign aid. Seventeen weeks of that 10 months spent on the road, including 90 days of foreign travel. The cost to you and your employer: your salary and the cost of maintaining an apartment in Kingston, Ont.

ndc

The cost to the National Defence College: approximately $100,000.

So how many journalists are taking advantage of this offer? None this year, says Major-General Andrew Christie, commandant of the college. None last year. A handful in the last decade.

And that's a shame, he says. "We'd like to have someone from the media along on every course."

The college, which was founded in 1947 and is funded by the department of national defence, offers a unique experience in education for people who are well past regular schooling.

The idea behind it is to target people who are going to serve in positions of influence — in government, the military or in the private sector — and teach them about political, economic, social and military factors affecting domestic and foreign policy. Perhaps the best-known alumna is Flora MacDonald, who attended the college in the early 1970s and later became external affairs minister.

Gillian Sadinsky, an editor at the Kingston *Whig-Standard* who went on the course a few years ago, says the chance to spend time with her classmates was one of the highlights. She says several of the people who were on the course with her are "real high fliers" who now occupy senior posts in government, business and the military.

Christie says 44 people are enrolled in the course each year. Thirty-five of them are Canadians, including 12 military officers (from the regular forces and the reserves). The other Canadians are civilians — federal, provincial and territorial civil servants and officials from government agencies, as well as business people, professors and representatives of church organizations. Each course also includes nine officers and diplomats from the U.S., Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

The course, which lasts 44 weeks, is divided into terms. Each includes classroom work and travel. As part of a term of Canadian studies, members of the course travel to Ottawa and all provincial capitals. Travel to the U.S. is included in the term on Canada-U.S. studies. The itinerary for the international studies term varies, but may include trips to Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East. The international studies term also includes an examination of how the U.S., as a superpower, projects power to the rest of the world. The course winds up with a term called "whither Canada," during which participants discuss the policy ramifications of all they've seen.

At a lunchtime speech to the Canadian Managing Editors' Conference in Kingston in early June, Christie made a pitch to get journalists on the course. He distributed brochures to the editors and urged them to consider sponsoring an applicant. In an interview later, he said he thinks it's important to involve people who will be communicating policy to the Canadian public.

So why have so few journalists attended the college? "Money," says Sadinsky. Unlike the Southam Fellowship or other traditional journalism fellowships, the defence college doesn't pick up any part of the cost of a journalist's salary. Sadinsky took a leave from her job to go on the course and lived off her savings for the year. But she had an advantage over many other journalists in that she lived in Kingston and didn't have to worry about extra living expenses.

In addition, Christie says, the program has a fairly low profile. It is not designed specifically for people in the media, and he thinks many simply don't know about it.

Major media organizations are on the course mailing list, but Christie recently discovered that college brochures were addressed simply to the organization, not to a particular individual or department. "We've decided to redirect our efforts," he says. "Next year we'll send one letter to the publisher, by name, and one to the managing editor, by name."

Sadinsky says that any journalist who has a chance to go on the course should leap at it.

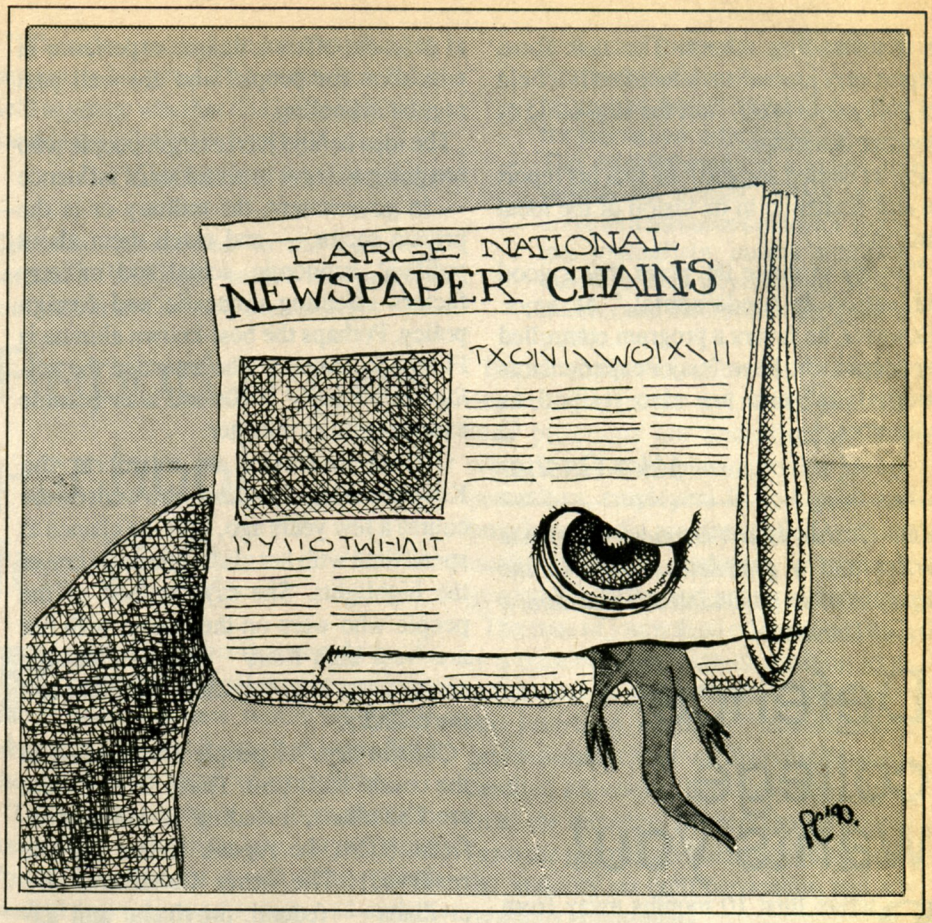
"Is it worthwhile? Absolutely," she says. On a personal level, she says, two things stand out: the opportunity to learn, and the chance to get to know her classmates. From a journalistic standpoint, she adds, "Obviously, the more you get to know about the world, the better you'll be as a journalist." ❑

— Catherine McKercher

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

Gold Rush!

Quest for profits has media barons casting covetous eyes on community press



Within the pages of Canada's community newspapers, there is hidden gold.

That's the most compelling explanation behind acquisitions which have swept up independent community newspapers across the country throughout the last decade.

Among the Canadian Community Newspaper Association (CCNA)'s 690 members the balance has quickly tilted for the last three years from a majority of independently-owned to a majority of group-owned newspapers, says Ross Mavis, the association's executive director. A group is defined as owning three or more publications.

Regional group ownership is as old as the hills, but the growing interest of media giants like Thomson and Torstar is relatively recent.

By Elizabeth Moore

In the mid-1960s, the *Toronto Telegram* and the *Toronto Star* looked at trends in the United States where successful suburban papers were moving in on daily advertising ground, sometimes resulting in the folding of the daily. The *Telegram* formed Inland Publishing to handle its growing stable of community papers, and the *Star* formed Metrospan.

In February 1981, the *Toronto Star*'s parent company, Torstar, bought Inland and in July combined the two to form Metroland. Dailies bought into the community papers simply to protect themselves, says John Baxter, president of Metroland.

Through Metroland, Torstar owns about 26 papers in a ring around Toronto. In the last 10 months, it has expanded its regional empire to towns like Kingston, Barrie and Peterborough.

Despite being related by ownership, the *Star* and the Metroland papers compete strongly for advertising, believing that it serves advertisers better, Baxter said. "Sibling rivalry is always stronger."

Other companies which have invested in community papers include Quebecor, Cogeco and Telemedia in Quebec, Island Publishing and Metrovalley in British Columbia, Armadale in the Prairies, Newfoundland Capital, Laurentian Publishing in northern Ontario and Rannie Publications in southern Ontario.

Southam has just ventured deeper into the attractive pool of community papers with its 63 per cent ownership in Lower Mainland Publishing in British Columbia, which manages 14 weeklies and 24 community publications. It already owns 16 daily papers and 15 community publications in Canada.

The CCNA's marketing director, Michael Anderson, says

highly competitive community papers have chipped away for years at the advertising base of the Vancouver dailies.

Mavis says if a daily sees suburban competitors, it has two options. It can change its format and appeal to the markets targeted by the community papers or it can seek some form of amalgamation.

The communications committee of the House of Commons will include the purchase of community papers by dailies in its agenda this fall.

Committee member MP Ian Waddell said the committee will look at the issue not so much from a competition point of view, but from an information point of view.

Southam spokesman Brian Butters says the company will continue its hands-off policy and that Lower Mainland will still be run by local people once Southam gets approval from the competition bureau.

Moves like Southam's aren't surprising given a recent Maclean Hunter study in which it was found that weekly papers had the most growth in advertising revenue of any medium between 1983 and 1988 at 115 per cent. This figure surpasses the average for all media which was 59 per cent, including dailies at 59 per cent, television at 44, radio at 42 and periodicals at 32.

The CCNA knows, from the Print Measurement Bureau study for 1990, that 9.4 million English-speaking adult Canadians read a community newspaper once a week. In 1989, community papers had 9 million readers, and in 1988, 8.7 million.

Leonard Kubas, president of the Toronto research firm Kubas Consultants, says that beyond their wide readership, community papers are also attractive to advertisers because they target a specific audience.

The advent of desktop publishing has also helped these publications by allowing improvements to their appearance and their content, Kubas said.

For all these reasons, including the loyalty of many readers, Anderson says the 1990s present a window of opportunity for community papers.

There is a natural fit, businesswise, between publishing a daily and a community paper for the same market. Many community papers are delivered free while dailies are not. Owning community papers allows a publisher to offer advertisers readers not being reached by the dailies, Kubas says.

"Buying a major daily and thinking you're getting everything covered — those days are gone."

Community papers are not a "pitch and read" like daily papers, but are picked up on several occasions and sit on the table, he said.

Fred Runge of Runge Newspapers, which publishes seven weeklies in the Ottawa Valley and prints about 30 more, said the biggest challenge community papers have had is to sell national and provincial advertisers on their wide readership.

Anderson says community papers also have to fight a perception among some advertisers that they are unprofessional, a perception that he says is antiquated.

But as more and more community papers give up their independent status for group ownership, there has been concern that more than just a business transaction is at stake. Loyal readers have complained that the new ownership has made the paper impersonal or is overly concerned about the bottom line.

Jeff den Biesen and his wife have owned the *Bridge River-Lillooet News* in Lillooet, B.C., since 1973. No more than five papers in the B.C. interior are still independent, den Biessen says. The others are owned by two or three groups.

Den Biesen says he has mixed feelings about group ownership. Groups could sign exclusive deals for national advertising, cutting out independents, he said.

Independent papers are more likely to have a publisher who works not just for a salary but for the love of it, he says. "The bottom line is not always the financial line."

But others feel group ownership can be a boon for some papers.

Kubas says that in the area served by the *Toronto Star* and Metroland, he doesn't think anyone would say the residents are not well-served.

"Ownership is not an issue when you consider the economies of scale and the resources that can be brought to bear. Weak papers can be carried by the success of strong papers."

Kubas says he believes the call for an investigation into concentration of ownership is unwarranted. Newspapers and other publications are not like radio or television stations which are constrained by limited frequencies, he said.

Mavis of the CCNA points out that group ownership can reduce administrative and printing costs, allowing some papers to survive when a community's economic base could not support an independently owned paper.

When a community is unhappy with its paper — whether it is independently or group owned — affordable desktop publishing breaks the barriers to competition arising. Competition will ensure a good newspaper, not ownership, Mavis says.

"In the end the reader and the community will benefit. If a large group fails to do its job, it knows full well a competitor can spring up overnight," he said.

In fact, such a situation arose recently in Kanata, an Ottawa suburb. Once a market served by two weekly competitive papers, Kanata saw the *Kanata Kourier* picked up by Runge Newspapers last summer, followed by the *Kanata Standard* this spring.

Some former *Standard* employees, unhappy with the merger resulting in the *Kanata Kourier-Standard*, have now launched a new weekly, the *Kanata Free Press*, using desktop publishing technology.

While this time Runge was the takeover artist, he says he wonders where the trend to corporate ownership will end. Some day, he speculates, he might receive an offer attractive enough to sell his company to a larger concern. ❑

Elizabeth Moore specializes in business journalism and now works at the Ottawa Citizen. *She has worked at the* Report on Business *of* The Globe and Mail *and at the* Edmonton Journal.

A tale of three newspapers

By Mark Henderson

It's the modern version of the David and Goliath syndrome.

In our society, there seems to be a natural tendency to root for the little guy and frown on any large business that swallows up its smaller competition. This is particularly true of the newspaper business.

People view group ownership of newspapers as somehow unsavory and contrary to the competitive spirit which supposedly fosters growth and the free exchange of ideas. And indeed, there is truth to the contention that group ownership is not in the best interests of the public or the people who work in the newspaper business.

A case in point is my experience in the weekly newspaper market in Kanata, Ontario, a wealthy suburban municipality of 35,000 just outside Ottawa. In the last four years, I have gone from editing a truly community-owned newspaper to working for the same publication under two different owners.

The first takeover proved to be beneficial while the second was disastrous, prompting my decision to resign and help form *The Kanata Free Press*, an upstart competing weekly which is now providing Kanata with the newspaper competition it has come to expect.

Back in 1985, *The Kanata Standard* was a paid circulation weekly with about 6,000 subscribers. Its only competition was *The Kanata Kourier*, a monthly newspaper produced by a teenager out of his parents' basement.

Under the direction of a volunteer board of directors, *The Standard* poked along, confident that it owned the market.

All this changed when the aforementioned teenager got more ambitious, secured some additional financing and moved up to weekly publication, blanketing the entire city, supported completely by advertising revenue. The competition hurt *The Standard* and in early 1988 it was sold to a Montreal company that published *The Suburban*, Quebec's largest English language weekly newspaper.

Just weeks before the takeover, however, *The Suburban* itself had been sold to AMAV Industries, a large cash-rich toy company that was interested in acquiring a portfolio of publications, mainly in the Montreal area.

The benefits from this group ownership were immediate and substantial. Wages went up, *The Standard* was transformed into a free, blanket weekly and I was elevated to the role of managing editor.

Times were good. *The Standard* grew, advertising was healthy and the paper successfully promoted itself on the fact that it was the most reliable source of news and information in Kanata. Trained journalists produced the copy while a crack team of advertising reps made sure we had the space we needed to cover the city properly.

That all changed in May when the competition, now owned by the Renfrew, Ontario-based Runge Newspapers chain, made AMAV an offer it couldn't refuse.

The Standard's success was apparently getting in the way of Runge's plans to expand into the lucrative Ottawa-Carleton market, so after several unsuccessful months of trying to gain the upper hand, it did the next best thing: Number Two bought out Number One.

The Standard office was quickly closed and our staff was moved to *The Kourier*'s office space. It was a devastating blow which I felt could be endured only if the integrity of *The Standard* was allowed to exist as it had before.

Yet two weeks and several hollow assurances later, it had become obvious that *The Standard* was no more. Its size was changed from the popular tabloid format to an oversized broadsheet, euphemistically called "metro", the size common to all of Runge's seven small-town Ottawa Valley weeklies. Next, the name was changed to *Kourier-Standard*, and a *Kourier* employee was placed in charge of overall operations. Although my title was still managing editor, the managing publisher had the final say on all editorial content, an excessive degree of authority which was exercised on my first editorial and subsequent decisions regarding which articles would run and how they would be slanted.

Robbed of its format, name and editorial integrity, *The Standard* had effectively ceased to exist. Worse still, Runge's policy of using editorial personnel to design and lay out the paper and shoot and develop the photographs meant there was little time to devote to news gathering.

The quality *The Standard* was once so proud of was no longer possible as all aspects of the newspaper operations were forced to fit into a preconceived mode.

Now I and four other former *Standard* employees are back in business as *The Kanata Free Press*, a weekly blanket tabloid which is giving Runge a run for its money in the growing Kanata market.

It's hard work and resources are few, but I'm comforted by the knowledge that editorial and marketing decisions can be made independent of a chain which imposes procedures and policies geared only to improving the bottom line.

The fruits of competition are already making themselves felt. Runge, in a move to lessen the impact of *The Free Press*, first changed its Thursday edition to the tabloid format (under the name *The Kanata Standard*), followed in July by the Thursday edition, ridding Kanata of the "metro" format the chain had attempted to impose.

The newspaper war that has distinguished the Kanata community newspaper market for so long is heating up once again, and given the alternatives, I wouldn't have it any other way. ❑

Mark Henderson is a five-year veteran of weekly newspaper journalism in Kanata.

Have lap top will travel (but where to?)

by Terry O'Neill

For the past 10 years, reporters looking to land a job with a daily newspaper in Vancouver had two choices — apply to work for the morning Southam paper, *The Province*, or apply at the afternoon Southam paper, *The Vancouver Sun*. Only in the community newspaper field could a journalist find diversity of ownership.

No more. This spring, Southam Inc. took control of 14 Lower Mainland community papers, giving it a hold on print media unmatched in any other Canadian region. Many a politician and academic expressed concern that such concentration of ownership could have dire consequences. Said MP Ian Waddell (NDP — Port Moody-Coquitlam): "There's a real danger when so much of the print media is held in so few hands." Eventually, Parliament's standing committee on communications and culture agreed to hold hearings this fall into the matter.

Not much was said, however, about the effects of the Southam purchases on journalists. Many feel that Southam's overwhelming influence in the metropolitan Vancouver area is bound to have some impact psychologically if nothing else. The issue was touched upon briefly when *The Province* ran an editorial assuring its readers that newsroom staff would simply walk out the door if they ever encountered interference from head office. However, an astute reader wrote back, noting that "since Southam now owns almost all the papers in the Lower Mainland, where would you walk to?"

The question was left unanswered, but its implication was clear: other than to Hacker Press, which runs 14 other metro Vancouver community papers owned by Liverpool-based Trinity International Holdings, there is virtually nowhere else to go. Journalists, especially those with an independent bent, suddenly find themselves with very limited options.

How did Vancouver's newspaper scene reach such a stage of concentrated ownership? Did not the Davey Committee of two decades ago, and the Kent Royal Commission 10 years later warn against such a development? The short answer to all of the above is that the federal government has simply refused to take steps to limit concentration of ownership in the country.

A special Senate committee headed by Senator Keith Davey was the first to warn in 1970 of the growing menace of corporate concentration in the media.

Ten years later, the public outcry over the closing of *The Winnipeg Free Press* and *The Ottawa Journal* prompted the formation of the Royal Commission on Newspapers. Tom Kent's commission recommended that a National Newspaper Act be created to prohibit further concentration of ownership by chains, to "correct the very worst cases" of concentration and to provide incentive for wider ownership of newspapers.

Today, Kent stands by his recommendations, and says that if they had been adopted, the take-overs by Southam of the Vancouver area community papers would not have been allowed.

Southam's move into community newspapers was apparently motivated by a realization that weeklies had been eating into the advertising and circulation of its Vancouver dailies. "I thought it was a very, very good business for us to get into," said David Perks, publisher of Southam's Montreal *Gazette* and chairman of Lower Mainland Publishing Ltd., the company controlling the new group of community papers. The move also makes it more difficult for anyone else to establish a new daily in Vancouver.

Perks says the new community holdings will be operated separately from the dailies, and that all will have complete editorial independence. Nevertheless, the possibility remains that Southam could use its unique ownership position to impose editorial conformity on its dailies and weeklies. Robert Hackett, assistant professor at Simon Fraser University's communications department, says that especially in a time of crisis, there could be pressure to have all the papers toe the company line.

Hackett also says that chain ownership can lead to a homogeneous corporate style, less in tune with individual communities. As well, there may be more concern with the bottom line than with journalism. There are increased possibilities of conflict of interest, especially when a chain has holdings in other fields.

On the other hand, Hackett points out that chain ownership can make small newspapers more independent of a local elite and less bound by local prejudices.

As well, chains can provide financial resources for investigative journalism, and the introduction of new technology. He also said that Southam's purchases may have helped maintain a more competitive market in the Vancouver community field. "Who knows," he says, "maybe the takeovers prevent Trinity from increasing its hold."

What a chain does with its papers depends on the particular chain itself, Hackett notes. Southam has a solid record of encouraging editorial independence and excellence, and has not indicated it will alter that. Indeed, Perks announced last June that Southam Newspaper Group will keep the 14 suburban papers at arm's length until a federal competitions investigation into the purchase is completed.

Economics, not public interest, drives the newspaper business in Canada, and despite what the parliamentary committee finds this fall, this is not likely to change. Journalists may find their options limited, and readers may find that papers lack unique points of view, but the industry's course was set decades ago. The Canadian government has made no attempt to change it. ❑

Terry O'Neill is a senior writer at the British Columbia Report, *a weekly news magazine.*

'We told you so...'

By Tom Kent

Ten years ago I had ideas and hopes about journalism in the '80s. Those were, to put it mildly, rejected. So why should my views about the '90s be taken seriously?

The case for the defence of Kent has to be that those of us associated with the Royal Commission, and with the preceding Davey committee, are entitled to the painful consolation of having "told you so." I would address that comment particularly to the Southam organization.

The central purpose of the commission's recommendations was to preserve the daily newspaper industry; that is, to save newspapers from further absorption into conglomerate business empires, within which they are mere divisions valued by their proprietors chiefly for the large cash flow that they can contribute to further empire-building. We pointed out that, within the existing framework of law and taxation, this process of conglomeration was bound to continue to the bitter end, to the disappearance of a distinct newspaper industry.

Within the existing framework, the business economics of the media are that a media property is worth more to the proprietor if it spends less on the space or the time between the ads. Of course, like all phenomena in economics, that is true only within a certain range. There are minima below which cost-cutting drives away readers or viewers or listeners. But the minima are considerably below the requirements of professional journalism.

In the Southam organization of 1980, as in some still independent newspapers, profit maximization was qualified by a significant measure of journalistic responsibility. For that reason, Southam was an attractive target for takeover. The commission proposals would have removed the danger. In any event Southam management through the '80s has been chiefly engaged in desperate attempts at self-preservation by other means. The eventual outcome remains uncertain and, sadly, has become less important, because the latest poison pill has been made acceptable to enough shareholders only by cost-cutting that makes journalistic standards less secure. Of course, it's easy to understand why Southam's traditionalist management looked askance at preservation by means of the commission's recommendations. For much of history everywhere, and still today in many countries, it is the power of the government that suppresses or at least limits the freedom of the press. Even in a society as liberal as ours, it's not easy for any of us to recast our thinking to recognize that now the more effective enemy is within. In an economy as dominated as ours by large corporations with diverse wide-reaching interests and large degrees of monopoly power, the problem for journalists is to obtain the resources required to inform the public, accurately and fairly, intelligently and interestingly.

There are, as always, conflicting pressures. On the one hand, as the matters that affect us all become more complex and as the interests of the public become, if not deeper, at least broader and livelier, then the gatekeepers of information — the media — have an unavoidable choice. Some abandon any attempt to do the job, retreating into irrelevancy. But the rest can cope only by becoming more sophisticated or — perhaps most of us would prefer to say — more professional.

At the same time, however, the instruments for manipulating information and opinion, instruments in the hands of the captains of politics and industry, also become more sophisticated.... But the scope for manipulation has increased and will increase further, unless we can deploy the countervailing power of an alert, investigative press.

Whether the media have the power depends, first, on numbers. There must be enough journalists for many to have time to make themselves well-informed and dig deeply into a story.

Second, it depends on pay standards adequate to attract, and to hold, able people.

I emphasize a third prerequisite for effective media. They must be operated in a spirit that constantly stimulates, and satisfies, the previous combination of enthusiasm and care that good journalism requires.

For many people, "investigative journalism" has something of the aura of the dark cloak, if not the dagger. Certainly its purpose is to give public exposure to matters of public interest that persons with some kind of authority would prefer to keep dark. But it is important to be clear that this calls for more than investigative technique. The journalist's background, knowledge and understanding are equally essential to the detection and accurate reporting of such matters.

It is equally important that the attitudes of investigative journalism should extend beyond particular activities to issues, to questioning the assumptions behind established policies and practices. If journalism had not played its part in this way, we would not have experienced the environmental revolution at the speed it has taken place.

On less obvious subjects, however, the media do not always serve the public well. The contemporary example is Meech.

Whatever the reason, the fact is that almost all journalists have been uncritically swept along by the hysteria. Consequently, the prophesy of "doom without Meech" has become self-justifying. Investors are worried. They go away or stay away. The dollar falls. Interest rates rise even higher. The crisis has been conjured up by, to put it kindly, political miscalculation. But it is now unavoidable that the failure of Meech would be widely interpreted as a damaging failure of Canada.

But need it have been so? If the media had thoroughly explored the Meech issues in 1988, when they were under discussion among academics and constitutional lawyers and were already entering the political consciousness, the politicians might have been induced to seek calmer and more constructive solutions than we can expect in the panic of June 1990.

What is illustrated is the importance to our society, to our politics and economics, of professional, investigative, analytical journalism.

So what do we do? You will do all you can to raise standards by your own efforts, in your work, in the journalism schools, even in our weak press councils. But the main problem is with the media proprietors. It is to induce them to pay for more professionalism.

Freedom of the press is often thought of as the variety of voices in the sense of media units. Certainly as much variety as is now practicable is desirable. Certainly we should not allow the wholly unnecessary restrictionism of cross-media ownership. But the most basic freedom is not that of an inevitably fairly small number of media proprietors. It is the freedom of journalists, of journalists with the time and resources to inform and investigate and analyze, to provide variety in interpretation and opinion within as well as among media units.

How? The experience of the past decade has confirmed that we will get little progress if company law and taxation remain as they are. We need larger and more secure public resources for the information programming of the CBC. Mostly, we need tax and legal change that would induce the other media proprietors to spend more on their information content. ❑

This is an excerpt of a speech Tom Kent delivered to the annual convention in Winnipeg of the Centre for Investigative Journalism, now the Canadian Association of Journalists. Kent was chairman of the Royal Commission on Newspapers in 1980-1981.

Getting the media we deserve?

By Senator Keith Davey

Our first and primary concern, honorable senators, was the concentration of media ownership, especially the concentration of print ownership.

Here the situation, I am sorry to say, in the last 20 years has gone from bad to worse, even without cross-ownership; that is, multimixed media ownership by various media conglomerates and so on.

The situation was bad enough in 1970. Twenty years later it is that much worse. In 1970 there were 116 dailies, of which 60 per cent were group-owned. In 1980 there were 117 dailies, 75 per cent of which were group-owned. In 1989 there were 116 dailies, 80 per cent of which were group-owned. I believe that leaves us with exactly 23 independent newspapers. Thomson controls 25 per cent and 32 newspapers; Southam owns 33 per cent and 17 newspapers. The situation is worse still in French Canada. Fifty per cent of the dailies were group-owned in 1970, and now 90 per cent are group-owned.

Honorable senators, gone is the *Telegram*, gone is the *Montreal Star*, gone is the *Winnipeg Tribune*, and gone is the *Ottawa Journal*. It is true thay have been replaced by a series of *Sun* newspapers, which is owned and controlled by Maclean Hunter, the biggest media conglomerate in the country. Yes, the *Globe and Mail* is a significant newspaper, but all of those other Thomson dailies still take more out of their communities than they put back in. Meanwhile, the *Toronto Star* has something of a love affair. David Jolley at the *Toronto Star* must blush and blanch when he meets with his friend, John Fisher of Southam.

Perhaps a brief additional comment on the Southam-*Star* relationship would be in order. Since 1985 Torstar has owned 23 per cent of the voting stake in Southam, while Southam, in turn has owned 23 per cent of the non-voting stake in Torstar. The Southam family, meanwhile, owns 22.6 per cent of Southam's stock. A standstill agreement preventing *The Star* from mounting a takeover expires in June.

The question we have to ask ourselves is: Does all of this print media concentration really matter? Should we bother about it? I think categorically the answer is "yes." I have never believed in a media conspiracy. I have never believed that there is a group of owners who get together and have breakfast to decide whatever it is they want to make the Canadian people believe on that particular day.

I think that the conspiracy of media ownership is not realistic. But the fact is that the owners, the people who own and control the mass media, particularly the newspapers, are all the same kind of people doing the same kind of thing with the same kind of private enterprise rationale.

All right, so it doesn't really matter. Well, in our report we dealt with this question of concentration by quoting the distinguished American jurist, Justice Hugo Black. He stated:

> "...the widest possible dissemination of information from diverse and antagonistic sources is essentially to the welfare of the public. A free press is a condition of a free society."

Again, we said in our report that the prudent state must recognize that at some point enough becomes enough. If the trend towards ownership concentration is allowed to continue unabated, sooner or later it must reach the point where it collides with the public interest.

One-half of all Canadians read daily newspapers. That is the good news. The bad news is that more and more

Canadians are spending less time reading those newspapers....

The fact is, however, that we really do not know what is happening in our society if we do not read newspapers. I frequently speak to student audiences — particularly Grade 13 and those in first-year university — usually about the media. I like to point out to them that everything that Peter Mansbridge says on *The Journal* on a given night could appear on one-quarter of the front page of the *Ottawa Citizen*. That is just a fact. Fewer and fewer young people are taking the time to read. I think that is a sad reality. It is something about which we should be extremely concerned.

Whether we like it or not, honorable senators — and I guess I do — print still orders society's agenda. True, it is television which defines how we respond to those items on the agenda, but it is still print which lines them up....

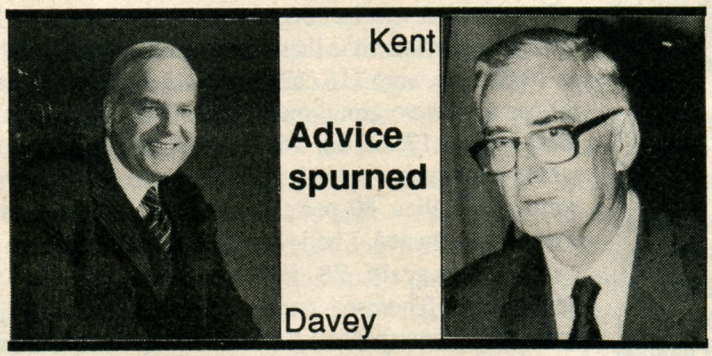
I also want to observe that press councils, which our committee helped to inspire, are working. They are not fast enough; they are not tough enough; and they are without enough public attention. What are we to think about the recent regrettable trend of allowing print advertising to pass for journalism. That is happening more and more, and it is a very distressing situation.

In 1970 we proposed a press ownership board to deal with the problem. The Liberal government of the day did absolutely nothing. No government has done anything about it since. However, it is never too late in my opinion. Perhaps it is in the national interest....

Our second concern was about the quality of all those media voices. The questions we asked ourselves were: What is a good newspaper? What is a good television station? What is a good radio station? The response was essentially a very subjective determination. How successful is that newspaper or broadcasting outlet in preparing its audience for social change?

Change then and now need not be feared if it is understood, which is not to suggest any built-in bias for or against anybody's notion of progress. It is rather to assist people to accept and to understand change. Indeed, there have been many examples of the media preparing us all for social change.

Twenty years later there are more journalists and they are better educated. Frequently they achieve celebrity status. There are examples of the media responding properly. I think of the escalating role of women in our society. I think regrettably of drugs and violence. I think most of all of the environmental crisis. In other areas there has been room for improvement. I think of the impending worldwide population catastrophe, which is virtually ignored in the press. I think of the decline and fall of the church. I think of the grisly state of poverty in Canada. The beat goes on.



On a sour note, there are fewer and fewer journalists of consequence in "small-town" Ontario. Small, honorable senators, is not better. Great journalists head for the big cities. Good for them, and good for you if you live in one of those big cities.

Honorable senators, I should like to talk about cultural survival. In softer, gentler, kinder days 20 years ago we were all quite optimistic about Canada. Our own flag, Expo 67, and a new Prime Minister all helped to create an ebullient mood about Canada. While Roy Thomson was right — the Americans were our best friends whether we like it or not — we were collectively anxious to demonstrate and expand our Canadian identity. Music, as was radio, was an excellent case in point. Unhappily, I have not said much about radio in this presentation except to observe that there has been an FM explosion, that bigger stations still garner bigger revenue and that the little guys continue to struggle. Too often the best announcers head for the big cities, which too often results in a lower standard of broadcasting at the small stations.

We enthusiastically endorsed Pierre Juneau's Canadian content requirement. Many broadcasters told us it just could not be done. There was, they said, no Canadian music worthy of the name. You all know what happened, and what is happening — from Anne Murray to Rita MacNeil, from The Guess Who to Blue Rodeo. Canadian newspaper ownership has been guaranteed by legislation passed, thanks to Walter Gordon, in the mid-1960s. Yet not too long ago the editor and director of *The Globe and Mail* wondered aloud if it was not time to allow American newspapers to start up in Canada. I ask, why on earth? It seems to me that we have more than enough American media entering this country on a daily basis and continuing Canadian newspaper ownership must remain a priority....

Finally, honorable senators, the media we need or the media we deserve? Twenty years later, regrettably, it is still the media we deserve. Then, as now, we do not have the media we need; we still have the media we deserve. That, of course, is because an overwhelming majority of Canadians do not know, for example, who owns the newspapers they read. They do not know how to find out who owns the newspapers they read. These are the Canadians who spend so much of their lives existing at the soggy centre of the political and social spectrum, and not making the kind of contribution which we need to have made in this country. ❑

This is an excerpt from a speech given by Senator Davey in the Senate on May 9, 1990. Senator Davey was chairman of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media in 1970.

What's in a name?

For CIJ, a hope for a better, brighter future

By Lawrence McMahen

After 12 years of aspiring to the feisty goals set by the founders of the Centre for Investigative Journalism, more than 250 reporters and editors at the CIJ's annual three-day convention in Winnipeg have now set new aims. They hope a new name for the 850-member national organization will mean a bigger, better future for their professional development, regional and national networking, and the group's latest growing activity: Lobbying on contentious national media issues.

But more importantly, the 82 per cent majority which voted to change the group's name to the Canadian Association of Journalists (CAJ) are betting they haven't gambled away the critical perspective, that edge, the adversarial stance that from its start made the CIJ something special: A leading force for quality, in-depth reporting in this country.

Whether the CIJ ever fully lived up to its founders' aims is open to question. Many original members — like *The Globe and Mail*'s Jock Ferguson and Toronto freelancer Nick Fillmore, say it strayed years ago — that the name change is just the final nail in the 'real' CIJ's coffin. While the CAJ will state on its letterhead that it "incorporates" the old CIJ, unless it makes a concerted effort fast to serve the country's investigative journalists, rumor has it there may be an effort to start a new version of the more narrowly focussed CIJ that was begun in 1978.

Building on '60s radicalism, the 1972-1974 Watergate drama and the Canadian media ownership debates that fuelled the 1970 Davey committee and the 1980 Kent commission, the core group of Toronto and Montreal investigative reporters who started the CIJ wanted to end the isolation of Canada's serious, in-depth reporters and editors — even independently funding investigative stories that reporters couldn't do in their own newsrooms.

Great idea. It fit the times. But, ironically, the same heightened public debate about journalism's role in society that spawned Davey and the subsequent Media '71, '72, '73 and '74 national journalism conferences also sparked a desire in hundreds of Canadian reporters for a very general professional association. So, fully 350 people, most of whom were far from seasoned 'investigative' reporters, showed up for the January 1979 CIJ-founding convention. That was at least 200 more people than expected.

The squabbles over name and aim began then and never stopped. The question almost tore the association apart at the rambunctious 1986 convention in Vancouver — divisive enough already over the issue of whether or not to hear South African Ambassador Glen Babb.

While the CIJ always held to the goal of fostering more and better investigative reporting, for many years now its leaders have unashamedly said they wanted to do much besides: They wanted to truly fulfill the demand for a professional association writ large, the notion that's been around since the founding convention.

So — fittingly at Canada's mid-point — members voted to change the name, and 'go for it' as a full-fledged national professional association.

Most would say it's really been such a beast for years, in everything but name. And many sage observers —like Southam national columnist/CIJ past-president Don McGillivray and Peter Desbarats, Dean of the University of Western Ontario's Graduate School of Journalism — say the name change signals a welcome maturing of the organization.

At this convention it truly acted the part. The excitement, even for someone who clings to the original CIJ credo, was infectious. Newly-elected president Julian Sher, a dynamic Montreal-based producer for CBC The Fifth Estate, called it "the most successful convention in years." Returning board member Harold Levy, a member of the *Toronto Star*'s editorial board, said this session was "exciting, vital, with lots of energy."

The convention dealt with many leading-edge issues: The Journal's planting of microphones on main players at last year's NDP leadership convention; newspapers's trend to McNugget news; journalists's rights to speak out on issues as ordinary citizens; the treatment of the Meech Lake debate; business reporting; the portrayal of newspeople on CTV's news show, ENG.

Keynote speaker Ann Medina, former Middle-East correspondent for CBC's The Journal and now an independent film producer, made a plea for open-minded reporting, versus pre-planned, story-board treatments that rely on the 'experts.'

"Take off the blinders,...don't suspend journalistic judgement...reporting is discovery, not story-boards," she argued.

Citing her experience, she said "We would talk to the 'gurus,' read the research and they all thought they knew the story — but time and time again they were wrong.

"The world is changing, and we're always so damned surprised, day after day...we must ask, what is the story 'on the ground?'"

In a panel on "Journalism into the 90's," Tom Kent, who headed the officially ignored Royal Commission into Newspapers in 1980-81, agreed with

moderator Peter Desbarats that "the growth of the CIJ is "one of the few good developments in journalism in Canada" in recent years.

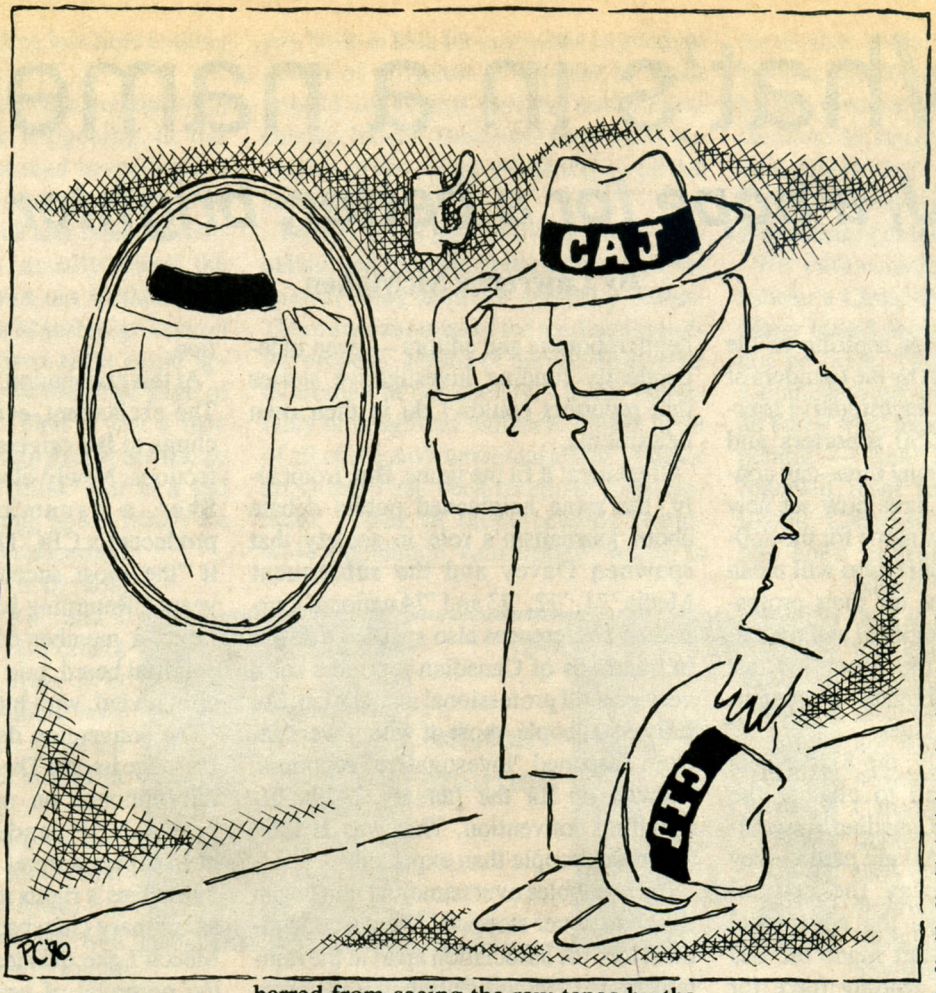
But he held to his report's argument that journalism suffers from a lack of media owners's investment in more professional reporting and editing — and he said the media have been far from investigative during the recent Meech Lake debate.

On the same panel, former *Winnipeg Tribune* and *Vancouver Province* editor Dona Harvey said reporters face a battle to maintain journalistic standards in an increasingly "lean and mean' corporate media environment in the '90s.

Laval University Arts Dean Francois Demers said he's pessimistic because the space for good political debate in newspapers is shrinking in the face of pressures of entertainment news and world economic pressures. But he's optimistic that technology will provide "journalistic entrepreneurs" with new media opportunities.

In a convention highlight, a panel pitted Regina East NDP MP Simon deJong against The Journal's reporter Terrence McKenna, the person who did the 'planted mikes' story on deJong from last year's NDP leadership convention.

In tense exchanges before 120 CAJ members, deJong and McKenna parried over the media event's details. DeJong argued "The Journal piece was riveting television, but all the pieces don't fit" — largely because McKenna was selective in what he used. DeJong said he's been barred from seeing the raw tapes by the CBC, a move McKenna defended on the grounds of protecting journalistic sources and story-writing decisions.



DeJong admitted his handlers erred when they let him be corralled into a fateful meeting with fellow-candidate Dave Barrett — "I was shanghaid into that room." But he saved most of his criticism for the electronic media.

What really angered him was McKenna's translation — with the help of a Dutch-speaking producer — of a deJong comment to his mother during a critical part of the convention. McKenna reported deJong said the Dutch "moeder" (mother) at one point, but also that he then asked his "mutti" (German for mommie) what he should do.

"Where does the CBC get off? I guess I could go to the courts. I find it irresponsible and unprofessional."

In a session on "Billions of McPapers," *London Free Press* editor-in-chief Phil McLeod avoided criticism of his paper's adoption of the so-called McNugget journalism of *USA Today* and argued "daily print journalism is facing a crisis" because of competition of other leisure alternatives for people's time."

His assertion that eventually papers will be transmitted electronically was accepted by fellow-panelist Gillian Steward, managing editor of the *Calgary Herald*. But, she said, "what concerns me is what is being transmitted — it must be good journalism."

She contested panelist Dennis McKnight's argument that the way to save readership in the midst of marketplace and time pressures is simply to redesign newspapers to be more visual, like *USA Today*. "The content must be of vital interest," she said.

The perennial question of whether journalists have the right to speak out publicly on controversial issues was aired at another panel, sparked by the recent suspension of CBC Winnipeg TV news anchor Mike McCourt for a week without pay for protesting high property taxes at a public meeting. His action violated the CBC's journalistic code of ethics.

CBC regional manager Marv Terhoch defended the move: "We're dealing with one of the cornerstones of our profession — credibility. It goes beyond (a reporter's actual) balance and fairness, to avoiding read or *perceived* bias by journalists."

Winnipeg Free Press columnist Gord Sinclair argued reporters should have the rights, within reason, to speak out. "I'm not advocating that we get up and yell our opinions. We must use common sense.

But when we feel strongly about something, we should be able to express that."

Southam News columnist Don McGillivray said everyone knows journalists have opinions on the issues, and they express them in their columns, but they shouldn't go to the extreme of publicly marching for one group or another.

"The guideline must be: The ultimate responsibility of the journalist is to his audience, not himself," McGillivray said.

New CAJ president Julian Sher, a producer for CBC-TV's The Fifth Estate, questioned restrictions on journalists' rights to express themselves: "This industry has a double-standard. It's considered fine for management to push its positions. Journalists aren't supposed to."

Another panel dealt with the ethical questions surrounding coverage of judicial and public inquiries.

Panelists voiced support for the public's right to the information gathered during inquiries, but worried about the rights of the people accused during testimony to a fair trial in any subsequent legal actions.

"I always wonder about the unguided missiles — us reporting charges that aren't true," one woman in the audience told the panel.

Winnipeg lawyer Hersh Wolch, who has represented parties to inquiries, says he agrees there's a need to cover tribunals, but the media should be selective, not covering every hearing into such topics as "why planes run out of gas."

Wolch's main criticism is that reporters and editors often don't follow-up their coverage of hearings with stories on why there isn't action taken by governments on the inquiries' recommendations.

In other workshop sessions, CAJ members voiced concern about mediocrity in business reporting, coverage of Native issues, boosterism in coverage of the Canadian Football League, and the blurring reality that can result from the use of dramatic re-creations in TV news — all fodder for more investigation at regional workshops in the future.

In the meantime, the newly-constituted CAJ is taking its new national professional association moniker seriously. The board of directors plans a weekend retreat in the Laurentians in mid-July to tackle long-range planning, bringing a further sophistication to the association. Directors will plot how to drive membership over the "magic 1,000" level.

If the old battles carry on, if the major questions of concentration of ownership and integrity of editorial content are as relevant in the 1990s as they were in the '70s and '80s, then the CAJ definitely has an important role to play — offsetting the imposing influence of media owners with the important perspective of reporters and editors who are closest to the reality of Canadian people.

At this year's national convention, the organization has positioned itself well to carry out that role. The question nevertheless remains: Has the original ideal of investigative journalism been lost in the shuffle? ❑

Lawrence McMahen has been a reporter for the Vancouver Sun, *a reporter and editorial writer for the* Calgary Albertan *and is currently assistant editor of a Saskatchewan education newspaper.*

Helping women advance

By Doni Eve

A woman journalist who had held senior positions at her newspaper returned from maternity leave to an assignment usually given to junior reporters. She felt she was being forced to prove herself by starting again at the bottom.

Another National Newspaper Award-winning reporter who could not find adequate day care facilities or baby-sitting near her home felt she had no choice but to leave her job.

These are just two example of the situations women face according to a task force on women's opportunities in newspaper journalism. Formed by the Southam Newspaper Group (SNG), the task force was launched in 1988 by then Southam president Paddy Sherman to study the barriers to women's advancement within SNG. This group is Canada's largest daily newspaper chain, owned by Southam Inc. of Toronto.

The task force, which released its report in April of this year, was co-chaired by Joan Fraser, editorial page editor of *The Gazette* in Montreal and Judi Harvey, manager of office and building services at Pacific Press, which publishes *The Vancouver Sun* and *The Province*.

The task force examined all of SNG's daily newspapers across the country by surveying staff and management and digging up statistics to compare to stories of personal experience. It found that women made up about 36 per cent of the 7,347 people employed at SNG in 1989.

According to Joan Fraser, the task force found much data to back up the suspicion that women had particular problems advancing in the newspaper industry.

"I was quite surprised to discover that in senior management, only five per cent are women," she says.

The report points out that this not only affects women's opportunities in the corporation, but also means women have little input into major news decisions. Shirley Sharzer, Southam's editorial coordinator of training and development, who also participated in the task force, says this is especially true in newspapers.

"In broadcasting, there are more women on the air," she says. "But in print, men make most of the news judgments. They're selecting what goes on page one and how news is played. News comes through a male filter."

One of the report's recommendations has already been implemented at two of the group's biggest newspapers. Senior managers at *The Ottawa Citizen* and *The Gazette* will now have their salaries and opportunities for advancement tied to their efforts in recruiting, developing and promoting women. Publishers of *The Windsor Star* and *The Hamilton Spectator* have protested this policy.

This is probably the task force's most important recommendation, as well as the most controversial. It attracted a tirade from writer Karen Selick on the editorial page of *The Globe and Mail* recently. She says she resents efforts to give women advantages they have not earned.

Fraser points out in response that the report specifically warns against advancing unqualified or incompetent women. However, she says women in the newspaper industry may need extra help with career development because newsrooms, compared to other industries, are slower to adopt modern management practices.

"There's a bit more of a tendency to do it the way we've always done it," she says. "In hiring, for instance, we want to hire someone just like us."

Giving incentives to management is one way to get them to think twice about whether they're doing enough in the development, hiring and promotion of women, Fraser feels.

"If it forces just a new way of looking at advancing people or hiring, they'll find it's not much of a problem," Sharzer says.

The chances of any of the nine other recommendations being implemented will depend on each newspaper. Southam's philosophy has always been to give its publishers a free rein.

Sharzer says this is nice, but could mean some papers may take their time introducing the recommendations.

The report also said Southam should:

— circulate to all its papers a policy statement by the president stating its commitment to "full equality for women."

— ensure that each short list for promotion and recruitment to senior positions include at least one woman.

— establish or support the provision of a child care centre on or near the grounds, where possible.

— adopt supportive policies on maternity, paternity, adoption and dependent sick leave.

— provide information on training and development programs and require senior managers to recruit women for such programs.

Both Sharzer and Fraser say the recommendations are an effort to raise consciousness about women's situations. Whether all of the recommendations are implemented or not, Fraser believes the work of the task force has been a success.

"In the two years since we got going I sensed a change in attitudes toward women in the papers and the corporation in general," Fraser says. "That was constructive."

Whether the report, like so many in industry and government before it, will fade into obscurity or result in changes in women's situations in the newspaper industry will depend largely on those changing attitudes.

Fraser says you can't expect employers to do everything on their own, but accepting the recommendations of the report will be "good business in the long run."

"Women, as well as men, will be choosing employers with enlightened attitudes," she says. ❑

Doni Eve is a freelance journalist based in Montreal.

Murdoch Davis

A man in a hurry

By Ken Regan

When Murdoch Davis joined *The Edmonton Journal* as its new managing editor in May 1989, his reputation preceded him. Prior to his arrival he'd worked at *The Ottawa Citizen* where, over 10 years, he rose from a night reporter to assistant managing editor. During that time he contributed to several significant changes at *The Citizen.*

Given what might be considered in the newspaper business a quick ascendency through management ranks, Davis was seen by some as an up-and-coming star, a man who was intent, if not zealous, in his desire to climb the corporate ladder.

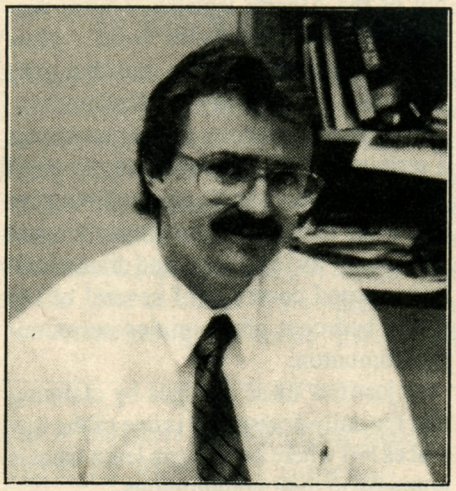
When word of Davis' arrival reached *The Edmonton Journal,* says one reporter, there was already considerable apprehension about what the arrival of "Murd The Impaler," as he'd been dubbed, might mean.

Since starting his *Journal* post, Murdoch Davis' unofficial moniker has changed. Recently a *Journal* staffer remarked that the boyish-looking 36-year-old managing editor is now quietly referred to as "Doogie Howser, M.E.," a take-off on the television character who plays a whiz kid, teenaged doctor.

More significant however, are the changes in the *Journal* newspaper that Davis has implemented.

When he arrived, *The Edmonton Journal* was suffering. For years it had been losing its market share in the Alberta capitol. Major incursions by *The Edmonton Sun* had caused some of the erosion. But years of economic slow-down following Alberta's boom of the 70s had resulted in extreme down-sizing. The content and quality of *The Journal* was slipping and when the paper raised its single copy price from 35 to 50 cents in 1988, circulation plummeted.

"I think the people who are here now," says Davis, "would tell you that they took



Murdoch Davis

a bigger hit in circulation because of that than they'd anticipated."

Enter Murdoch Davis.

In a little over a year, *The Journal* has expanded its news hole, added staff, changed layout style and typography to make an easier read, expanded the Lifestyle section and increased coverage of local news.

With the assorted changes, most of which occurred with *The Journal's* "relaunch" on Sept. 11, 1989, there's been a significant boost in the paper's circulation. The unaudited six-day average circulation in September 1989, according to Davis, was about 157,000. By April 1990, that figure had risen to about 175,000. Similar trends were seen for the Friday *Journal* containing the weekly TV guide, where September 1989 figures showed a circulation of 188,000. April 1990 figures saw that number climb to about 200,000. By comparison, recent *Edmonton Sun* figures show a daily circulation of about 91,400.

With slight modesty, Davis attributes much of what's occurred at *The Journal,* and his climb through the ranks of The *Ottawa Citizen,* to circumstance. "I'm not going to be falsely humble and say it was all an accident," he grins. "I think I do what I do quite well. ...But over the past several years, I've certainly learned that happenstance, circumstance and coincidence have a lot to do with the way things go in this business and in life generally."

As an example, Davis cites what he says was his biggest break at *The Ottawa Citizen:* the 1980 same-day closure of both *The Ottawa Journal* and *The Winnipeg Tribune.* Davis was then night editor at the *Citizen* and the paper published in the afternoon. Upon hearing of the demise of *The Ottawa Journal,* which was a morning paper, his publisher literally told him to make the *Citizen* a morning paper by the next day.

Davis and the rest of the *Citizen* staff pulled it off and Davis was eventually moved into the city editor position. Says Davis, "It was decided that I was someone who could get things done in a hurry."

Similarly, Davis ascribes a fair portion of *The Edmonton Journal's* recent turnaround to a plan put in place by Southam management, the *Journal's* publisher Donald Babick and editor Linda Hughes, shortly before his arrival. Nonetheless, Davis has put his own stamp on the revived *Journal* as well. It shows up in such areas as the Lifestyle section.

"As of May 1989, the lifestyle content of *The Journal* consisted of one page every day that had Dr. Donahue's column and Ann Lander's column, and that was it. ...And on Sunday they had the Brunch section which was kind of a lifestyle-cum-entertainment section. And I don't think anyone could defend that for a metropolitan newspaper in the 1980s," says Davis, "let alone the 1990s."

The trend toward enhancing the Lifestyle section's content is one of the things that has rankled some *Journal* staffers and some long-time readers, but it's a

position that Davis vehemently defends.

"When I got here," he says, thumping his fist on his desk for emphasis, "in some quarters there was an image the *Edmonton Journal* was a hard news newspaper, which is fine. ...But I don't think that being a hard news newspaper is exclusive of doing good lifestyle content."

If Davis becomes animated about some internal criticism on this point, he fairly bristles when asked about the opinions of some outsiders, that dailies have become soft, too visual-oriented and lacking in substance. "I don't understand that," he snaps. "The concept of serving your readers is considered to be selling your soul by some of these supposed journalism critics."

"Some people out there are deciding that they're getting enough information from (CBC's) "The National," "The Journal," and radio and they don't need the newspaper any more," he says.

"Then, (when) newspapers start trying to find ways to convince them that they're wrong, ...why is that something journalism critics decry? ...I don't understand the thinking, I really don't."

In fact, Davis believes that newspapers (at least *The Journal*) have improved by catering to readers' demands for a quicker read and more soft news. "Very few people read everything in the paper," says Davis, "and very few ever did. But we used to run the paper as if they did. Now we've come to realize they don't and we should edit to recognize that. We make it easier to find what they want to read, to evaluate which parts they want to read closely and make it easier for them to digest some of the hard news quickly. That's not the same thing as saying you're going *USA Today* style."

Davis points to other changes at *The Journal* which he says illustrate that the so-called "soft" approach can be used without sacrificing quality or content. Since his arrival, the book page has doubled in size to two full pages and "Insight" content — backgrounders and features — has been bumped up by three pages on Saturdays and to seven pages long on Sundays.

Davis is equally ready to defend the recent increased prominence of local news. It's a change perhaps, more than any other, which carries Davis' stamp. Prior to his arrival, says Davis, "the local news section had evolved or devolved to the point where many days there was the section front, with very little space behind it ...and because of competition for the rest of the news hole, a lot of times stories out of the Alberta legislature were running on the local news front. Now they're legitimate stories, but that ain't local news by anybody's definition."

In an attempt to correct what he saw as a serious flaw, Davis subsequently hired more local news staff, reduced the play given to legislature coverage, created more room for local news and dramatically increased coverage of several of the larger bedroom communities surrounding Edmonton.

He justifies these changes by claiming that the daily newspaper is one of the few places left where people can learn what is going on in their communities.

In local news and elsewhere, Davis says, the changes mean a better quality product. "For those people who will look at a computer-generated graphic, or a list of quick quotes and sneer and say 'That's not quality journalism'...first of all I think that's really simple-minded. But we've also done an awful lot of things that I think even the snobs at Carleton University would have to acknowledge is improved quality."

So what now? In the hectic 14 months since Davis assumed his *Journal* job, he's accomplished many of the goals set out by management. Davis says he has other changes in mind, but adds, "I guess our feeling right now is that this newspaper absorbed about 10 years worth of changed in about six months. Retrenchment would be too strong a term," he says, "but I think we're in a period of stabilization. ❑

Ken Regan is Legislature Bureau Chief for Alberta's provincially-owned education radio network, CKUA.

Muffled voices

Unless you're a Liberal, Conservative or NDPer, chances are the media won't pay much attention to you

By Bob Roth

A Toronto man's battle against Canada's three major television networks has rekindled the debate over the social responsibility of the media. On behalf of the Green Party of Canada, former candidate Greg Vezina has charged CBC, CTV and Global with violating the Broadcast Act by not giving the Greens adequate coverage in the 1988 federal election.

The issue of access to the media is not a new one. Vezina has been complaining to the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) for seven years. CRTC guidelines call for equitable treatment of all registered parties. Unfortunately, a precise definition of the term "equitable" remains elusive.

Vezina has now filed charges to settle the legal question. The case could end up in the Supreme Court of Canada if both sides decide to exhaust the appeal process.

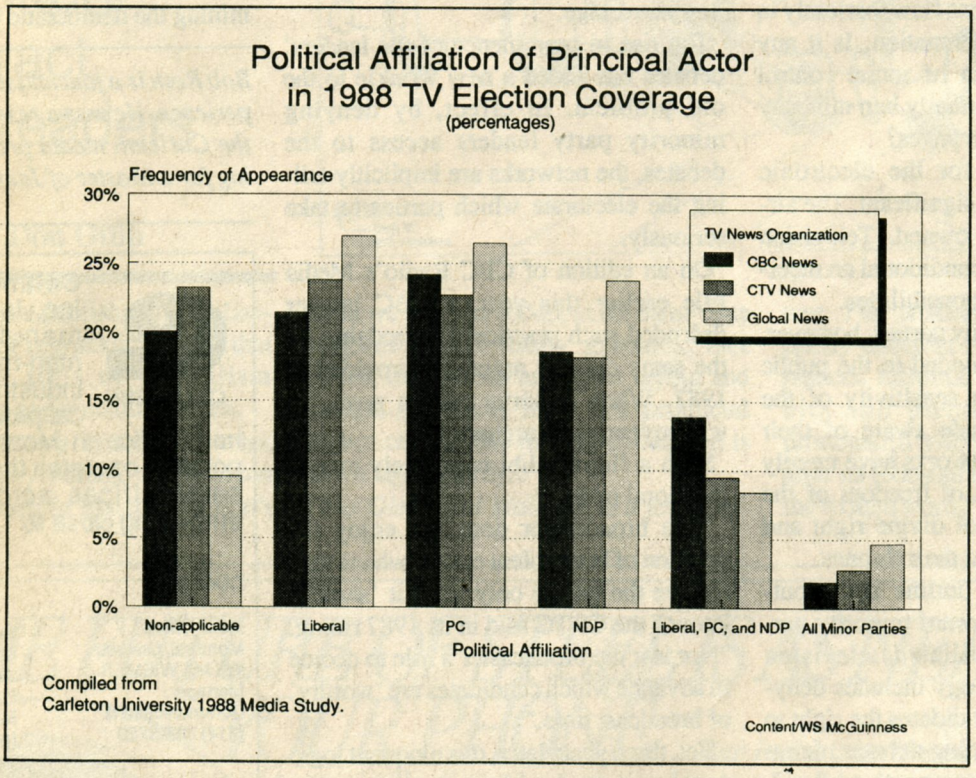
Whether the networks have acted illegally in their treatment of minority parties is strictly a matter for the courts to decide. Whether they have acted immorally or irresponsibly however, is an issue which can only be tried in the court of public opinion.

Access to information is one of the most crucial components in a democratic electoral system. And the role of the media in this process is pivotal. No party can seriously expect to obtain national prominence without national exposure.

Carleton University's School of Journalism conducted a major study of media during the 1988 election. The evidence was overwhelming: minority party coverage is as scarce as a Canadian flag on St. Jean Baptiste Day.

The late evening national newscasts of the three major networks were studied as were all the election stories in seven daily newspapers, each a market leader in its region.

Part of the study involved isolating the party affiliation of "principal actors" in news stories. In 1988, 12 political parties participated in the federal election. Minority party coverage was so statistically small as to be practically non-existent. The news pages were so overwhelmingly weighted in favor of the Liberal, Progressive Conservative and New Democratic parties that each of the remaining minority parties failed to get even one per cent of the coverage. Even when minority party statistics were combined, these nine parties collectively were principal actors in less than five per cent of election news stories. Specifically, these parties were principal actors in 1.9 per cent of CBC stories, 2.8 per cent of CTV stories and 4.7 per cent of Global stories.



Newspaper coverage was similar with minority parties serving as principal actors as follows: Montreal's *The Gazette*, 3.4 per cent; *La Presse*, 3.4 per cent; *The Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, 3.5 per cent; *The Winnipeg Free Press*, 4.2 per cent; *The Globe & Mail* (national edition), 2.6 per cent; *The Toronto Star*, 0.9 per cent; *The Vancouver Sun*, 3.6 per cent.

Such virtual exclusion of minority parties can be challenged on three moral counts.

First, the media are not even paying lip service to the role of "reflecting" society, since minority parties received about five

per cent of the federal vote.

Second, such coverage undermines the electoral process by denying duly registered parties the right to convey their views to the public. Voters can hardly weigh the options when the options are not presented.

Third, from a broader, philosophical viewpoint, the media are not promoting that "marketplace of ideas" which is so central to liberal democratic theory. Civilization progresses through exposure to fresh ideas. Thus, a rational society is one which encourages the dissemination of new thought. Canada's media, however, have demonstrated they would rather be stenographers of the status quo than harbingers of innovation.

When totalitarian states restrict ideas by banning certain political parties, Canadian editorial pens flow fearlessly in condescending condemnation. Is it any less effective a form of social control when mass media virtually ban minority parties from the news pages?

The implications for the electronic media are especially significant. The airwaves are publicly owned. Television licenses are granted conditional on meeting certain social responsibilities.

In the case of minority parties, however, the media have responded to the public interest with all the sensitivity of the Bourbons. When made aware of their shortcomings, the networks have merely elevated the concept of freedom of the press to the stature of divine right and refused to budge from their thrones.

CRTC documents outline some outrageous behaviour toward minority parties by network-affiliated television stations. The chronology includes denying minority party candidates the right to participate in local riding debates, denying them free-time broadcasts while allocating it to mainline candidates and even denying minority candidates the right to purchase commercial airtime.

In 1987, the CRTC made a significant ruling on complaints from the Green Party following provincial elections in Ontario and British Columbia. Both complaints were made against CBC affiliates and the commission concluded the stations had not given the Greens equitable treatment.

The CBC defended itself by arguing the Green Party would receive more coverage as it grew in significance — a Catch-22 situation that was not lost on the CRTC.

In circular 334, 1987, the CRTC noted that "in order to grow, a party requires exposure and it is this very exposure which the CBC's guidelines deny. This amounts to a vicious circle. A registered party which is not big enough to receive coverage may never become big enough because it does not receive coverage."

Since that ruling, several changes have taken place in CRTC regulations to give minority parties some access to free-time broadcasts and paid advertising. But the measures were minimal and there is still no effective means of ensuring equity in news coverage.

The rise in prominence of the leaders' debates has added a new wrinkle to the old problem. In effect, by denying minority party leaders access to the debates, the networks are implicitly telling the electorate which parties to take seriously.

On an edition of CBC Radio's Media File earlier this year, a CBC lawyer defended such practices by dredging up the same circular argument provided in 1987. When minority parties grow, so will coverage, he argued.

Such a flimsy alibi completely misses the moral point.

"The broadcaster does not enjoy the position of benevolent censor who is able to give the public only what it 'should' know," the CRTC said in its 1987 ruling. "Nor is it the broadcaster's role to decide in advance which candidates are 'worthy' of broadcast time."

Yet, three years later, this eloquent logic continues to be blunted against the network's armor of intransigence.

Whether such guidelines are legally enforceable is a point in dispute. What should not be in dispute, however, is that such coverage does not serve the public interest. If the law isn't bolted down tightly enough, our legislators should give the wrench another turn. The media should not be allowed to strip the threads of public accountability by twisting the concept of freedom of the press into a tool of self-interest. That concept should not be perverted to mean freedom for media corporations to prevent Canadians from communicating with one another on their own airwaves.

The principle which needs to be championed today — as mass media becomes concentrated in fewer hands — is not freedom of the press, but freedom of access to the press.

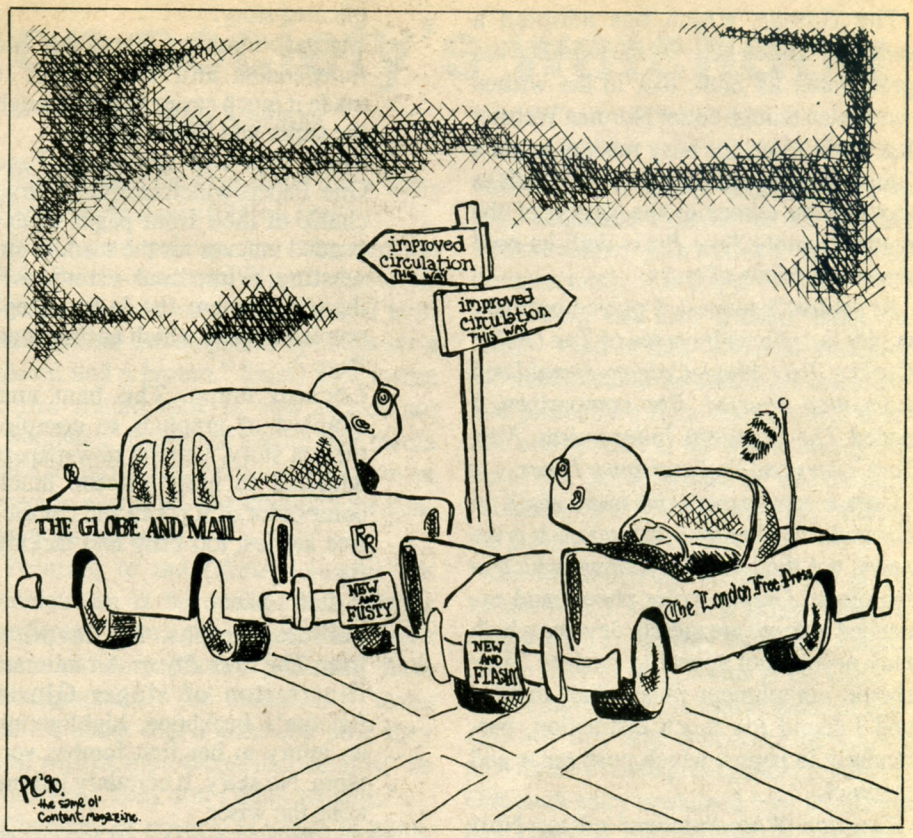
Through the registration process, the Canadian people have determined that minority parties have a right to participate fully in the electoral process. By virtue of their control over the channels of communication, the mass media can arbitrarily and effectively prevent these parties from talking to the voters. In so doing, media practitioners are guilty of undermining the democratic process itself. ❑

Bob Roth is a journalist with 20 years experience. He was a research assistant on the Carleton media project while studying for a Master of Journalism degree.

Taking the high road

Globe ignores flash and glitz in its effort to attract more readers

By Don Gibb



The associate publisher of *The London Free Press* acknowledges that the new style of journalism embraced by his paper could backfire.

"We may be wrong in terms of what we've done," Jim Armitage told Ryerson journalism students in March. "We don't think we are," he added, at the same time conceding that flashy graphics, fact boxes, lean stories and other layout and design gimmicks have not produced higher circulation. In fact, circulation is down significantly.

The Globe and Mail and to a lesser extent, *The Montreal Gazette* are on distinctly different roads to retain and lure readers. Editorial will not be reduced to bits and pieces (à la *Free Press*), pronounced *Globe* editor Bill Thorsell after its redesign in June. "We will honor the written word," seems to be the *Globe*'s

motto.

The *Gazette*, which has adopted a redesign somewhere in the middle, has proclaimed its faith, too, in the written word even though editor Norman Webster has made room for busy readers to get a "quick scan" of the day's events. That's as close as he comes to the jargon of the reader-friendly *Free Press* with its road maps and points of entry.

At *content*'s request, I played ordinary reader in June with copies of *The Globe, Gazette, Free Press, Calgary Herald* and *Edmonton Journal*. For comparison, I added *The* (London) *Independent, New York Times* and *St. Petersburg Times*.

I sense newspapers put more stock in cosmetic changes than do readers. It is the news, not the length of stories, which is important. Graphs, color photos and expanded indexes are merely devices which may or may not appeal to readers. They should compliment rather than distract and I found too much distraction, particularly in papers which push color and graphics.

Kingston Whig-Standard editor Neil Reynolds is closer to the truth when he says the length of stories or the use of color doesn't really matter in the end. It is content that matters.

If editors routinely reviewed other Canadian newspapers, I think they'd find that startlingly little separates them — even the so-called papers of the 1990s. More white space here, a graph there, a colorful feature spread.

Deck heads, a feature from the 1890's rediscovered in the 1990's, are supposed to appeal to what the market surveys call browsers and scanners. But readers browse, scan and even read, all at the same time. That's part of the variety offered by a newspaper.

Here's what I liked:

- More white space. I've always thought it was one of the most effective and simple design tools. *The Globe* uses it effectively to give the paper a cleaner look.
- Simple graphs. *The Herald* and *Journal* ran one on the shooting of an Edmonton cop, but it required too much work. A detailed graph is as difficult to manoeuvre as a complicated story.
- Big page numbers. Check out *The Independent* and *The Globe*. It made it much easier to flip through the paper and follow a story.
- More than two stories on Page One. Papers which sacrifice a large chunk of their front pages to expanded indexes for the scanner are wasting prime real estate. Although I ignore the index, I appreciated those which anchor it on Page 2.
- Locator maps. The best and simplest of graphics to complement a story. I found newspapers addicted to graphics; too much color (a lot of it poor) and calorie-free stories, too busy and lacking focus.

What I didn't like:

- Pointless graphs. My favorite, from *The Free Press*: An intimate illustration of singer Gloria Estefan's backbone, highlighting an injury to her first lumbar vertebra. No story. It certainly left me none the wiser.
- Too little humor and off-beat stuff. What I saw was buried. The Common Cold Research Centre in England was closing its doors after 44 years of trying to find a cure. And a great lead to boot: "Another cold war has ended." Also buried: A funny story on Gorbachev walking off with Canada's cherished tree-planting spade. Some editor should be charged with finding these gems and selling them at news meetings.
- The ad at the bottom of *The Globe*'s Page One. Nothing subtle there.

Newspapers have allowed consultants to convince them of impending death and have lost sight of their role. Just give us the news. Dress it up if you like, but not at the expense of the printed word. Don't add so many distracting bells and whistles that we can't "hear" the news.

Papers will survive on what they do best: In-depth news coverage, enlightening backgrounders and well-written, timely features in a crisply designed, recyclable newspaper with smudge-proof ink. ❑

Don Gibb was a reporter and city editor at The London Free Press *for 20 years before leaving in 1988 to teach at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto.*

Watchdogs on society's watchdog

By Ron Verzuh

Anyone who has read A.J. Liebling's collection of *New Yorker* columns, *The Press*, appreciates the vital importance of independent media criticism. Liebling was a respected reporter in his role as a watchdog on society's watchdog.

In Canada we have no such tradition of media critics. Instead we seem to rely on royal commissions. Certainly the O'Leary, Davey and Kent commissions all provided excellent critiques of various aspects of the media. But ten years is too long to wait for insight into this highly influential institution.

Former *content* publisher Barrie Zwicker says good media critics "have to understand how the media work" and "have an alternative vision of how the world should be." The media assign in-house ombudsmen and join press councils. But understandably, none of those offer independent critique based on an alternative view. To do so would mean questioning a system they largely accept. So who are today's media watchdogs?

George Bain makes a valiant effort in his column in *Maclean's* and there is the occasional feature in other mainstream media. Almost everyone — from *Toronto Life* to *Saturday Night* — took a crack at the changing of *The Globe & Mail* from distinguished newspaper of record to businessman's handbook.

But with the possible exception of the CBC's Media File, which airs on Saturday afternoons, the function performed so admirably by Liebling has been inherited by the alternative press.

Several "alternatives" cover media regularly. Rick Salutin and Joyce Nelson in *This Magazine*, for example, often pass on thoughtful media observations. But at least three "alternatives" have assigned media critics in the Liebling tradition.

Doug Smith writes "Press Release" for a Winnipeg community monthly called *Inner-City Voice*. He started the column in 1986 when an NDP cabinet minister resigned after the *Free Press* did a "McCarthy-style sleaze job" on him.

In a recent column, he compared the *Free Press* ombudsman's job to that of the "fellow in the circus whose task it is to trail behind the elephant, armed with a shovel and a broom." Smith says media critics should look at how stories are "weighted." Instead of asking how media treat society, media ombudsman key in on specific events never explaining the connections, he notes.

Pointing to the *Globe*, he says the mainstream is becoming "less a mass media and more a class media. They don't want ordinary people polluting their demographics." The mainstream "loves stories about individuals and how they deal with their problems individually," he observes. "They don't think socially."

Coverage of poverty is a case in point. Smith's column notes that "the real poverty... is the lack of any critical analysis of the causes, or the uses of poverty in our society." Rather than suggest ways to eliminate poverty, such as redistributing income, the mass media dwell on "helping individual poor people rise above their surroundings."

As an alternative critic, Smith tries to remind people that "there are other ways to perceive what is going on in the world than the way the mass media portray it."

Paul Weinberg shares some of these traits in his fortnightly "Media Watch" column for Toronto's *Metropolis*. Weinberg provides a mix of serious analysis and insider media gossip, but he prefers to look at why media cover what they do and what's being left out.

"I like to research stories that show how the media coverage may reflect the values of one group or another in society," he says, "and how they approach stories from a certain angle depending on the political line they take."

Using the New York *Village Voice*'s "Press Clips" column as a model, he has written articles on, for example, how the media use the same, "usually conservative, economic experts" or on whether conservative journalist Peter Worthington really was a spy.

Weinberg has also written about the "chilly wind of anti-feminism sweeping the mass media," defended the investigative journalist's right not to reveal sources, and scoffed at the way *Morningside* host Peter Gzowski butts in "like the dutiful matron at a Rosedale tea party," during the political pundits' sessions.

Ken Rockburn has written many of the Media Watch columns at Ottawa's *Metro* magazine. He recently tackled a feature on the folly of budget cuts at the CBC.

The column itself is a sassy blend of gossip, hot tips and anecdotes obviously provided by bored press gallery reporters. One such entry explained how the *Globe* had changed the spelling of the town Iqaluit, formerly Frobisher Bay on Baffin Island, in Hugh Winsor's copy. The editors decided it should take a "u" after the "q". Problem was, in the Inuit language "Iqualuit means dirty asshole."

Rockburn says good media criticism should contain more opinion and point out discrepancies in coverage. "It should expose hypocrisy" and "take shots." He says *Metro* tries to show how badly the mainstream inform the public.

For example, there was the *Ottawa Sun* sports story about an Ottawa man who won a marathon run in Hamilton. Rockburn did a little checking and found there was no run. Rockburn says *Frank*, Ottawa's satirical weekly, doesn't check its facts. Says Rockburn, "They make most of the their (media) stuff up."

A.J. Liebling may have eaten himself to death, as documented in the biography *Wayward Reporter*, but his tradition is being kept alive in Canada by a hungry alternative media watchers! ❑

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

Prisoners of journalism

By Scott Whitfield

There is nothing wrong with your television set. Do not attempt to adjust the picture. We are controlling transmission.
— opening to *The Outer Limits*

The Canadian consumer has access to more channels via cable and satellite dish than anyone else in the world. Yet with all the choice there is a disappointing sameness to what is offered. The evening news shows vary little in their line-ups, television comedies are predictable in their humor and the whole of the medium seems obsessed with ratings.

The thirty odd channels one gets may give the illusion of an enlarged window on the world, but having The Cosby Show on three times a day tells one otherwise. The essential character of television hasn't changed: it is a system of many receivers and few senders. Someone else is controlling transmission.

Every Monday night on TVOntario, Ontario's public "educational" television network, a modest half-hour program attempts to break through the barriers of a manipulated medium and discuss the many issues of our technological age.

The program is called Prisoners of Gravity. It is hosted by "Commander Rick," a galactic castaway trapped aboard an orbitting communications satellite, dubbed "Reality One." The character's creator, comedian and former Frantic comedy troupe member Rick Green, explains that the "Commander" crashed into it following a failed bid to escape what he saw as a world gone mad.

Now, with the entire world communications system at his fingertips, he breaks in on TVO's signal to bring viewers a "pirate newscast" on the world of comic books and science fiction. But the program is not for just the "Dr. Who" set. Through its focus on the world of sci fi and comics, and it's imaginative use of video technology, it discusses issues such as the environment, war, ethics, literacy and even the meaning of life.

Commander Rick, with his half-crazed demeanor, is an "over the edge" alternative to the perfectly coiffed, stoic-faced (a la Mansbridge) newsreaders who offer up reality in the form of "the news." Instead of two-minute, neatly packaged decontextualized bits of information stitched together and presented through the cliche visual vocabulary of TV news, you get a weird stream of consciousness video presentation of information.

Interviews are heard over movie clips while script streams across the bottom of the screen, and in the midst of all this, the Commander appears to offer up his own little commentary on all of what we are trying to absorb. In a parody of the famous "over Barbara's shoulder" shot from The Journal, talking heads appear in Commander Rick's control centre by spinning in through a tunnel, then dissolving or peeling off the air like a dried out decal.

Daniel Richler, executive producer of Prisoners and head of arts programming at TVO, describes the show as a "mutated newscast, as though Spock had taken Dan Rather's chair." Richler is interested in reinvigorating the arts through the medium he felt has gone a long way towards destroying the "idea of art" in society.

"Arts threaten us, once upon a time that was part of art's job and I think it's lost its teeth thanks to television and the way arts and entertainment are handled on tv," explains Richler, who was once the arts host for CBC's The Journal. "It's something you do in your leisure time. It's something entertaining, it's something you can measure on a scale of one to ten. Does anyone measure Kissinger's efforts in the Middle East on a scale of one to ten? No. I don't see why the arts should be treated that way."

"Prisoners" is one way in which Richler is fighting mainstream journalism's tendency to marginalize the arts. Not only has he chosen to create an arts program that uses a newscast format, but he chose one of the most maligned segments of the arts community to be its focus.

Richler had long wanted to do a program on the world of comic book art since doing a piece on the industry for CBC's The Journal five years ago. No longer is the industry seen as being out to cater to pre-adolescent boys with a diet of superheroes. Many now look upon comic books, or should we say "sequential art," as a valid art form which combines literature with visual art. The adult market alone is growing with sales topping $60 million a year in North America.

A year ago, looking for ways to implement his ideas, Richler contacted Mark Askwith. Askwith was the manager of The Silver Snail, a large Queen Street comic book shop in Toronto. Richler wanted Askwith to host a short science fiction/comic book info segment that would run between two episodes of the British sci fi series "Dr. Who." But when YTV bought the rights to the popular time travel show, Richler decided that instead of ditching the segment, he would expand it into a half-hour television magazine in the same vein as the New Music, a rock music show he had worked on at Toronto's CityTV.

Jamie Mandelkau, the producer and director, was brought onto the project to help develop its look. Richler had worked with Mandelkau at New Music and wanted someone with a solid background in magazine television while being unafraid to try new things.

Askwith took on the role of story editor after both he and Richler agreed that Askwith had little in the way of a television presence.

Green was made host after pitching a model train show to Richler. Richler politely refused the idea, but liking Green's work on the CBC as a Frantic, had him audition.

It was then that the Commander was

born and the title of the show found. Wanting to distance his Frantic past as much as possible from that of this new project, Green created a new persona. And as the crazed Commander, Green turned to the camera taping his try out and said, "Greetings, prisoners of gravity."

These three became the show's creative core: Askwith providing the raw material, Green injecting humor and commentary into it and Mandelkau setting the style and pace. All of them were determined to do something different with television.

Much of the style of Prisoners can now be seen in other shows aimed at a hipper audience than would tune into the MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour. MuchMusic's Fax, a rock and roll newscast that highlights happenings in rock and pop culture uses film and video clips, interviews and its hosts shot from unusual angles, all mixed and blended together in a fast-paced format. MTV, the U.S. music channel, has Buzz, a show that covers much the same ground as Fax and in the same style. Like Prisoners, the subject matter sets the manner of presentation.

For the creators of Prisoners, there was a desire to reflect the vision of science fiction in their show.

Mandelkau conceived of the show as being, in part, an electronic painting with what he described as "layers and levels of information" with a "jolt every fifteen seconds." It made for stunning visuals that used multi-imaging and distortion to keep the eye entranced. However, where the eye went the mind didn't always follow, or at least these were Askwith's fears.

"I'm the information person, that's what I care about, there was some tension on the show between the information and the packaging. At its best it really works, at its worst it was quite frustrating," recalls Askwith.

For Green there was too much chaos in the sense that the show lacked any internal logic.

Some shows presented lengthy interviews that ran counter to everything "Prisoners" was trying to achieve stylistically and this irritated Green.

Another sore point was the character of the Commander. By season's end he was a mellower sort, but in the first shows he had an edge that was at best mildly annoying. Green was told by Mandelkau to go even further with the character's maniacal side.

"He (the Commander) was harsh," says Green. "I can't listen to the voice. These were ongoing battles."

Some episodes feature snippets of commentary that have touched on matters such as the Reagan-Gorbachev summits, the hypocracy of television anti-drug campaigns and Heisenberg's uncertainty principle as a basis for reevaluating our concept of God. This sort of political/philosophical content was curtailed to

Green's dismay.

"A lot of it didn't make it to air because the director (Mandelkau) wanted more visual pizzazz."

On top of creative differences were the tight deadlines. Preliminary production didn't start until February of last year, giving TVO only six weeks to design and tape the first show. Lead time for stories was often little more than a week and Green found himself writing whole shows in less than a day. This led to the show leaning heavily on promotional material sent out by the big entertainment companies like Paramount Pictures.

"By the end of the season it seemed like all I was doing was throws to clips," says Green.

Things ought to settle down next season. Mandelkau has departed the show for Europe to write a novel. Another New Music alumnus, Gregg Thurlbeck, has been brought in. Green has said that after a conversation with Thurlbeck he feels next season will be much better.

For one, the show's camera crews will be on the road and less Toronto-centric.

Richler has a distaste for using movie clips and there will be fewer. One reason being the copyright hassles that will come if TVO tries to sell the show abroad, and Richler does see a market for it.

After a year of struggling with its journalistic demons, Richler sees the show emerging as a successful blend of art and information.

"It's all a question of balance and I think we have to keep pushing the envelope, but still keep things a little organized."❑

Scott Whitfield is an Ottawa freelance writer.

Cinema Canada fades away

By W.P. Wise

After 18 years of serving the cultural life of the nation, the last issue of *Cinema Canada* (#169) came out in December of 1989. Sadly, it ended with a whimper, fading away, despite efforts to save it by friends and a few remaining employees. Active negotiations had been taking place to take the magazine into the fold of the newly formed Cinematheque Ontario (created out of the absorption of the Ontario Film Institute by the Festival of Festivals) since September. However, for a variety of reasons they decided not to revive the magazine.

The magazine began, as such things usually do, with a great deal of energy, enthusiasm and very little money. *Cinema Canada* had been the organ of the Canadian Society of Cinematographers when Phillip McPhedran and George Csaba Koller were approached in 1972 to produce a glossier format for the Society's newsletter. One issue and $2,000 later, the Society decided they couldn't carry the debt and McPhedran soon resigned.

Csaba Koller, with his wife and co-editor, Agi Ibranyi-Kiss, continued publication in Toronto's notorious Rochdale College. Rochdale was already home to the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre and the fledgling Toronto Filmmakers Co-op. There was a great deal of overlap, mutual support and common goals among these organizations. At first, *Cinema Canada* published only sporadically, but after a few issues it became a regular bi-monthly publication. It was scrappy, provocative and unashamedly nationalistic.

Late in 1974, the magazine was passed on to Connie and Jean-Pierre Tadros. Jean-Pierre had been the film critic for *Le Devoir* and editor of *Cinema Quebec* and had been a contributor to *Cinema Canada*. They moved the editorial offices to Montreal, which immediately caused resentment in Toronto. 'Their' magazine had been hijacked. However, Connie, in her usual no-nonsense style, dismissed this 'geographical question' by simply ignoring historic rivalries.

Cinema Canada came into its own during the tax shelter boom/bust years (1976 - 82), when Connie issued so many jabs at the carpetbagging lawyers and accountants that her name became a curse on the lips of some of the biggest producers in the country. She lost advertising support but never backed down or apologized for her strident nationalism, and to her credit, she was usually dead-on in her pronouncements.

Unfortunately, time and financial cutbacks took their toll on Connie's hardline. In the mid-eighties, the Ontario Arts Council suspended its funding, reasoning that it could no longer support a magazine that wasn't actually published in Ontario. Ad revenue was dropping and Connie became tired of turning out a monthly publication after fourteen years on the job. She handed over the reigns to Jean-Pierre while she went on sabbatical; she left the magazine six months later.

The impending GST and removal of postal subsidies in 1991 were the official reasons given when the magazine folded. The underlying truth, however, is that *Cinema Canada* had lost its reason for being. The production climate in Canada has changed considerably from those days in the early 70s and the magazine eventually lost its constituency.

Throughout most of the magazine's history, the film community had a great degree of congruity with the aim of the magazine, which was, emphatically, the articulation of a distinctive Canadian film culture. However, since 1984, with the creation of the Broadcast Fund at Telefilm and the massive infusion of federal funds into TV and film production, the emphasis shifted from a film community to a film and television industry with a premium placed on commercial values. The industry, as opposed to the community, had little interest in supporting a critical magazine that did not serve its purpose. ❑

Wyndham Paul Wise is a former filmmaker and the last Toronto reporter for Cinema Canada.

A crisis of communication

By Walter Cronkite

We are living through a remarkable age of telecommunications, but the question is: Are we any better informed than in the days of the Pony Express, or even later than that, when I began in journalism before World War II?

I am afraid we are not. And I lay the blame — through little fault of its own — at the feet of television....

The problem simply is the constriction of time which binds television news — that and the tolerance level of the public. In the network half-hour evening news broadcasts, the total number of words spoken, after the commercials are deducted, equal the number of words on just about two-thirds of a standard newspaper page.

There is no way that the important news of the day from our complex country and around the world can be condensed into that amount of time. To expand the time allotted to serious news to an hour or more would only strain the attention-quotient of the viewers — and there is no indication that networks or local stations are ready to give the extra time anyway....

And television without doubt has broadened the understanding of its world among that shamefully large proportion of our population that either cannot or does not read.

But its fault is that it is so well presented that it seems to satisfy most viewers's appetite for news. So what we have done is, while lifting the floor of knowledge for a large number of people, we have put a ceiling on knowledge for a lot of others....

With television's competition for people's attention — and, hence, for the advertising dollar — many newspapers have tried to compete by becoming more entertaining and by reducing their news coverage to barely more information than television itself provides.

Thus has developed our communications crisis. We are filling the airways with more words and pictures and grinding out newspapers in record numbers, and yet to the average news consumer we are imparting less information of importance.

We are producing a population of political, economic, scientific ignoramuses at a point in time when a lot more knowledge rather than less is needed for the survival of democracy. ❑

The preceding is an excerpt of the award speech by Walter Cronkite upon receiving the 1989 Allen H. Neuharth Award for Excellence in Journalism.

Gallery conflict rules 'clarified'

by Melanie Willis

Press Gallery members and their activities have been under scrutiny again because of the suspension from the Gallery of Publinet reporter Steve Hall in March.

Because of complaints that members other than Hall are involved in activities that are not journalism — the reason for his suspension — the appropriateness of that suspension was called into question. A review of the regulation of Gallery membership followed.

A committee of past presidents of the Parliamentary Press Gallery was brought together, with the end of studying by-laws pertinent to the Gallery membership. The current executive asked the committee for some guidance in the interpretation of these by-laws and, if possible, some advice in clearing up some of the hazy wording.

There were two by-laws under review by this committee, chaired by G. Stuart Adam of the Carleton University School of Journalism. By-law #4 stipulates that a member must be employed as a journalist (or technician) by a "recognized major news service," which must "adhere to generally accepted journalistic principles." By-law #10 states that any member "may be expelled from membership...in the event that such member uses his membership or the facilities of the Gallery to obtain a benefit other than by journalism or engages in unethical conduct."

The facts of Hall's case were also reviewed and compared to the cases of other Gallery members who have been paid for extra work which could not be defined as journalism per se.

Hall fell foul of these by-laws when he did some work for Publinet's parent company, Informetrica. Because the parent does not fit the description of a news service and prepares documents for the federal government, Hall's work for them was felt to be contrary to the Gallery regulations.

The committee indicated that Hall's conditions of employment had been changed — he was not working only as a reporter for Publinet anymore — because he did not receive any separate remuneration for performing the Informetrica work.

In other cases of Gallery members doing outside work, there were clear boundaries between that work and their work as journalists. The committee also found that these members did not use their positions as members, or the facilities of the Gallery, to perform these outside jobs.

However, the committee found the Hall decision to be technically wrong. It found the wording on the statements in the case did not follow the wording of the by-laws and could, therefore, be technically disallowed. The statements claimed that Hall represented "the interests" of the government rather than interests other than those defined in By-law #4.

The committee also found that the wording of the two by-laws taken together could lead to differences in interpretation. If they are narrowly read and interpreted with an understanding of their historical context, the committee found, they would provide an adequate avenue for the expulsion of members who were inappropriate or who behaved in a manner inappropriate to their membership.

However, if they were read in a more expansive way, the committee worried that the by-laws could be "in conflict with the traditions of Parliament and the Canadian Constitution" by infringing on both a person's right to their own political affiliation and their activities outside the Gallery.

Because of this, the committee recommended a reading of the by-laws in the former way. Its report did not advise a rewriting of these by-laws in order to remove the choice of interpretation. It did, however, support the amendment of By-law #10, to remove the words "unethical conduct" and replace them with "other than those defined in By-law #4" (see quote from By-law #10 above).

The committee felt this was necessary because the words unethical conduct "convey a meaning and stigmatize an individual for actions which are a good deal short of being unethical.

"It would be preferable to say what rule has been broken rather than to designate the behaviour unethical," the report concluded. ❑

Melanie Willis is a freelance journalist and independent film producer based in Ottawa.

Aphorisms, epigrams and chicken guts

If No News, Send Rumors
Anecdotes of American Journalism
by Stephen Bates
St. Martin's Press, pp. 318, $18.95

Reviewed by Val Sears

For print reporters, anecdotes are the raisins in the pudding. For feature writers, the raisins are frequently the sole reason for spooning up the dish.

Now, with media more the subject than the predicate of both entertainment and information, there has been an obvious need for jounalistic flavoring and Stephen Bates has undertaken to begin the flow.

Bates is a research assistant at a right-wing Washington think tank called the American Enterprise Institute and author of a book on political advertising on television as well as numerous magazine articles.

He has done a remarkable amount of research on this project, picking up material from biographies, speeches, judicial opinions, case studies and, presumably, bar stools.

It's a rich lore because newspersons, television or print, spend a whole lot of time being smart asses, one-upping their colleagues, cutting up their rivals, coveting the title of "best one-liner of the day."

Unhappily for history, a lot of the time you had to be there, hyped on the story, the camaraderie, the inside stuff, a few beers, before the anecdote got a laugh. And, in fact, in a 318-page book — with 44 pages of notes — there are all too few that survive the chill of type.

Nevertheless, anecdotes, like the backs of deskmen, are loaded with all sorts of stuff besides laughs: insights, illuminations, wisdom, all of the things that go into writing the rough draft of history.

Having written a newspaper book that was almost entirely anecdotal, I am particularly conscious that all the stuff in Bates' book is American. I am not aware that anyone — aside from Jack Macleod on politics and Robert Colombo on anecdotes in general — has attempted to mine the rich lode of media stories in Canada.

And yet I have dined out many evenings on such Canadian journalism anecdotes as: a *Globe and Mail* photographer who, ordered by a young twerp of a night editor to cover a suicide from a viaduct, visited the scene as instructed although he knew the *Globe* didn't cover suicides.

On his way back to the office, he stopped off at a Chinese restaurant and got a bag of throwaway chicken guts.

Upon arrival at the *Globe*, he dumped the guts on the night editor's desk, remarking: "This was all I could get, the *Star* got the rest of him."

> ***'Every reporter is a hope; every editor is a disappointment.'***

Never mind, for now Bates' bag will have to do and do very well.

There is, for instance, the fact that Arthur Krock of *The New York Times* would read his column aloud to his family each eveing; that President Hoover refused to be questioned by reporters "like a chicken thief by men whose names I do not even know"; and White House spokesman Larry Speakes had a sign posted on his desk which read: "You don't tell us how to stage the news, and we don't tell you how to cover it."

And there is the title anecdote from Civil War days when Wilbur F. Storey of the *Chicago Times* instructed one war correspondent: "Telegraph fully all news you can get and where there is no news send rumors." That instruction is much followed today.

Bates notes some instructive trivia, as well. When John F. Kennedy became the first president to allow news conferences to be televised live, there was one clear-cut effect: the length of the average question more than tripled.

There are also insights into the profession: "Reporters are like crabs in a barrel. When one gets up, others pull him down" — Jack Anderson, columnist.

And: "Journalism is the only profession in which you can stay an adolescent all your life." — Jack Karnow, columnist.

My own favorite, a treasure, comes from a man who should know, Joseph Pulitzer: "Every reporter is a hope; every editor is a disappointment."

There is inevitably, a whole lot missing. Bates couldn't be on every bar stool.

But he might have noted Charles MacArthur's story — I think it was about his early newspaper days when he befriended a murderer in prison. The day the man was to be hanged MacArthur gave him a note to read on the gallows when invited to offer last words. It was a detailed description of MacArthur's managing editor's ancestry and curious sexual habits.

Unhappily, the executioner dropped the hood before he finished.

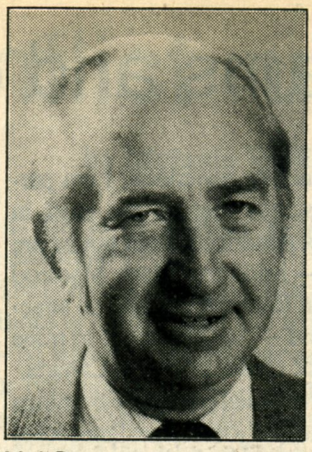
Or the reporter on the Paris *Herald-Tribune* who, upon receiving complicated instructions about the paper's pages going from seven to eight columns, wired head office in New York: "I don't know what the hell all this means, but I gather you want me to write narrower stories."

And then there was the guy... but, go ahead, you tell one.

Or at least buy another round. ❑

Val Sears, veteran political writer for the Toronto Star, *joins the faculty of the University of Regina School of Journalism in September.*

Val Sears is retiring from the *Toronto Star* after a career that spanned 30 years. He has been named Max Bell Visiting Professor of Journalism at the University of Regina's School of Journalism. Sears will teach for the 1990-1991 school year, then plans to return to Ottawa to write and travel. Since he began at *The Star* in 1960, Sears has been Ottawa bureau chief, London bureau chief, editorial writer, editorial page editor and Washington bureau chief. Currently he is political editor. He hopes to draw upon his experience as a foreign correspondent to write a book.


Val Sears

Victor Malarek, the *Globe and Mail*'s immigration critic, is moving to CBC's Fifth Estate. He succeeds Eric Malling, who has been appointed the CTV's flagship show, W5, in a revamped version.

The French language daily *Le Devoir* has won the 1989 Michener Award for meritorious public service in journalism for its coverage of the issues and challenges facing the Innuit people in Quebec.

John Strauss, wire editor of the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald* for the past eight years, has been appointed managing editor. He replaces **Dave McGee** who has moved east to the *Timmins Daily Press*. **Scott Bonnell** has replaced Strauss as wire editor for the *Times-Herald*.

Crosbie Cotton, former assistant managing editor of the *Calgary Herald*, has been named managing editor. He replaces **Gillian Steward** who served for three years and now plans to write. There have been several shifts around *The Herald* newsroom; **Susan Ruttan** has moved from assistant news editor to life editor,


Gillian Steward

Susan Scott has moved from entertainment editor to assistant news editor and **Mark Tremblay** has replaced Scott as entertainment editor. *The Herald* has also named **Barry Nelson** as business columnist.

At the *Edmonton Sun*, **Graham Hicks**, former assistant entertainment editor, has been named entertainment editor. He replaces **Jeff Harris** who has moved to the copy desk. **Eric Floren** is the new business editor, replacing **Linda Slobodian**, now investigative columnist.

Paul Robson, former general manager of the Ottawa Rough Riders and former coach and general manager of the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, has been named publisher of the *Winnipeg Sun*. Robson succeeds **Alfred Davies**, one of the paper's founders, who becomes chairman of Sanford Evans Communications Ltd., a Winnipeg-based publisher of business and trade magazines.

John Cruickshank, former foreign affairs editorial writer for *The Globe and*

-30-

Well-known Canadian journalist **Ross Munro** died June 21 at the age of 76. Mr. Munro's long and diverse career began as a war correspondent during The Second World War. At that time, he established himself as a brave and principled journalist. He was famous for being in the thick of things as Canadian troops landed at Dieppe, as well as Sicily, Italy and Normandy. Following the war, Mr. Munro became a foreign correspondent and then followed a career as a newspaper manager and publisher, in Toronto, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Vancouver and finally in Montreal, where he was the publisher of *The Montreal Gazette* from 1976 to 1979.

Dick Brown, veteran journalist and winner of several writing awards, died May 23 at Humber Memorial Hospital in Toronto. He was 56. Mr. Brown's career began in 1953 as a reporter at the *Cornwall Standard Freeholder*. Through the next 20 years, Brown worked at many papers, magazines and broadcast outlets, including the *Journal* and the *Citizen* in Ottawa, the *Toronto Telegram*, the Reuters news agency in London, England, *The Star, Canadian Magazine* and the national newsrooms of both the CTV and CBC networks. Since 1973, he worked successfully as a freelancer.

Former *Montreal Gazette* film critic **Bruce Bailey**, 43, died recently in California. Before joining the *Gazette* in 1979, Bailey was a professor of film, literature, drama, popular culture and art history at Dawson College in Montreal. At the time of his death, he was writing on television and film for the *Hollywood Reporter* and *Pasadena Star-News*.

Margaret Cragg, former women's editor at *The Globe and Mail* and publisher of the *Fergus-Elora Express*, died recently at the age of 84.

Thomas Wilson, former publisher of the *Oshawa Times*, died recently at age 91. After World War I, Wilson worked briefly for the *Ottawa Citizen* before joining the *Times* (then the *Ontario Reformer*) in 1920. He was named publisher in 1953, two years after the paper was bought by Thomson, and he retired in 1968. ❑

Mail, has been appointed associate editor, with responsibility for *The Globe*'s editorial page. He replaces **Christopher Waddell** who is now the paper's national editor.

Linda Leatherdale is now the *Toronto Sun*'s business editor. She had been at the *Ottawa Sun* as business editor.

John Miner has been named acting business editor at the *London Free Press*. Miner moves from his assistant business editor position to fill the place of **Jim Tost** who has left the paper.

Dave McLellan has been appointed managing editor of the *North Bay Nugget*, after filling various positions there during his 13-year career. McLellan replaces editor-in-chief **Colin Vezina** who is now associate editor and who will also write a column.

At the *Brantford Expositor*, **Peter De Podesta** has been named city editor. He has been a reporter and a deskman for *The Expositor*. Reporter **Beth Gallagher** has left to go to the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*. **Jim Beattie** has been hired. **Tim Godden**, a business columnist, has left the paper to travel the continent. **David Schultz** will become news director later this summer. Schultz is presently helping the Southam computer group with the installation of the Ventura Pagination System at smaller market Southam papers.


Dale Eisler

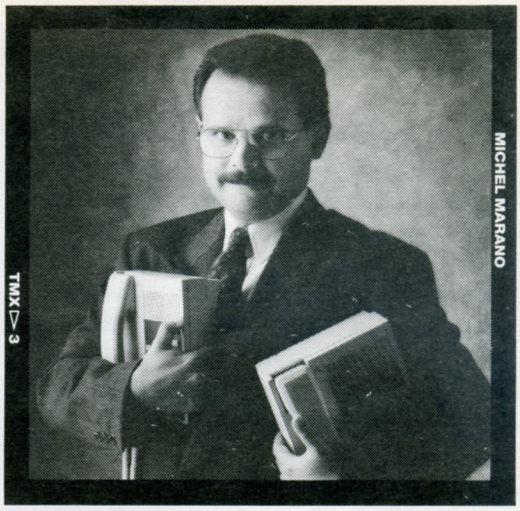
Kevin Vincent, reporter/anchor at CFCL-TV in Timmins is leaving to freelance and complete a book he has been researching. **Bob McIntyre** will replace Vincent. McIntyre was news editor at CKGB in Timmins.

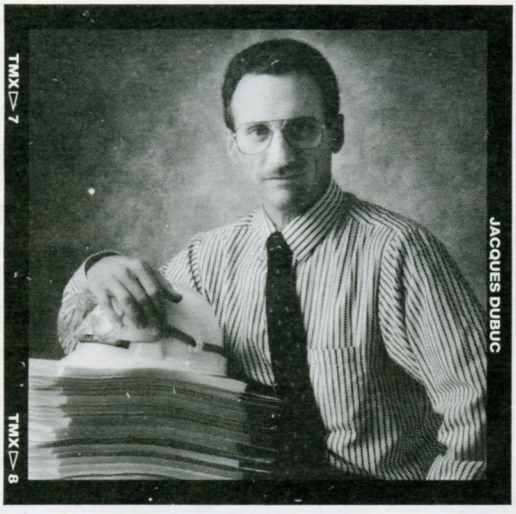
Dale Eisler has been named political editor for the *Regina Leader Post* and the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*. He was the former legislative bureau chief for *The Leader Post*. **Murray Mandryk**, formerly second in command at the legislative bureau is now bureau chief. **Michael Bromley** has been named to the newly-created position of news graphics artist at *The Leader Post*. He is responsible for computer-generated graphics. *The Leader Post* has also named **Ron Petrie** as its first city columnist.

J.-Jacques Samson has been named editor-in-chief and assistant publisher of *Le Soleil* in Quebec City. Samson, former editorial writer and political columnist, has held the top editorial job on an interim basis since **Claude Gravel's** resignation in January.

Paul Willcocks, former president and publisher of the *Saint John Telegraph-Journal and Evening Times-Globe*, has been named publisher and general manager of the *Peterborough Examiner*. Willcocks replaces **Bruce Rudd** who has gone west to Winnipeg as publisher of *The Free Press*. **Fred Hazel**, editor-in-chief and vice-president of New Brunswick Publishing Co. Ltd., will hold Willocks's position until a new publisher is appointed.

Jim Sheppard, Canadian Press correspondent in London, is heading to Moscow. Sheppard replaces CP Moscow correspondent **Warren Caragata** who is returning to Ottawa. ❑





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