

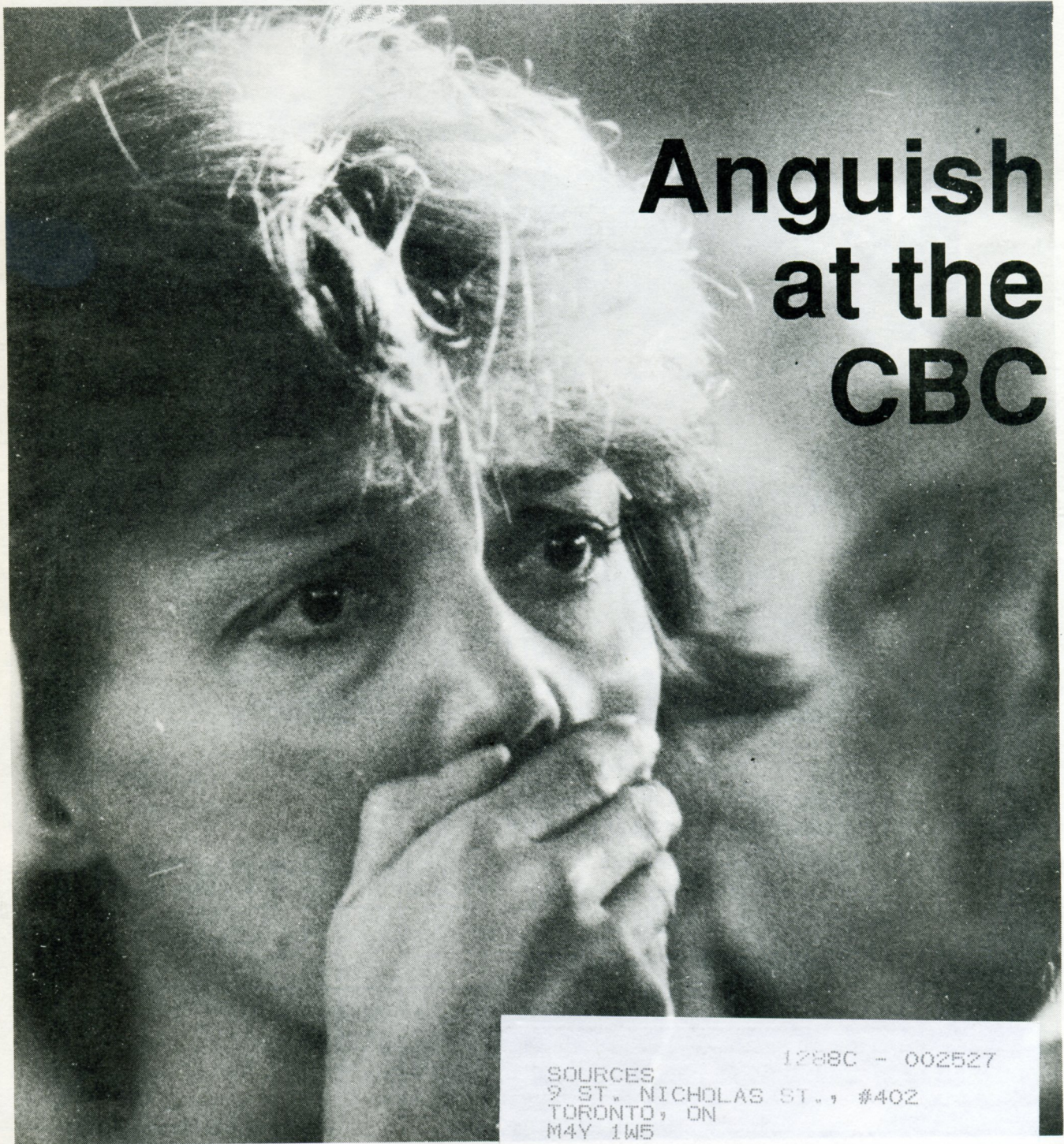
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content

for Canadian journalists

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January/February 1991

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Editor's Notebook

Those who pay attention to such things will notice something different about this column — the familiar initials, "MG," which have graced this page for the last two-and-a-half years, are gone. After almost 45 years as a journalist, editor and teacher, Murray Goldblatt has retired.

Murray has had a long and distinguished career beginning in 1947 at *The Oshawa Times*. Over the next four decades he brought his journalistic talents to such papers as *The Ottawa Citizen* and particularly *The Globe and Mail*, where he served at various times as reporter, national editor, supervisor of the Ottawa bureau and chief of the Parliamentary bureau. In the early 70s, he established and edited *International Perspectives*, a foreign policy magazine, for External Affairs. In 1975, he began a relationship with the School of Journalism at Carleton University which only ended with his retirement on Jan. 1 of this



year. Since August 1988 he also guided *Content* magazine. While editor of *Content* he sought to widen the magazine's circle of contributors and to make it more journalistic.

Among Murray's trademarks is his fanatical, albeit misguided, support of The Hamilton Tiger Cats. He will now be able devote himself even more to their cause.

Over the years, Murray made many friends in and outside of journalism as well as among Carleton students.

We know they join us in wishing Murray and his wife, Sylvia, the best in the future.

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(This issue released for distribution in February 1991)

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Give women an equal chance

To the Editor: Trevor Lautens' sophomoric analysis of the Southam task force report on women's opportunities (Shades of Kafka, September/October, *Content*) betrays the same antiquated attitudes which continue to prevent women from becoming full and equal partners in society.

The report Mr. Lautens condemns reveals that a mere six of 126 senior managers and 22.4 per cent of newsroom employees at Southam are women. Both these figures fall miserably below the 44.1 per cent share of the workforce women constitute (Statistics Canada, 1988).

I'm not sure what conditions are like at *The Vancouver Sun*, where Mr. Lautens works, but at Brabant Newspapers, a Southam-owned chain of weeklies in the Greater Hamilton area, all six senior managers are men. In the hiring for at least two of these positions (from my admittedly biased perspective, anyhow), men were promoted over better qualified and more experienced women. One can only speculate why; however, the cold, hard facts contained in the task force report show that male publishers and senior managers — no matter how out of step their attitudes are with society at large — continue to balk at opening their exclusive boys clubs to women. If they won't do it willingly, they must be coerced.

Tying bonuses and career advancement to a senior manager's promotion of women's opportunities seems a reasonable way of doing so. It provides a measure of enforcement and credibility to the platitudes which presently substitute for meaningful action.

I sympathize with Mr. Lautens' concern that this policy might result in the promotion of "Jane Doaks over a better qualified Joe Doaks." Discrimination, whether

towards men or women, is distasteful. However, I also wonder whether Mr. Lautens and people who share his view take into account that male managers, when considering candidates for managerial positions, value male traits — aggressiveness, ruthlessness, forcefulness of presentation — over (subjectively) equal female traits like sensitivity, compassion and a more humane approach to employer-employee relations.

In trying to redress Southam's present inequities, there may well be instances where women are promoted over better-qualified men. However, the alternative is to let things continue as they are — to perpetuate the discrimination Mr. Lautens condemns when applied to men.

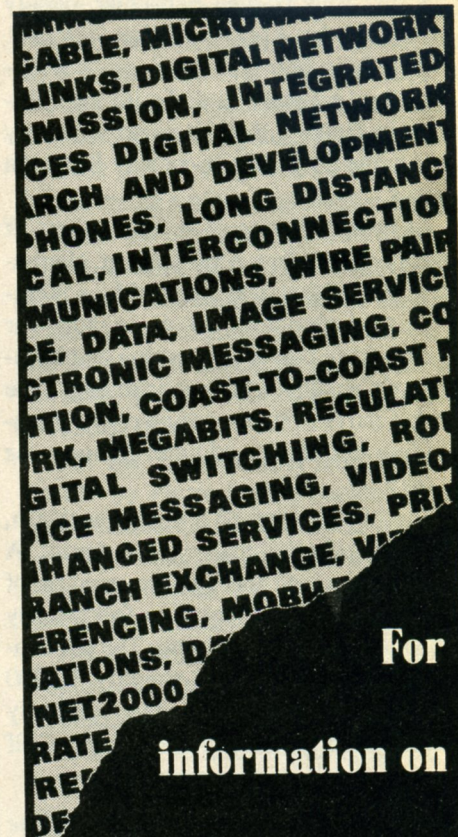
Sadly, Mr. Lautens does not offer any alternatives to the task force recommendations. Instead, he rather shamefully resorts to quoting Karen Selick (if a woman said it, it must be so, the implicit reasoning goes), columnist for *The Canadian Lawyer*. She says she simply wants to read the best newspaper possible, whether produced by men or women.

What rot. Since none of us is omniscient, it's impossible to objectively define what constitutes "the best newspaper." However, surely newspapers which present a male-dominated view of society and its events cannot provide a true, balanced or fair account. The timeworn debate over objectivity in news reporting aside, I think it's safe to say women, both in the newsroom and in society at large, bring a different perspective on what really matters in life. Hence, while men obsessively pursue bigger toys and greater accumulation of wealth, women are, for instance, the driving force behind the peace and environmental movements, trying to undo the excesses of their male counterparts' testosterone-driven policies.

Women provide the necessary balance to men, the yin to keep the yan in check. Perpetuating the systemic discrimination which prevents them from assuming an equal role — in the newsrooms, boardrooms or corridors of power — im-

poverishes not only women, but society as a whole.

Richard Leitner,
Chairperson, Brabant Unit,
Southern Ontario Newspapers Guild,
Hamilton.



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Separating the private from the public

When does an individual become a public figure whose actions are subject to the glaring scrutiny of the media?

"It's one of those dicey issues for journalists," says Harvey Schachter, deputy editor of the *Kingston Whig-Standard*. When Schachter and other senior *Whig-Standard* editors wrestled with the question in January, their decision indirectly led to the death of a bi-weekly Kingston paper.

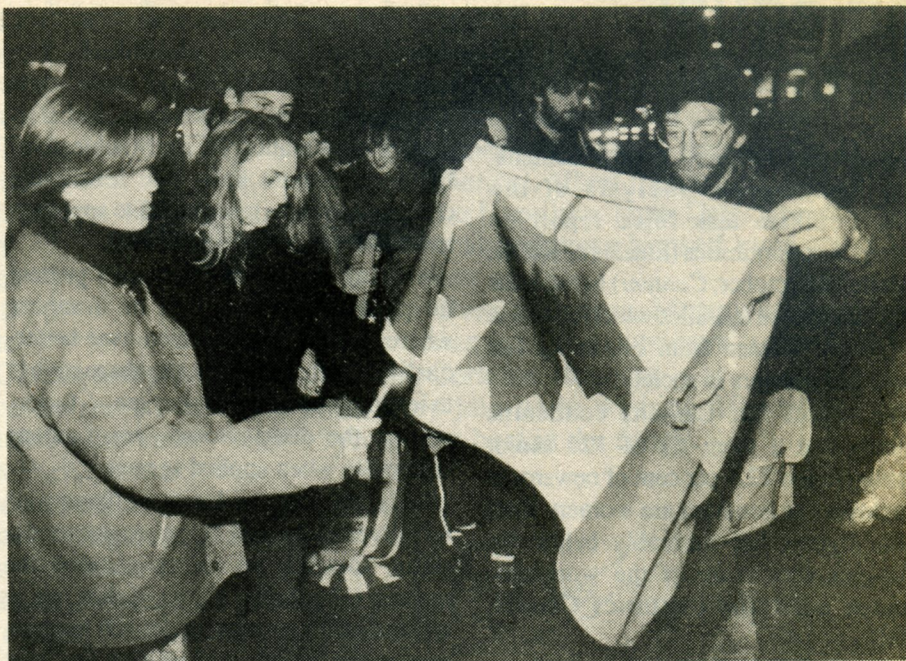
Allan Antliff, one of several editors of *Between the Lines*, a left-leaning, alternative publication, was snapped by a *Whig-Standard* photographer at an anti-war rally taking part in the tearing and burning of Canadian and American flags. The *Whig* ran two photos, one on page 1, identifying Antliff as an editor of *Between the Lines*.

The photos sparked a public backlash, including death threats against Antliff. A rock was tossed through the window of the paper's downtown office, followed by threats to burn the building. The publication, which circulated roughly 10,000 copies every other week, had repeatedly condemned the war in the Persian Gulf and Canada's involvement in it.

As soon as the pictures appeared in *The Whig-Standard*, advertisers began pulling their ads from *Between the Lines*. In three days the paper lost 10 advertisers, says advertising and operations manager Neil Monckton.

"Every advertiser I've talked to ... has been contacted by individuals who've said, 'We will not shop at your store, we will tell all of our friends not to shop at your store and we want you to stop advertising in *Between the Lines*,'" says Monckton.

The loss of ad revenue, coupled with an already tenuous financial situation, broke the tiny operation's back, Monckton says. In its Jan. 24 issue the paper announced it was suspending publication. The shut-down came just two weeks after the Ottawa edition of *Between the Lines* folded



The photo that killed a magazine

because of a lack of money.

Monckton feels the way *The Whig-Standard* presented the story was unfair. For one thing, he says, Antliff was participating in the demonstration as a private citizen.

But Schachter says, "We operate on the belief that the people at *The Whig-Standard* in editorial whose names are in the masthead and indeed senior department heads elsewhere are in the public eye.

"I am sure that if Mr. Neil Reynolds were to demonstrate in favor of the war in Iraq or against the war in Iraq ... *Between the Lines* would have mentioned his name and would not have said Neil Reynolds, citizen, but Neil Reynolds, editor of *The Whig-Standard*."

Monckton agrees that his newspaper would identify a *Whig-Standard* editor in a similar situation, but he says it would treat the flag-burning story differently. "It wouldn't have been a desecration of the Canadian flag, it would have been a celebration of ... freedom of expression," he says.

Schachter says that when the pictures

were developed, there was some disagreement among senior editors over whether to link Antliff to *Between the Lines*. Managing editor Sheldon MacNeil made the decision to go ahead with it.

"There are consequences to everything that happens in newspapers and if we make our news decisions based on the consequences then one would say nothing should have been printed about Gary Hart or Richard Nixon," says Schachter.

Schachter and Monckton say there was no bad blood between the two publications, despite some prickly incidents in the past year. Last year *Between the Lines* was the first to write about a boycott of the daily by some local real estate agents. Two *Whig* reporters have also been mocked in its pages.

Monckton won't say the *Whig* was out to get *Between the Lines* but adds, "They could understand the significance of what effect (the photo and cutline) might have on the paper ... and were prepared to endanger Allan."

Says Schachter: "I'm not aware of anybody at the (editorial) meeting having

said, 'Running this story will shut BTL down,' but if someone told me that a decision I was making that I thought was legitimate was going to shut them down I would still make that decision."

As *content* went to press, *Between the Lines* workers were planning to launch an appeal for \$10,000, which would keep them in business for five more months. Monckton says he's not optimistic they can revive the paper in Kingston, but says the Ottawa edition stands a better chance for success. □

— Rob Tripp

Rob Tripp is a Kingston freelance writer.

Commission 'no threat' to media

It's the most exhaustive study of the media since the Kent Commission of the early 1980s and the 1986 federal Task Force on Broadcasting Policy, but the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing is not likely to have any major impact on the way reporters cover elections, says York University professor Fred Fletcher.

What might change, says Fletcher, the commission's research co-ordinator for broadcasting and media, are areas that have traditionally been subject to legisla-

tion, such as free air time for political parties.

"One of the things that some people in the media seem to be afraid of is that because the commission is looking into things like polling or media practices in election coverage that we have some notion of regulating them," says Fletcher.

"But that doesn't necessarily follow. We are only interested in providing contextual information for the commission so that they (the commissioners) know what they're talking about."

The commission's mandate is to determine the principles that should govern the election of members of Parliament.

"Suppose the commissioners want to know, for example, how well the minor parties are covered," Fletcher says. "And let's say they found out they're not covered very well. ... The commission could recommend some kind of subsidized advertising campaign or some kind of alternative channel not through the media." For the newspapers, wire services and broadcasters covering the election, this kind of action would pose "no threat," he says.

Fletcher is co-ordinating 24 studies for the commission on the role of the media in elections. They range from an examination of the relationship between media and political parties by Michael Nolan of the University of Western Ontario to a study of stereotyping in campaign coverage by Carleton University's

Eileen Saunders. Others commissioned include an examination of the impact of TV all-news services by Concordia's David Hogarth and William Gilsdorf, and a look at mass media and elections at the local level by David Bell of York University.

Fletcher says the researchers have been asked to outline policy options, which may be translated into recommendations by the commission. But because most of the studies are in areas that are not legislated, it's more likely the conclusions will become part of the public record for use by the media and various interest groups.

Part of the commission's work is to examine sections of the Elections Act that deal with the media, such as the blackout period for advertising prior to voting day, the formula for allocation of network advertising time for the parties and free broadcast time.

But the five-member commission, headed by Pierre Lortie, couldn't make recommendations on such areas unless its members understood the relationship between the media and the parties, so it asked for the studies, Fletcher explains.

The studies were assigned between August and December 1990, after the commission held public hearings across the country. Several of the topics are in response to issues raised during the hearings.

For example, Francis Fox, president of the Liberals' Quebec wing, told the com-

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mission in April that televised leaders' debates have become so important they should be mandatory. In response, Cathy Widdis Barr of Sir Wilfrid Laurier University is studying the importance and potential of leaders' debates.

Several studies have been completed and will be presented at a symposium in Toronto on Feb. 21 and 22. The studies will be published after the commission files its report in the fall. The commission hopes the recommendations will be considered by Parliament before the next election. □

— Laura King

Laura King is a copy editor at the Ottawa Citizen.

CCNA wants subsidy plan changed

The head of the organization representing Canada's community newspapers warns that unless the government changes its plans for implementing higher postal fees, some papers will fail.

"A number of community newspapers across Canada will cease publication as a result of these increases," says Michael Anderson, executive director of the Canadian Community Newspaper Association which represents 684 papers across the country.

The increases are the result of changes in the federal Publications Distribution Assistance Program, which subsidizes the cost of mailing books, magazines and newspapers. The subsidy, now \$220 million a year, will be decreased in stages beginning March 1 and will be eliminated by the end of 1994.

The federal government plans to replace the subsidy with \$110 million in direct grants to eligible publishers of community newspapers, says Sheila Katz, director of publishing at Communications Canada. But Anderson says the grants won't kick in until late 1993 and early 1994.

The change means publishers will either have to raise subscription costs dramatically for some out-of-town customers, or try to cover the increases themselves, Anderson says.

"I think there are some markets out there where the publisher will say, 'That does it' and pull the pin."

The postal changes will affect daily newspapers, community newspapers and magazines differently. The subsidy on the cost of mailing dailies will be eliminated over three years, while for community newspapers the elimination occurs March 1. Rates for paid circulation magazines will increase at the same rate as the cost of living, about 5.5 per cent.

John Caines, manager of national media relations for Canada Post, says the corporation has to raise the rates to cover the cost of the reduced subsidy.

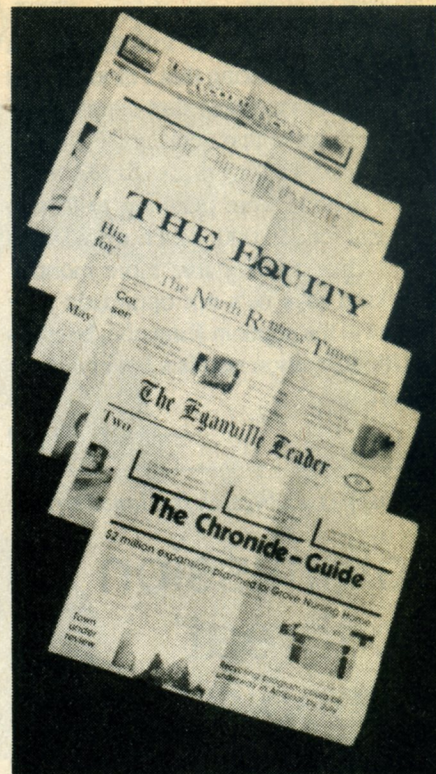
The policy change "is based on protecting Canadian readership as well as Canadian publications," he says. Publications from outside Canada will have the subsidy completely removed, he adds.

"When you compare them to other parts of the industry (community newspapers) have not been hit that hard," Caines says. Community newspapers with a circulation of less than 10,000 will still be eligible to have as many as 2,500 papers delivered at no cost in a "free zone" near their publishing location. It will cost only 41 cents to deliver a paper weighing up to 150 grams to any part of the country, compared to 40 cents for delivery of a letter weighing 30 grams, says Caines.

Anderson says his association doesn't object to the idea of ending the subsidy, but the structure of the new rates will cause tremendous increases in some delivery charges.

At present, it costs just over five cents to mail a 100-gram paper anywhere in Canada. Under the new rates, the cost of mailing the same paper to communities where subscribers collect their mail at the post office will rise to 11 cents. And the cost of mailing to places with letter carrier delivery will jump to 31 cents.

Anderson says his organization is annoyed that it was not consulted about how



Threatened?

to implement the change, and that publishers received only 90 days notice of the new rates.

Fred Runge, publisher of seven community papers in the Ottawa area, says he doesn't object to paying commercial rates for delivery, but wants Canada Post to phase in the increases over a longer period of time.

Runge says his postal costs will jump from \$10,000 to \$83,000 when the new rates come into effect March 1. One of his papers will lose money next year, but it won't fail because it is part of a group, says Runge.

He echoes Anderson's complaint that Canada Post hasn't consulted community papers about its proposals.

"I've tried every day to contact Canada Post. They won't return my calls."

Anderson says the CCNA will propose to the government that the rate change be postponed until March 1, 1992 to give community papers time to "educate their subscribers" about the increases.

In the longer run, Anderson also has concerns about the implications of direct

grants to publishers. The postal subsidy goes directly from the department of communications to Canada Post. "The publishers never see that money," he says. But when the grants come on line, the funds will go from the government to the publishers, raising concerns about direct government involvement in the newspaper business. □

— *Marty Logan*

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

TV awards again on backburner

Just as the Meech Lake crisis aborted plans for a 1990 National Television News Awards, this year's war in the Persian Gulf is likely to set things back once again.

The idea for a national TV news awards competition was developed by Peter Rehak, executive producer of CTV's W5. More than a year ago, he convinced the National Press Club in Ottawa to serve as host for the competition. June 15 was set as the deadline for entries and the Chateau Laurier was booked for an inaugural awards dinner Nov. 10. But it didn't happen.

"Meech Lake was definitely the culprit last year," says Rehak. Despite the backing of CBC and CTV News, as well as the press club, organizers found they were too busy covering the news to reward themselves for a job well done.

In January of this year, National Press Club board member Walter Gray planned to call for renewed support for a 1991 inaugural ceremony. At its most recent meeting, however, the executive managed to talk only about coverage of the Gulf War.

Gray says poor organization and lack of real interest are partly to blame for the demise of last year's awards competition.

Press club president Michel Gratton also has reservations about the plans for the competition.

"I warned everyone at the start that this is too big," Gratton says. "I haven't given up on it, but if we're going to do it we're going to have to hire someone to take charge."

In the meantime, some of Canada's high-profile television journalists are being recognized through the Gemini Awards. But Rehak and others are concerned that the Geminis look for star quality rather than good journalism on television. "A number of us felt that it wasn't really a definitive forum," he says.

Although plans for when to hold the National Television News Awards competition are on hold, the press club has decided upon a format for the competition. Awards in both French and English will be offered in 15 categories, recognizing excellence in news and current affairs programs.

Because the Gulf War has started, Gray says he may suggest that the press club look for examples of outstanding reporting during the crisis.

"The Overseas Press Club in New York is the best place to look for good war reporting," says veteran reporter Charles Lynch, one of the last surviving members of the Canadian War Correspondents' Association. The New York club has several radio and television categories in which individuals, as well as specific stories, can win awards.

"There is a lot of excellent coverage going on in the Gulf right now," says Rehak. "And almost all of it will go unnoticed simply because there is no forum. This just proves that there is a vacuum."

Press club members say any organizing for television journalism awards will have to be done during the lull of the summer months.

Of course, that is what they also said last year. □

— *John Ruttle*

John Ruttle is a freelance reporter based in Ottawa.

Inquiry turns table on newspaper

The chill wind of northern justice has left the *Edmonton Journal* standing out in the cold and some screaming foul.

A December, 1989, article in the newspaper quoting a judge's views on sexual assault in the North prompted a four-month judicial inquiry into the sayings and doings of Northwest Territories Judge Michel Bourassa. The 346-page inquiry report exonerated the judge but left *The Journal* and staff writer Lauri Sarkadi, 28, accused of distortion and inaccuracy.

The Globe and Mail's Michael Valpy described the report in a column as "an awesome indictment" of a newspaper and "an account of the worst nightmare we all have about our jobs."

The inquiry was triggered by the public outcry that followed Sarkadi's Dec. 20, 1989 article headlined, "Sex assaults in North are often less violent, judge says." The opening paragraph said: "A Northwest Territories judge says sexual assault among Northern natives is sometimes less violent and cannot always be judged in the same light as southern Canadian cases."

Further on the judge is quoted as saying, "the majority of rapes in the Northwest Territories occur when the woman is drunk and passed out," and that, "a man comes along and sees a pair of hips and helps himself."

The story quoted Bourassa as saying, "that contrasts sharply to the cases I dealt with before (in southern Canada) of the dainty co-ed who gets jumped from behind." Most rape victims in southern Canada suffer vaginal tears and psychological trauma related to sexual intercourse for several years afterward.

"My experience with rape down south is different from the reality of rape up here," the judge adds. "In most cases there is

violence apart from the rape that's involved. Up here you find many cases of sexual assault where the woman is drunk and the man's drunk."

Sarkadi, who wrote the story while working as *The Journal's* northern bureau reporter in Yellowknife, got most of the quotes from two interviews she had with Bourassa. She did not use a tape recorder.

The story went on to document examples of the judge's leniency with sex offenders. A *Journal* editorial also focused on the judge's supposed leniency.

The inquiry was called at the request of the territorial judicial council after Northwest Territories Justice Minister Michael Ballantyne ordered an investigation into Bourassa's remarks. Alberta Court of Queen's Bench Justice Carole Conrad was appointed to head the inquiry and with a mandate to determine whether misconduct had occurred and whether disciplinary measures were warranted.

Since *The Journal* article was at the heart of the affair, Sarkadi was called to testify. *The Journal* co-operated with the inquiry by handing over the unedited version of Sarkadi's story along with her notes.

But since the inquiry was into Bourassa's conduct, the newspaper couldn't get its lawyers into the inquiry with full standing; they couldn't call witnesses and not until midway through the inquiry could they cross examine.

This meant Sarkadi was put on the stand for four days while inquiry lawyers and Bourassa's attorney examined her conduct and the newspaper's.

Arlene Nichols, executive director of the Yellowknife Women's Society, says the narrow focus of the inquiry meant *The Journal* was unable to protect itself or Sarkadi.

"*The Journal* was put on trial," Nichols says. "It sets a dangerous precedent when a reporter can be called on the stand and harassed."

The inquiry lasted about four months and was extensively covered by *The Journal*.

In her report, Conrad criticized *The Journal's* accuracy on two points. Bourassa never used the word "natives" during the interviews. Conrad concluded he was

speaking about the Northwest Territories — with a 32 per cent non-aboriginal population — as a whole. The word was inserted, incorrectly in Conrad's view, by Sarkadi and her editors.

The unedited draft of the story attributed to Bourassa the view that "sexual assault in the predominately native North is less violent than in southern Canada." The published version was changed to read: "Sexual assault among northern natives is sometimes less violent ..."

Sarkadi says she had no difficulty with the edited version. She says the interviews with Bourassa were clearly about native justice and she used the word native herself a number of times in questions.

Conrad also took issue with the suggestion that Bourassa had expressed the view that sexual assault in the North was less violent than in the south. Evidence showed the judge had said that in most cases in the south, there is violence "apart from the rape." But that comment did not infer that rape itself was less violent in the North, Conrad found. She concluded the report by saying, "the article in the *Edmonton Journal* contained inaccuracies and misleading innuendoes."

Conrad also found fault with Bourassa. While Conrad said there was no evidence of leniency in his record of judgments, she felt his choice of words in describing rape in Canada was "poor."

Nonetheless, Conrad ruled that Bourassa's legal expenses were to be covered by the inquiry. *The Journal* had to pay its own costs.

Journal editor Linda Hughes has said the newspaper stands behind the accuracy and fairness of the story. And Sarkadi says she will go to her grave defending the accuracy of the article.

"I'm so disillusioned with the whole justice system, this inquiry being part of that system," Sarkadi says. "It's definitely affected me." □

— Ashley Geddes

Ashley Geddes is the Calgary Herald's legislature bureau chief in Edmonton.

Satellite links Southam papers

From Vancouver to Ottawa in less than 10 seconds: that's the promise of a new, satellite-based news service being launched by the Southam Newspaper Group.

The Southam News Network, which reportedly will cost \$100,000 to startup, is being tested this winter to go into full operation in the spring. It will provide almost instant communications among the Southam group's 17 daily newspapers and Southam News, the company's news service.

Jim Travers, editor of Southam News, says the change will avoid the time-consuming transmission of Southam stories through The Canadian Press, the national news service.

He cites the example of what happens now if a Vancouver paper gives a story to an Ottawa paper. First it contacts the *Ottawa Citizen* by phone, then "codes" the story for CP, which sends it to the Toronto CP office. Toronto then sends the story to Southam News in Ottawa, which recodes it and sends it to *The Citizen*.

"The satellite system gives us a lot of options that we can't do through CP," he says. "We can move information more cheaply and quickly."

Travers insists, however, that the new Southam News Network does not represent a threat to CP. Southam papers will continue to provide local material to CP, which rewrites it for the approximately 110 Canadian dailies in the news service.

"It's not intended to put CP out of business," Travers says. "It's supplementary to Southam News service and CP. We want to make sure the papers have a greater range of information, a greater degree of Canadian content."

CP president Keith Kincaid also doesn't see the Southam move as creating any problems for the wire service.

"As a condition of membership in CP, a

newspaper is obligated to provide its stories to CP and the Southam papers are doing that totally," he says.

Explaining how the new system will work, Travers says every Southam paper will have a computer terminal connecting all the papers via satellite. Each paper will list major stories on "an in-house bulletin board" on the computer daily. All the papers will have direct access to each other's stories on the computer.

Southam president Russ Mills says the service may eventually be available to some papers outside the group.

"We may possibly sell it outside to other interest groups, (or) some other non-Southam newspapers... We haven't quite decided yet how we're going to handle this because these are papers that have been customers of the Southam news service for a long time."

Travers says the new service will give Southam papers greater choice. He adds that the heaviest use of the satellite will be for lifestyle and feature stories, where Canadian newspapers often rely on U.S. syndicates. But many of Canada's larger papers can provide the same type of information. With the satellite, "we can pool that information together." □

— *Mary Scianna*

Mary Scianna is a freelance writer in Toronto.

CBC closes Media File

Housecleaning at CBC radio has cost the network Media File, a half-hour show that examines the moral, economic and social issues affecting the broadcast and print industries.

The CBC is in the process of "creative renewal," explains senior editor Bruce Wark. "The feeling is, after five years on the air, the show has run its course, done all the issues. I'm not so sure."

Media File staffers learned of the show's demise in mid-December, when managing editor Vince Carlin came to Halifax to

break the news to Wark, host Jim Nunn and program editor Richard Starr.

On Dec. 15, Nunn told the show's listeners the program would go off the air in June.

"We announced it because we wanted people to know we weren't going immediately, that we still had six months," Wark says. Some radio and television shows were dropped instantly when CBC announced sweeping budget cuts.

Carlin acknowledges that budget restrictions played a role in the decision to redevelop Media File's time slot.

"In order for the program to improve, it really required more money. Because of the budget, we cannot go to the next level."

That next level would involve reshaping the interview-based show into a documentary-style program, he says.

Media File originally developed as a short show to air during *As it Happens*, but continued as a separate entity in the weekend time slot after *As it Happens* was expanded to 90 minutes.

Carlin was the program's first host. "The concept was to do a show about journalism, not media in general. We didn't do much about advertising or public relations, except as it related to journalism. It

became a program about journalistic issues. It was new territory for us."

Items aired on the show cover a broad range, from how the media handled last summer's Oka crisis to the problem of repetitive-strain injury, a problem common to journalists working at computer keyboards.

Mount Saint Vincent University journalism professor Sharon Fraser says the show cannot be replaced by featuring media panels on *Morningside* or occasional stories on programs like *Prime Time*, as the CBC has suggested.

"I definitely think that anything that takes some of the mystery out of how a powerful institution works is valuable. The media has a responsibility to shine light on other powerful institutions, but few people look critically backward at the media. It is important to have the media look at its own institution."

Adds Wark, "We need some kind of independent unit to look at things. We won't have that without Media File." □

— *Helen I. MacDonnell*

Helen I. MacDonnell is a member of Dalhousie University's Public Relations Department and a non-practising lawyer.

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Employee turmoil

Unions scramble to protect CBC cutback victims

by Alec Ross

On Dec. 3, Steve Pasqualotto began a two-month contract as a television reporter at Newsday, the CBC's current affairs program in Saskatoon. Pasqualotto, 26, had quit his job at the local Global affiliate, STV, because he figured a foot in the door at the CBC might be good for his four-year-old broadcasting career. Three days later, Pasqualotto learned that the corporation no longer required his services.

Losing his brand new job was bad enough. But to add insult to injury, his former employers at STV decided to fill the position he'd just vacated. Today Pasqualotto is unsure about what he'll do next, but he's considering a move to the U.S. "Things look a little better there."

Ramona Dearing was another victim. After a stint as a television reporter in St. John's, she transferred to Goose Bay in September to help put together local inserts for the popular St. John's news program *Here and Now*. She'd heard rumors about potential CBC cuts, but never thought the CBC would shut down the Goose Bay station completely. Now, like Pasqualotto, she's discouraged about her future prospects in television.

"All the reports we're getting are saying that there's just nothing out there. I'll probably go into else."

Eliminating the jobs of Pasqualotto, Dearing, and 1,100 others from Vancouver to St. John's was part of the extensive "service reductions" the CBC announced on Dec. 5. On Jan. 4 the corporation issued redundancy notices to 960 employees. CBC spokesman Iqbal Rahemtulla says the number of layoffs

announced in December differed from the number of January redundancy notices because 140 positions were vacant; he expected most of the laid off employees would be gone by April 1.

Other controversial money-saving measures included the closure of local television stations in Goose Bay, Matane, Que., and Toronto; the downsizing of other stations in Corner Brook, Sydney, Rimouski, Sept-Iles, Windsor, Toronto, Saskatoon, and Calgary; and the cancellation of hundreds of hours of home-grown programming. The redundancy notices threw everyone from janitors to on-air announcers into a limbo from which many have yet to emerge.

For starters, the names of some employees who got notices weren't on the list of layoffs the CBC gave to each union, so some people didn't know whether or not they'd been fired. The job cuts are supposed to be administered on a fair and equal basis according to seniority, but union representatives say this hasn't always been the case. CBC managers are trying to save as many jobs as possible, but in some locations where staff was reduced, for instance, the CBC has instructed video camera operators to shoot tape and edit, when before the two jobs were separate. The National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians is challenging the legality of combining the two functions.

Such wrangles have led both NABET and the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA) to file unfair labor practice suits charging that the CBC hasn't been up front in its handling of the cuts, and has in some

cases violated collective agreements.

For many staffers, the most bewildering part of the downsizing involves bumping — when a unionized person with high seniority moves into a job occupied by a less-senior person in the same union. Each union has different bumping rights. For instance, NABET members can bump nationally, while the Canadian Wire Service Guild (CWSG) can only bump locally. The process isn't supposed to be through until the end of February, so many CBC staffers are unsure if they should seek a new job in the private sector or wait and hope that they won't be bumped. If they're not bumped and keep their CBC jobs, or if they transfer elsewhere within the corporation, what assurances do they have that their jobs won't be chopped in a future round of cuts? There's a lot of confusion.

"Until the bumping process is sorted out, making deals is probably not a wise thing to do," said Sheila Petzold, who lost her job as executive producer at the popular CBC *Metro* in Ottawa. *Metro* was cancelled, but Petzold has found a temporary spot at her old show, *On The Road*, with its genial host, Wayne Rostad.

Until the bumping is completed, no one will know exactly how many layoffs will result from the cuts. But in the third week of January, representatives of the various bargaining units within the CBC offered some preliminary figures.

The layoffs affect about 260 full-time CBC employees and up to 400 English-language temporary workers with the Canadian Union of Public Employees, while ACTRA estimated that 49 of its

broadcasting jobs were jeopardized, and those of an unknown number of freelance writers and performers on short-term contracts. The CWSG expected to lose about 50 current affairs jobs, while NABET said 217 of its members will be hit. The Canadian Television Producers and Directors Association (CTPDA) knew of 63 producers' positions on the line. The Association of Television Producers, representing producers in Toronto, and the Association de Realisateurs, which handles French-language producers in Quebec and Moncton, were still trying to determine final layoff figures.

About 25 of the 84 laid-off CBC Calgary employees were suddenly back in the newsroom in mid-January. They were recalled for a two-week period ending Jan. 25 to help Newsworld cover events in the Persian Gulf.

In January, representatives from each bargaining unit met with CBC management to discuss voluntary separation packages, early retirement, severance, resignations, and possible transfers for their members to jobs in other locations. But many union representatives expressed frustration at the CBC's unwillingness or inability during the negotiations to offer specifics about layoff deals and packages.

"We are having to fight this every step of the way," said David Lewington, NABET's national union representative. About 217 NABET camera operators, video editors, sound-effects operators, audio technicians, and other technicians received redundancy notices, but their names didn't match the list the CBC gave NABET. Lewington has had a hard time sorting out the discrepancy.

"Not only are things not clear to us, we're having to use every single legal recourse we possibly can to force the CBC to live up to its obligations" under the collective agreement and the Canada Labor Code, he said.

One prominent issue in the January talks was the debate over how many layoffs constitute a "major reduction." Some collective agreements say the term applies when more than 50 per cent of the employees at a station are laid off; if this

happens, NABET, CWSG, and CUPE members are entitled to double severance packages. But the CBC has argued there were no major reductions at stations CBLT and CBLFT in Toronto, both of which were shut down.

"You can't get any more major than that," said Lewington.

Another wrangle associated with severance involves producers with the CTPDA. They receive two weeks pay for every year of service when a major reduction occurs, but Guild members get four weeks. Bob Allison, chairman of the CTPDA's national grievance committee, admits the CBC is not contractually bound to offer producers a more generous severance. But he says producers are a show's "creative juice," without which there would be no need for managers or technical people — so producers should be entitled to at least equal treatment.

Not everyone agrees. David Gersovitz, the local CWSG representative in Toronto, says he regrets the loss of any jobs — producers' or otherwise — but adds that one reason the CBC is in such dire financial straits is its "large, deadweight programming bureaucracy" largely comprised of hundreds of producers. If their numbers had been pared down years ago, he says, perhaps there would have been no need to chop local programming.

Allison has sensed a tacit "too-many-producers" attitude from other unions during the negotiations, but understands where it originates. By definition, he says, producers are creative people, not managers, but those at senior and executive levels make managerial decisions. They choose directors, scriptwriters, and hosts, and decide which guests will appear on the show. They can tell people what to do. They can't hire or fire, but Allison says their manager-like ability to "toot the whistle" can be a source of tension with other managers.

Still, he says, "if (the CBC) loses these producers, they lose the creative ability. They lose the chance to be better directors of television." □

Alec Ross is a Kingston freelance writer.

Ex-staffers work to save Saskatoon station

By Helen Cibere

What bothers them most is that they never got the chance to say goodbye. When CBC Saskatoon went off the air Dec. 5, 1990, 33 people lost their jobs and the station was reduced to a two-reporter bureau. That night the newscast on channel 11 came from Regina, almost 300 km away.

Evening anchor Cathy Little sent a letter to various Saskatoon community newspapers expressing her shock about the cutbacks. Since then, angry yet determined CBC supporters and staff members have devised a plan to re-open the television station and run it themselves as an affiliate. And so far so good.

An accounting firm hired by the small group has reported that the station can be run profitably. But Bill Mayes, president of the employee corporation, says a new station may need to reduce wages and scale down staff.

The Saskatchewan government is giving the employee group \$20,000 to help pay for a more detailed feasibility study. The group doesn't have to repay the grant if their plans fall apart.

In January, a group of employees met in Ottawa with CBC executives to get a response to their buy-out proposal. Iqbal Rahemtulla, a spokesperson for CBC Head office, said the meeting was "amicable." Rahemtulla added that the CBC will have to see if affiliations fit in with its financial situation. He said it was good to know people liked the CBC presence in Saskatoon, but CBC has to face some tough choices.

If the plan is approved, the group will produce 90 minutes of local programming daily. □

Helen Cibere is with CJWW in Saskatoon.

Senseless carnage

by Ross Perigoe

A couple of days after the pre-Christmas massacre at the CBC, I read a short news clipping in which Patrick Watson defended the decision. The CBC chairman-designate described the \$108 million in cuts as "amputations." The phrase reminded me of a memorable scene in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. In the film, the king is accosted in the forest by a foul-mouthed rascal, played by John Cleese. He's challenged to a sword fight. During the battle, the king slices off his opponent's arm, whereupon the challenger picks up the sword in his other hand and continues to fight. Off goes the rascal's other arm. He fights on, unrepentant, kicking the king. So the king lops off the left leg. He continues to berate the king on his swordsmanship. If only for symmetry, the king whacks off his opponent's other leg. Finally, with only four stumps to show for his day's work, the challenger says, "All right, we'll call it a draw."

It strikes me that's how the CBC is today. Programmers are promising to continue the fight to Canadianize the system. But the system doesn't have any arms or legs left. Regional television

programming has been decimated. Overall, regional television programming accounts for less than 19 per cent of the CBC production budget. And yet, it has been told to make 40 per cent of the cuts. In one seemingly lucid moment of even-handedness, when management decided the pain would be distributed equally across the country, three stations were closed and 11 local newscasts and public affairs programs were wiped out.

And what is the result?

Calgary's newsroom gets turned into a bureau for the Edmonton newscast, but Charlottetown's newsroom remains open. (Charlottetown is a provincial capital. Calgary is not.) By this logic, the capital of New Brunswick, Fredericton, should have a local station complete with news and current affairs programming. But there are no CBC-owned and -operated stations in all of New Brunswick.

The CBC's new broadcast centre in Toronto is the first in history to lose an entire television station (CBLT). Virtually all of its French news and current affairs programming is now gone. Estimates

vary, but it is generally agreed that Toronto's unopened centre is already 15 per cent larger than necessary. And don't forget, we still have another year of cuts totalling at least \$35 million to come.

It just doesn't make sense to close down these stations. I always thought the government got involved only in areas where private enterprise couldn't make a buck providing the same service. Something's gone terribly wrong. Windsor is left with no local newscast. None. But the CBC is still broadcasting local news in Toronto where there are local or regional newscasts provided by seven broadcasters, not to mention Sports News on TSN, and the Weather Channel.

We shouldn't have been surprised by the cuts. We all knew they were coming. What we didn't know was that the cuts were triple the size everyone expected. Staff had been involved in discussions on how to adjust to the \$35-million loss in the next fiscal year. No one expected the CBC sales department to miscalculate its revenue projections by \$95 million.

What's so galling is not that the cuts were made, but the way the cuts were

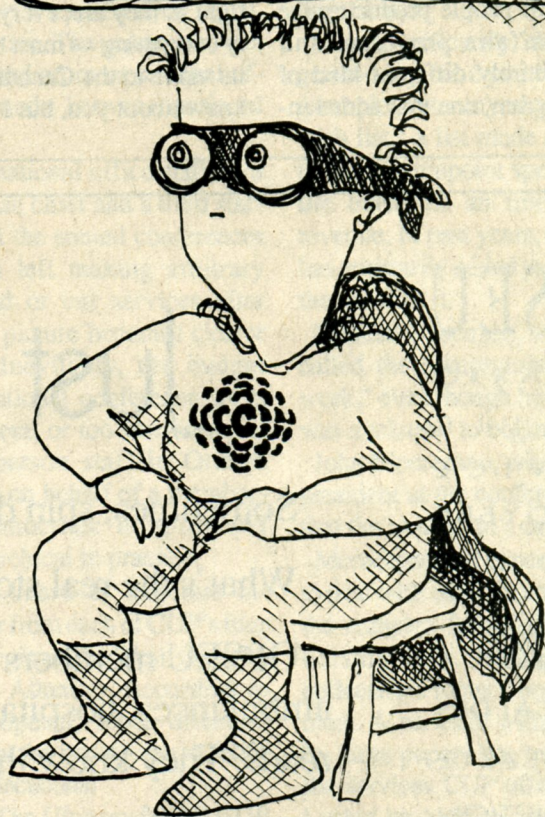
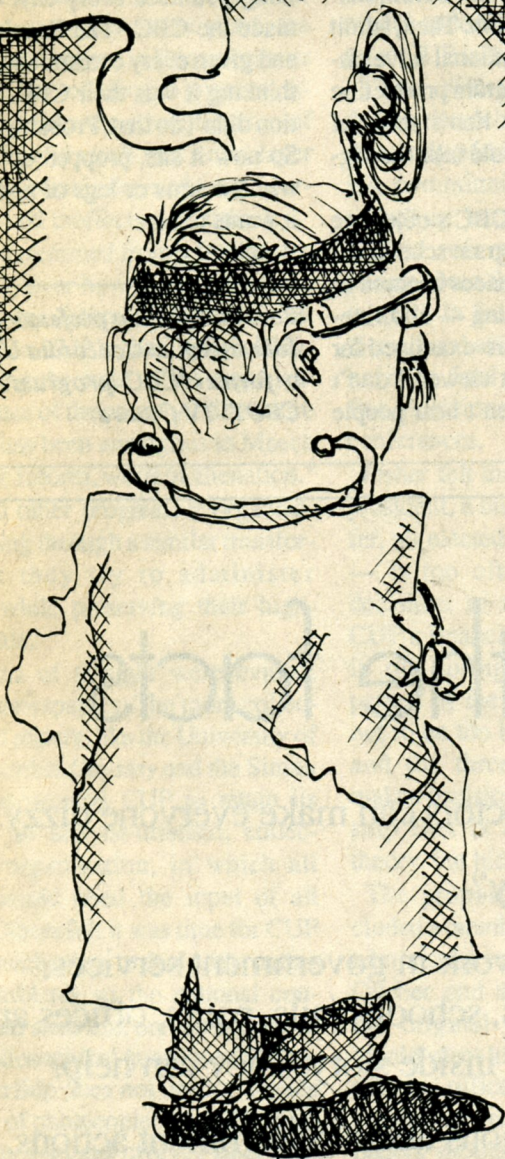
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made. CBC gave no warning of the magnitude of the cuts.

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised that the federal government is allowing the corporation to hemorrhage. We have seen it before in the cuts to VIA Rail, which were supervised by the current CBC president Gérard Veilleux, and in the reduction of post office services. The government is saying to small communities from Windsor to Sydney, from Matane to Calgary, "You don't count. You are too far away from the centre of activity. You are simply too expensive." These communities are being marginalized. The government feels they're somehow less deserving of national institutions than people in big cities in central Canada.

What would this ex-program manager have done? First, I would have taken the creative talents of people producing the local current affairs programs and developed an entirely different kind of supper-hour program, one that added in-

sight, passion and context to the stories the news department follows every day. I would have let local CBC operations pry beneath the surface of stories to find out what's really going on at City Hall. I think people would watch. Then more could be charged for advertising.

And where would I find \$108 million? To begin with, the likely transfer of Radio Canada International and the Parliamentary Service to External Affairs and the Speaker of the House of Commons' budget will save \$25 million. Then, admit that the shortfall is in national advertising, and that national program production must suffer. It takes the lion's share of production dollars; it should take the biggest hit.

We all know about the CBC's objective of Canadianizing the program schedule. I applaud it. But when finances become as tight as they are, everything — absolutely everything — must be re-examined for its value to the Canadian viewer. I don't know about you, but I don't hear people

standing on the barricades shouting, "Close down my station! Do anything! Just don't cut Street Legal or Video Hits." I'm enough of a cretin to suggest that for the cost of one Street Legal we could get a lot of hours of Masterpiece Theatre.

But I would have done more. I would have made my public relations department a vehicle for citizens to get to know their local broadcaster. You don't cut something that is part of the family, something you need every day. I would have made the CBC "The People's Network" and given every constituency a reason for thinking it was their CBC. The corporation didn't do that. Probably, it never will. So now it sits, propped up in the forest, without arms or legs or a vision of what it wants to be. □

Ross Perigo is a professor of Broadcast Journalism at Concordia University and a former CBC program manager of CBOT-TV Ottawa.

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Collectivism at work

by Jacques Poitras

Student journalists left the annual national conference of Canadian University Press more confused than ever over the state of their co-operative.

While CUP continued its slow recovery from cutbacks, caused by the loss of several large papers in recent years, the 53rd annual conference in December was marked by a heated dispute over an attempt to streamline the administration of the co-op. The end result was a new layer of bureaucracy that is deemed too powerful by some and ineffectual by others.

The dispute stemmed from a fundamental difference over how the organization should face the future. The battles left Deanne Fisher, CUP's president in 1989-90, comparing the state of the organization to the state of the country. "The entire conference has been analogous to Meech Lake, Senate reform, western alienation."

Fisher said other progressive organizations are going through a similar transformation as they try to administer efficiently while preserving their high-minded ideals.

Two strains of thought were evident among the newspapers. The more collective-minded papers, like the University of British Columbia *Ubysey* and the Simon Fraser *Peak*, wanted CUP to retain its identity as an activist-oriented, collectively-run organization, in which all decisions would need the input of all members. Others felt it was time for CUP to create a mechanism to deal with routine business problems so the national conference could shed that burden and focus on more philosophical questions. The entire membership does not need to decide which type of photocopier should be purchased by the national office, Fisher said.

These conflicting ideals spring from the ways the 47 papers run themselves. The *Ubysey*, for example, claims to avoid hierarchical structures by electing a five-person editorial collective. All decisions are reached by consensus, either by the

collective or by the staff. The University of Toronto *Varsity*, on the other hand, uses the traditional division of labor found in the mainstream press, electing various individuals to specific jobs. For *The Varsity*, the *Ubysey* approach is unrealistic and inefficient. For *The Ubysey*, the *Varsity* model endorses the type of power structures CUP is trying to eliminate.

These differences became apparent during the debate over the creation of a new body within CUP: a national consulting committee proposed by Fisher. It ended up becoming CUP's version of Senate reform, with some delegates joking about the body as a "triple-E committee." In fact, it is exactly that: equal, elected and effective. The committee will have the final word on most national office decisions made between national conferences.

Fisher felt the national office staff — a president, a bureau chief and a third staffer, all elected at the annual conferences — is too often left making arbitrary decisions to add or cut services after CUP's financial picture becomes clearer in the spring. Inevitably, the budget passed at the national conference turns out to be too liberal or too conservative, and the three-person staff in Ottawa makes decisions on behalf of a membership that is democratic in spirit and theory, but hierarchical in practice.

The proposed board of directors included a member from each of CUP's four administrative regions (the West, Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic). According to the original proposal, these directors would meet after the fiscal year to ratify national office decisions.

The Peak and *The Ubysey* felt all CUP papers should have been consulted last fall, for example, before then-president Francesca Do Lico went on a cross-country campaign to woo more student papers into CUP. "If we want to be a collective, let's be a collective," *Ubysey* delegate Paul Hayson told a mid-week

plenary. Hayson said the idea of a consulting committee was a perfect example of why his paper was angry at the national office. "There's this feeling that we haven't been consulted" on the proposal, he said.

A compromise was worked out to avoid alienating *The Ubysey* and *The Peak*. A fifth director, representing B.C., was added to the proposed committee. Also, requirements were made for representatives to consult member papers before committee meetings. The changes were remarkably similar to the ideals of direct democracy touted by the Reform Party: more power for the west and more direct input.

Most significantly, the committee was granted a great deal of power. It can, for example, veto any changes to the "CUP wish list," a list made at the annual conference to pinpoint spending priorities in the event of an unexpected gain in revenue. In past years, the national office has arbitrarily added to the list or changed the order of it.

Graham Camerson, a *Ubysey* delegate, called the compromise "collectivism at work," even though he felt the committee was a mistake to begin with.

John Montesano, who was elected CUP president at the conference, was relieved that the issue didn't cause serious splits.

Montesano had expected the conference to deal with other thorny questions — like the complex formula that decides membership fees. He wants to shift the collective's focus from reform to recruitment. A series of withdrawals from CUP by large papers has led to drastic cuts in the services CUP offers to its members. Luring back those papers will give CUP the money for expanded services, Montesano says. □

Jacques Poitras is a graduate student in journalism at Carleton University with an interest in the student press.

Oka: crisis in journalism

by Randy Boswell

Soon after the smoke cleared at Oka last fall, a thick fog rolled in as the media began examining their own role in the conflict.

Months of discussion about the media's handling of the Oka crisis have made only one thing clear: coverage of press issues by journalists often suffers from the same lack of contextual analysis and critical attention to language as native coverage itself.

Words such as objectivity, professionalism and accuracy have been bandied about by journalists with the same kind of care Robert Bourassa used when he spoke of restoring "law and order" to Kanasatake. They smack of deceit and self-justification. At the very least these words lack semantic muscle, for they carry just enough meaning to make sense on one level but are wholly inadequate to explain larger questions, deeper issues.

What does it mean when reporting that is perfectly professional, objective, accurate — even award-winning — according to conventional standards still fails to satisfactorily capture the essence of a story?

This was largely the kind of reporting produced by the crisis at Oka, and subsequent attempts by journalists to analyze that coverage illustrate the narrow range of their self-scrutiny. They failed, again and again, to question those conventional standards by which they judged Oka coverage, so their conclusions have told us little about the fundamental flaws which impair all journalism, not just that of native affairs.

What's never questioned is the faith that textbook journalism — professional disinterest, bare facts and telegraphic prose — can cope with an event which really began centuries before July 11, 1990, whose setting stretches far beyond a single reservation near a golf course, whose roots reach into cultural depths

barely suggested by the Warrior's mask and the soldier's helmet.

Most stories, in fact, have such complex origins. But between the reporter and the truth is a barricade of encrusted news values and a razor-wire narratological code that bleeds stories of interpretation, context and meaning. The post-Oka media analysis by journalists has unfortunately reinforced those stifling conventions, even when the best reporting during

syndrome.

Such accusations have kept Oka journalists scrambling to protect their professional credibility at the expense of more meaningful appraisals of native coverage in Canada.

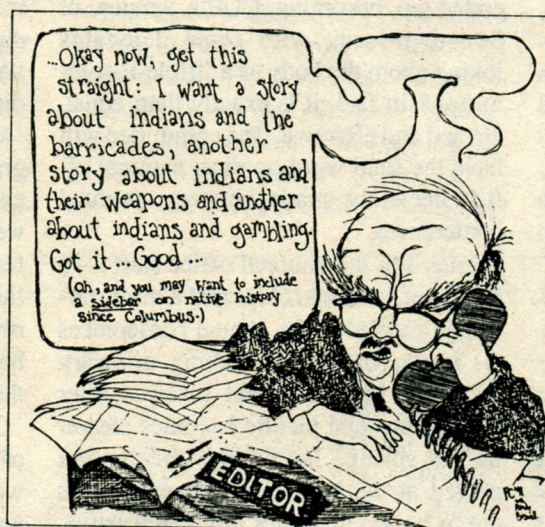
In the last issue of this magazine, *The Globe and Mail's* Geoffrey York declared "We were under no pressure from the warriors," and "By any standard of accuracy, the reports by the journalists inside the barricades were clearly superior to coverage from the outside...."

An *Ottawa Citizen* article, obviously designed to dispel doubts about Ian MacLeod's professionalism after the Oka crisis, recounts the reporter's ethical agonizing over decisions such as whether to accept a piece of birthday cake from the Mohawks. In the Sept. 29 article headlined "Journalistic integrity tested at armed stand-off in Oka", MacLeod says: "It bothered me all afternoon because I thought we were losing our professional distance."

And in a *Content* piece from the Sept./Oct. issue, *Montreal Gazette* reporter Alexander Norris rebuffs criticism about his reporting with a challenge for critics to "identify actual errors in my stories."

Some words are really just the shells of what were once meaningful concepts. Claiming "accuracy" is a convenient escape hatch which denies different levels of truth. It is part of the "objectivity" doctrine of journalism, which has come to mean skimming the surface of reality and offending the fewest possible readers. Objectivity has rather little to do with searching for truth. The word, like the newsgathering method it now represents, has become an heuristic cop-out, a shortcut to explanation in the face of an overwhelmingly complex reality.

With the terms of the debate fixed so firmly by the journalistic community on



the crisis defied them.

If the journalists who covered the conflict from behind Mohawk lines share this view, they have been too busy ducking grapeshot to say so. They have been forced on to the defensive by critics who claimed that most Oka coverage failed journalism's traditional test of quality: objectivity.

La Presse columnist Lysiane Gagnon, Carleton University journalism professor Joe Scanlon, media analyst George Bain and others have stated that journalists located on the native side of the barricades were biased in favour of the Mohawks, or worse, victims of the Stockholm

questions of professional ethics, objectivity and mere facticity, the voice virtually left out of this discussion — ostensibly about native coverage — has been the native's.

And is it any wonder that whenever native Canadians are asked to evaluate news coverage of their plight the criticisms are almost always the same: cultural insensitivity, not enough background. In an otherwise positive appraisal of Oka coverage, George Erasmus, leader of the Assembly of First Nations, complained that "the history of the aboriginal people was not properly told." Dan Gaspe, a native panellist at a Montreal symposium on Oka coverage, was more reproachful: "There is one important lesson for the media and that is why did Oka have to happen in order to inform the public of our existence?"

Several studies also alerted journalists to the distorted image of native people created by media which are geared to play up conflict. Such coverage rivets public attention on guns and masks and barbed wire. The emblems of violence surround a caricature people, like rubble and the Lebanese.

This won't be rectified by a glut of native stories in the conventional mold. Unless readers and viewers are offered much more, some explanation of how these people came to this despair, with attempts to convey the cultural complexity of it all, native groups will get only sympathy — not understanding — from other Canadians.

What would a revitalized journalism of native affairs look like? A hint may have been given by a native Canadian writer months before reporters discovered that Oka means more than cheese. Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, an Ojibway poet from Toronto, wrote the following in *The Globe and Mail* of Jan. 26, 1990: "Stories, you see, are not just entertainment. Stories are power. They reflect the deepest, the most intimate perceptions, relationships and attitudes of a people. Stories show how a people, a culture, thinks. Such wonderful offerings are seldom reproduced by outsiders."

Keeshig-Tobias wrote this in the midst

of a furor over non-native writers such as W.P. Kinsella borrowing from the wealth of native tales and experiences to produce their own best-sellers. She challenged non-native writers to join the aboriginal struggle for justice, to earn the right to share in another people's cultural expression: "Hear the voices in the wilderness. Be there with the Lubicon, the Innu. Be there with the Teme-Augama Anishnabai on the Red Squirrel Road. The Saugeen Ojibway. If you want these stories, fight for them. I dare you."

The call for advocacy must make journalists bristle. Ours is a narrative form which demands a clear separation between story-teller and subject, between the writer and the cause depicted. But the poet's advice isn't easily ignored, because above all she demands a deeper understanding of native concerns, something to be sought by novelists and reporters alike.

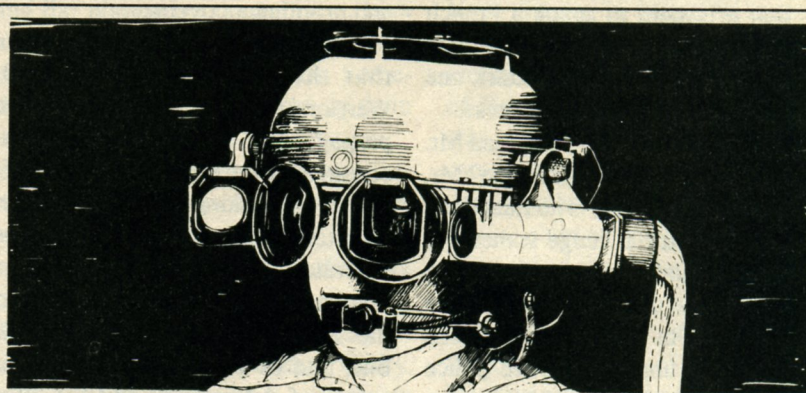
Journalists should be able to do more to provide Canadians with such deeper understanding. But the task demands more time, space, research, good will, foresight, hindsight and insight than most

reporters are encouraged to use. It also demands that journalists critically examine the canons of their own craft to see if the "accuracy" and "objectivity" of inverted pyramids, five Ws and balanced quotes are really enough to do the job.

It is easy to say that this is the task of the columnist or the editor — or even the historian or novelist — and not that of the daily journalist. I would agree if it was not my impression that citizens and governments today react more to the swirling surface of daily news than the deeper currents of reality. Coverage of the Middle East war is confirming the pattern.

Reporters must find ways to incorporate in their daily depiction of events more of society's accumulated knowledge about history, ethics and culture. The choice for journalists is between striving to really understand the roots of conflict or facing a world in which thoughtful words are lost amid bullets and missiles. □

Randy Boswell is a journalist and a graduate student in Canadian Studies at Carleton University.

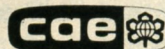


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Tripping the light fantastic

by Lysiane Gagnon

In the November/December edition of *Content*, Geoffrey York wrote about the coverage of the Warrior standoff at Oka, where it seems nobody did their job. But thank God Mr. York was there, holed up for 22 days with a tiny group of reporters in the treatment centre surrounded by the armed forces. It seems this trying experience led Mr. York to entertain light, paranoid fantasies.

"The journalists behind the barricades," he wrote, "were subjected to a torrent of criticism from columnists and media commentators across the country... Many journalists (especially in the Quebec francophone media) seemed to think that we should leave the scene ... and they were quite happy to see the army censoring the media by threatening and intimidating the reporters who were behind the barricades."

He then zeroes in on my case. Why are my writings singled out...? One explanation is that it is safer to attack a French newspaper columnist that most *Content* subscribers do not read than to attack one of the luminaries of the English press.

This brings up a question: I can read Mr. York's articles, but can he read mine? Mr. York is not bilingual. This is no fatal flaw, but why does he try to judge something he can't understand? I cannot blame him for not having read the 17 columns I wrote on the Oka crisis, in which I often blamed the governments and the Quebec police for the way they dealt with the Mohawks. But why does he so crudely distort the views that were clearly expressed in the two columns he cited? The charitable explanation is that Mr. York cannot grasp the meaning of a French text.

Mr. York alleges that I "cheered the army's suppression of the reporters at the treatment centre." False. I wrote that even though the presence of reporters on the premises clearly played into the hands of the Warriors, freedom of the press required that those reporters be able to send their stories. But, I added, if it was true

that, as the army contended, some of the reporters' cellular phones had been used by Warriors for their own purposes, these reporters had crossed the line between observers and actors.

Mr. York pretends that I wrote that reporters admitted into the treatment centre were "hand picked" by the Warriors. False. I explicitly pointed out that reporters had not been chosen on a personal basis, but that some had been specifically excluded from the zone controlled by the Warriors.

Mr. York writes that most good journalists "were happy to accept the version of events given by the army." This is a gross distortion. All the media were present on the Warrior's side of the barricades from day one. During the last days of the standoff, after the army had closed off the perimeter, most Warrior leaders were outside what Mr. York calls the "war zone," and their views received ample and prominent coverage.

Finally, Mr. York accuses me of writing that the reporters who shared the Warriors' fate for 22 days were "agents of propaganda." False again. I wrote that considering the uncritical outlook of most stories emanating from the centre, the reporters ran the risk of being seen as collaborators instead of observers.

Not much hard information came out of the 22-day cohabitation. Mr. York, for one, told us at length about the spiritual nature of the uprising and the infamous deeds of the soldiers. His readers learned nothing about the severe internal divisions within the Mohawk community, nothing about the Mohawks who disagreed with the Warriors' tactics and were terrorized, nothing about what was really happening on the premises and nothing about the way photo-op events were regularly staged for TV consumption.

Even when one of the chief negotiators for the Warriors, American non-native lawyer Stanley Cohen, left the area in a rush, no explanation came from Mr. York

or his colleagues about the reason for the sudden departure of a key figure in the uprising. And when the Warriors finally surrendered after having orchestrated another violent confrontation for the TV cameras, throwing women and babies into the melee, neither Mr. York nor his colleagues seemed to notice that the Warriors were using women and children as part of a propaganda ploy.

Mr. York thinks he covered a war, and that he was in a "war zone." If Oka was a war, how should one describe the Persian Gulf? Mr. York thinks it's time for "a refresher class in the basic principles of journalism." We finally agree: Mr. York should go back to school before he is sent out to cover a real war. □

Lysiane Gagnon is a political columnist for La Presse and writes a weekly column for The Globe and Mail.

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Hanging on!

A year after their government funding was cut the native media are surviving, but for how long?

by Bob Rupert

It's been almost a year since the secretary of state celebrated the International Year of Literacy by cutting funding to native newspapers.

Because some last-minute "conscience" payments were arranged and the current fiscal year doesn't end until April, most of the papers are still around. It's too early to say if they will survive.

Still, a survey of the current situation indicates more may weather the storm than originally forecast.

First, the good news.

Kahtou, "The Voice of B.C.'s First Nations," is now published monthly (it was bi-weekly) in Vancouver and has raised its newsstand price to \$2. The B.C. market is a strong one, with its large native population, and the future looks promising.

Windspeaker, "North America's No. 1 Native Bi-weekly Newspaper" was the most commercially successful of the native publications prior to the cuts. It continues in that role, though no longer bi-weekly. The ad sales staff, working out of Edmonton, is performing heroically. Gone, however, are the outstanding full-color photographs that once made this one of Canada's best-looking tabloids. *Windspeaker*, also in a strong native market, was the paper considered most likely to survive when the cuts were announced.

Alberta's other native newspaper, *Kainai News*, "Canada's Leading Indian Newspaper," is still publishing weekly out of Stand Off, an Indian community on the Blood reserve in Southern Alberta. But it's thin, and even with a higher newsstand price of 75 cents, it will have an uphill struggle.

In Saskatchewan, *New Breed*, which barely survived with government funding, is demonstrating surprising strength without the taxpayers' help. Ad sales for the Christmas issue totalled \$12,000 — a record for a publication that was on-again-off-again for years. But December is the big advertising month, and the publication's future is far from secure.

Wawatay News, a semi-monthly tabloid serving a vast audience throughout Northwestern Ontario, is making a strong effort to stay alive. Its advertising market, basically the Sioux Lookout and Dryden areas, is tiny compared with the western papers'. But *Wawatay* has had great continuity in staff and consistently outperforms the non-native competition, both editorially and commercially. For many years, *Wawatay* carried few ads. Somebody is beating the bushes hard up there these days. Ad content is way up.

Both native papers in the Northwest Territories were bailed out by the territorial government. So there's still federal money coming in, but through a different stream.

The Native Press, out of Yellowknife, is now called the *Press Independent*. Oddly, at a time when street sales, advertising and commercialism in general would seem to demand higher priority, the tabloid has gone to a much more conservative layout, a sort of *Globe and Mail* change.

The Inuvialuit tabloid, *Tusaayaksat*, out of Inuvik, is unchanged in format and is still quite thin both in editorial matter and advertising.

Through some innovative financial sleight-of-hand and by tightening a belt that was already straining, the Okali-

Katiget Society in Nain, Labrador, has kept its newsletter, *Kinatuinamot Ilen-gajuk*, alive. But it is now published only once every two months. Ernestina Pijogge, all five feet and ninety pounds of her, is a one-Inuk publishing band on Labrador's north coast.

That's the best news. Now the 'other shoe' drops.

The Micmac News, which established a well-deserved reputation as the publication of record for Nova Scotia's native people, folded late last year after making seemingly impressive gains in ad lineage. The line rate must still have been too low. But Sister Theresa Moore, president of the Native Communications Society of Nova Scotia, is trying to resurrect the paper that played a major role in turning around the wrongful murder conviction of Donald Marshall. *The Micmac News* was published out of Membertou, the reserve on the edge of Sydney where Marshall was born and where he lived when he was charged and convicted. His father is the grand (hereditary) chief of the Micmacs.

Shortly after *The Micmac News* died, the Confederation of Mainland Micmac Nations out of Truro launched the *Micmac Nation News*. The editor of the paper is aggressive former *Micmac News* reporter-photographer Rick Simon. The new paper may define its audience as all of Nova Scotia, but the Confederacy does not include the many reserves on Cape Breton, including Nova Scotia's largest, Eskasoni.

Part of the original rationale for the secretary of state's now defunct Native Communications Program was that native publications should be free from

undue influence by their own political organizations. Though a politically aligned newspaper is arguably better than none, the development in Nova Scotia may be a step backward for the "free" native press. Most native papers were started by native political organizations, but were required to have an arm's length relationship with those organizations as a condition for receiving federal funding initiated in the early '60s.

While sceptics may ask how "free" the publications were from government while they were receiving federal funding, there is little or no evidence that any of them felt any pressure to give the government good press. The independence battle was mainly fought within native society. Many native politicians fought hard for continued control of the native media. They played heavily on the conscience of reporters and editors who believed their "objective" role applied to both non-native and native politicians. The struggle for editorial independence was achieved by most, though more by some than others. The native papers were still evolving from their basically propagandistic beginnings when last year's budget axe fell.

There was no territorial government bailout for *Dannzha* (once the *Yukon Indian News*). The paper tried to survive on ad revenue and a much higher price (\$2.50 per issue), but gave up in December. In the small and competitive Whitehorse market, attempts to restructure and renew the paper will face great difficulty.

The Saskatchewan Indian is also gone. While there is hope that Indian organizations in that province will take it over, it hasn't happened yet. And most native organizations had their federal funding reduced in last year's budget.

In Manitoba, where native publications never really got on a stable footing, a faltering attempt by the Native Media Network to publish *The Native Scene* died with the federal cuts.

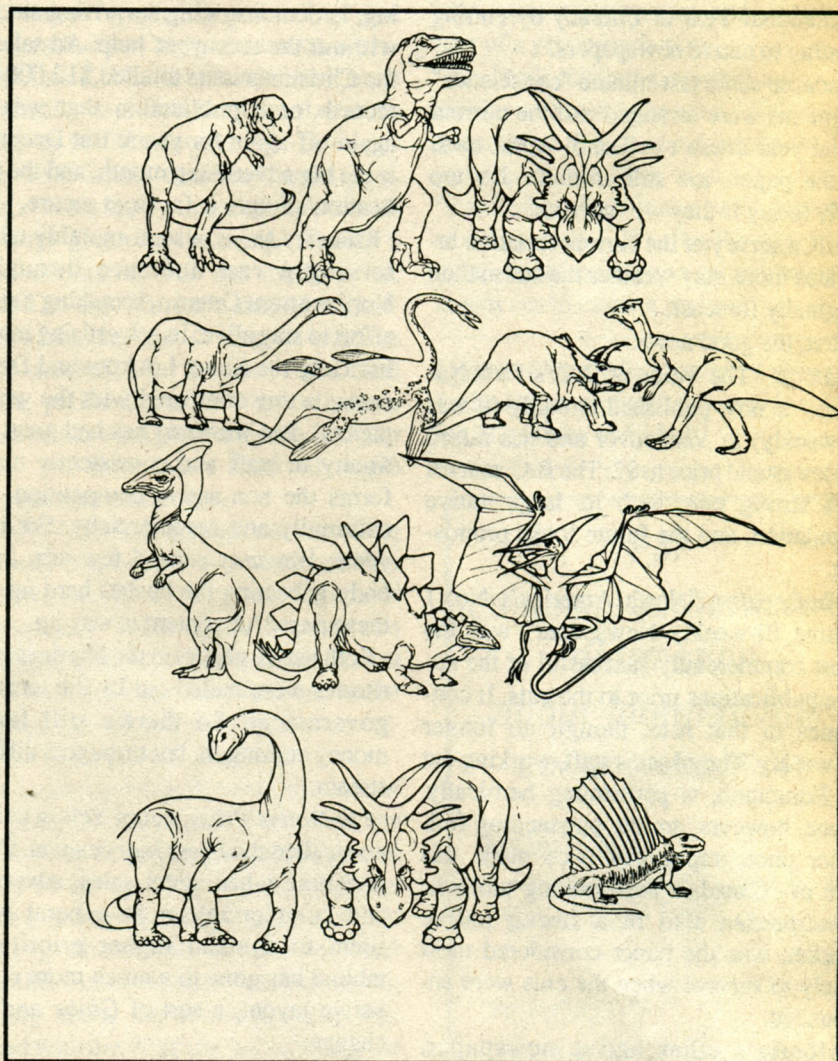
Hopes to establish federally funded native media for the large and under-served urban native populations in central and eastern Canada were also dashed by the

budget.

Where does all of this lead? Many of the surviving papers are barely hanging on. They will face very severe tests when the current fiscal year ends and they head, unsubsidized, in to the traditional summer advertising doldrums. What now appears to be a reassuring and surprisingly bright picture may grow dim as the last vestiges of government support dwindle and die — and the recession deepens.

Of course, the government could rediscover its conscience. Or, and this seems like a better bet, Canadians could get themselves a new government. Unless something changes, most native publications will be hard-pressed to live out the year. □

Bob Rupert is a journalism professor at Carleton University with an interest in the native press.



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Sun will 'shine' all day

by Tom Arnold

Vancouver will be waking up to a new product this spring — an all-day *Vancouver Sun*.

To boost declining circulation, *The Sun* is being redesigned with a reader-friendly format and will print several editions between early morning and the afternoon.

The changes will also be significant for Vancouver's flashy morning tabloid, *The Province*. That's because both dailies are owned and published by Pacific Press Ltd., part of the Southam Newspaper Group.

Pacific Press first considered an all-day newspaper after it hired a market research firm to test the idea of a morning street-sales edition in May 1990. The results showed that:

- 22,400 readers of the afternoon paper want a morning *Sun*;
- 18,200 *Province* readers would switch to *The Sun* if it was available in the morning, and;
- 3,500 new readers would purchase a morning *Sun*.

In a November, 1990, newsletter Pacific Press told its staff "The message was loud and clear — we are ignoring the needs of some of our readers. We need to give people the newspaper they want, when they want it. If we don't, we'll lose them. And we'll start to lose advertisers, too."

Over the past 10 years circulation of *The Sun* has plummeted, while that of *The Province* has steadily increased. The biggest drop — about 10,000 readers — occurred last year. Some of the reasons include:

- marketing has been ineffective;
- content and design haven't met changing needs and expectations of readers, and;
- the newspaper hasn't been delivered at the time people want to read it.

Pacific Press president Stu Noble said there is no other option for the *Vancouver Sun*. "The issue is survival. Papers that did

not switch (from afternoon publication to all-day or morning) have died," he said in a recent letter to employees.

Dr. Michael Burgoon, an American consultant to the Gannett Newspaper Group (owners of *USA Today*) and Scripps-Howard News Service, was hired to assess the newspaper market in Vancouver and has just completed an extensive survey examining market potential, service, content and design of the newspaper.

Burgoon will soon review his findings with management and editorial staff at both *The Sun* and *The Province*.

Preliminary results of his research suggest that people in Metropolitan Vancouver are eager about the prospects of a morning *Sun* newspaper.

"Burgoon told us in all honesty he was surprised at the strong desire for a morning *Sun* and we were also very surprised at the interest," said Daphne Gray-Grant, Pacific Press manager of strategic planning who is co-ordinating the re-launch of the newspaper.

Originally, the morning edition was planned for street-sales only, available in delivery boxes, news stands and 24-hour stores before 6:30 a.m. weekdays and 8 a.m. Saturdays.

The preparation needed for home delivery made the original Jan. 28 re-launch date unrealistic, said Gray-Grant, former *Sun* features editor who joined the newspaper in 1984. "April is our last chance to (introduce the all-day paper) before the summer (circulation) decline. If for any reason we are unable to meet the deadline we would wait until the fall."

The experience of other newspapers in North America indicates that survival depends on an early morning edition. Although it's unlikely to lead to huge circulation gains, it will stop the decline, she said. Since 1976 more than 150 North American newspapers have switched from p.m. to a.m. or added a morning edition. Sixteen more newspapers switched

in 1990.

Canada's largest circulation newspaper, *The Toronto Star*, went the morning route in 1981 after losing 5,000 readers a year.

Vic Krukalis, *The Star's* circulation director, said in a company newsletter: "In North America, the evidence is overwhelming that people want morning newspapers. I expect a continuing decline in afternoon papers because of lifestyle trends, the number of working women and the reduction of leisure time in general."

Longer work hours and more time spent travelling to work means less time to read newspapers. When people get home they have neither the time, nor the patience, to read in the evening. Vancouver has the highest rate of evening television news viewers in Canada.

While *The Sun's* writers are up against the supper-hour newscast, its delivery trucks combat rush-hour traffic. Delivery is slow and unreliable, which adds to the staleness of the news. Greater Vancouver's population is expected to reach two million in the next 10 years, so traffic and delays could get worse. An early edition is attractive because delivery would be completed before rush hour.

Until now, Pacific Press wasn't able to consider a *Sun* morning edition because *The Sun* and *The Province* used the same presses. Press capacity and *Province* deadlines did not permit it.

But Gray-Grant said *The Province* will be printed at a new press plant in Surrey and presses at the Granville Street site in Vancouver will produce the morning *Sun*. Nevertheless, a number of problems have to be ironed out before the all-day newspaper can go to press.

Production problems leading to late papers and poor delivery continue to plague the Surrey plant and must be eliminated, Gray-Grant said.

Home delivery for a morning *Sun* could

mean earlier *Sun* deadlines to allow production of both newspapers, more delivery trucks because the two papers share them, and more carriers.

But key *Province* deadlines will not be affected, Gray-Grant said. "Pacific Press will pull out all stops so home delivery of a morning *Sun* will not affect *Province* deadlines."

As well, management is still waiting for image-setting equipment to be delivered to the composing room. And since street sales will be the primary mode of paper delivery, *The Sun* requires 700 additional delivery boxes, which have not been approved by Southam management in Toronto.

Producing the all-day *Sun* will mean significant changes in the workplace, including scheduling of shifts. Changes to union contracts will also need to be negotiated.

Gray-Grant said Pacific Press won't be submitting a budget to Southam for the relaunch until management knows if it will

require additional staff or equipment.

The redesigned newspaper is likely to include an approach to stories which will be "feisty, more human and less institutional, reader-friendly and community-focused" according to a January company bulletin. Four different prototypes indicate larger type will be used to make it easier for older people to read and more appealing to younger people. Color, quotes, fact-boxes and extended headlines will also be used to draw the reader into the story.

Although these prototypes are likely to be altered according to Burgoon's findings, the end-product will probably use elements from all of them.

Many employees and media observers suspect that an all-day *Sun* will eventually lead to a merger with *The Province*.

But Gray-Grant said, "This is the single most unlikely thing to occur. It just doesn't make any sense. If anything, the exact opposite will happen. In fact, I suspect there will be three or four or five

newspapers coming out of Pacific Press in 10 years."

Nobody knows what effect a morning edition of *The Sun* may have on *Province* circulation.

Province editor-in-chief Ian Haysom admitted in a recent letter to employees that the newspaper may lose readers. He said the goal will be to "minimize any erosion in our circulation."

"We can do that partly by continuing to target the younger end of the market and the suburbs. But we'll need to be more creative, innovative and competitive to combat the threat to our circulation."

Said Gray-Grant: "The aim isn't to rob Peter to pay Paul. Once *The Sun* is relaunched, we will clearly market and target the two newspapers to different audiences." □

Tom Arnold is a graduate student in journalism at Carleton University.

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Rejuvenating an old gentleman

The House the Berrys Built.

by Duff Hart-Davis
Stoddart, 288 pp., \$27.95.

Reviewed by Val Sears

When Conrad Black bought control of *The Daily Telegraph* of London on Dec. 5, 1985, what he got was a sad old gentleman of a paper, hag-ridden by debt and the unions, befuddled about nearly everything but the glory of its past.

Within two years, under two new editors, Max Hastings and Peregrine Worsthorpe, the paper had been turned around and was once again a Conservative and profitable witness to history.

There is much for Canadian publishers to learn from these matters as Canadian newspapers struggle to find a role in the age of television. And there is a good deal that reporters can delight in as author Duff Hart-Davis unfolds the story of *The Daily Telegraph* in *The House the Berrys Built*.

Duff-Davis, who worked for the paper and is the author of a number of non-fiction books as well as half a dozen novels, is a fine writer, neat but not gaudy. His tale of the rise and fall of the paper from the time the Berry brothers — William and Gomer — bought it in 1915 is full of incident and anecdote.

But nothing in the ups and downs of a paper (1989 circulation: 1,150,000) can compare with the drama of its final years before it went to Black.

A great paper brought down by lack of leadership, outmoded technology, mindlessly greedy union practises and arthritic editors is compelling tragedy. But equally riveting is the splendid reporting of Conrad Black's takeover, facile, clever and nearly bloodless.

Black was the second Canadian to take a run at the Berry family holdings. Roy Thomson had first lumbered after *The Sunday Times*, then part of the empire, in 1959. "I'll give you a very good price, indeed," Thomson told Michael Berry. When Berry declined, Thomson was afraid he had offended him by his direct approach.

But then, as Hart-Davis notes, Thomson "always asked people if they would sell

him their businesses as a matter of course."

The Berry papers have always attracted a solid collection of middle-class British readers, relying on a formula devised in 1856: providing maximum information, at minimum expense, a radical concept these days.

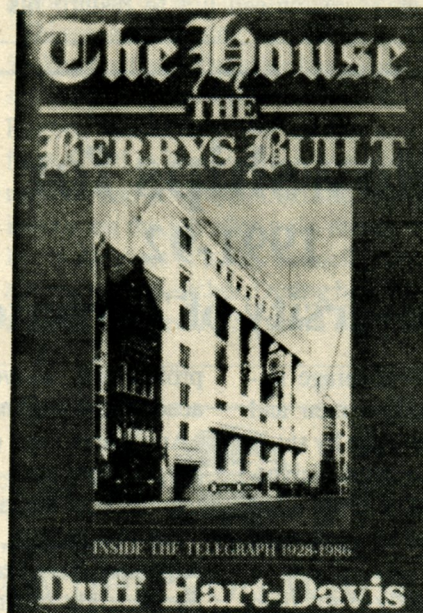
There were, of course, bad times and bad judgments. Such as when editor Geoffrey Dawson kept spiking reports from the *Telegraph's* man in Berlin critical of the Nazis. "I do my utmost," Dawson said at the time, "night after night, to keep out of the paper anything that might hurt their sensibilities."

Or poor Jeremy Wolfenden, the paper's Moscow man whom the KGB caught with a young chap in bed — a barber from the Ministry of Foreign Trade as it happened — and turned him into a spy on the British community.

But there were heroes and heroines as well, particularly the redoubtable Claire Hollingworth, a reporter of exceptional courage and tenacity for over 50 years on the *Telegraph*. In 1989, at 79 and now a free-lance correspondent, she was clinging to a lamp-post at Tiananmen Square in Peking, still determined to get the right perspective.

Although the paper gloried in work by Worsthorpe and Malcolm Muggeridge, the news department suffered under the short-story syndrome, not unknown to readers of the Sunpapers in Canada.

Foreign correspondents were told: "We have room only for the best news. No story should exceed 300 words unless it is of paramount importance...the



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limit for average-value stories is 150 words. Many excellent front-page stories are no longer than 50 words."

The rainbow of color magazines that followed Roy Thomson's newly acquired *Sunday Times* supplement, produced some bitter battles on Fleet Street.

Thomson was doing his best to undermine the *Telegraph*. On one social occasion, Thomson met *Telegraph* editor Donald McLachlan at a party in a new hotel. McLachlan's wife, Kitty, in an attempt to be friendly in the elevator, said: "When we get to the top, I suppose one of you will have to push the other off." Thomson replied flatly: "That won't be necessary. He's going down anyway."

The difficulty in a book so crammed with good stuff, is that there is little room for context. One wishes that Hart-Davis would tell us more about the atmosphere in London and on Fleet Street, more indeed about journalistic turmoil of the times. Instead, we move from editor to

editor, story to story, triumph to decline as if in a *Telegraph* capsule.

Never mind, we can enjoy what we're given. And look forward to the final chapters as Black negotiates to take over. It is the sort of stuff that has made the Wall Street books of the '80s so compelling and successful. Big money-men at war, very different from us.

At one stage, a delegation of *Telegraph* men flew by Concorde to New York to meet Black, there in the morning, back to London in the afternoon. The cost to the all but bankrupt *Telegraph*: more than \$25,000 (Can).

Black's handling of the *Telegraph* people was later described by a participant, auditor David Montagu, as "hopeless, geriatric, and like small boys being brought one after another into the headmaster's study."

The story will no doubt delight Black, Hart-Davis's laconic knight, and is absolutely guaranteed not to disturb his

libel-sensitive soul.

The Daily Telegraph, like the rest of London's major dailies, has abandoned Fleet Street, crushed the unions and now publishes in the barren pastures of the Isle of Dogs. The production department, which numbered 2,200 on Fleet Street, had 507 at the end of 1988, publishing a profitable paper.

But the reporters are miles — an hour's journey — from Parliament, the City, their lunchtime sources at The Cheshire Cheese.

It is a better *Daily Telegraph* and, most important, it has survived. But God bless the old gentleman of pre-war days and nights. That was a time when standards were set in a world that could savor its news with port and cigars. □

Val Sears is Max Bell visiting professor at the University of Regina School of Journalism.

Southam Fellowships for Journalists

1991-92

University of Toronto

The objective of these Fellowships is to encourage improvement in journalism by offering qualified men and women an opportunity to broaden their knowledge by study in a university setting. For the academic year at the University of Toronto, from September, 1991 to May 1992, up to five Canadian journalists will be chosen from the applicants by the selection committee.

The successful candidates will be able to study in any field of their choice. Graduate or undergraduate courses at the University's schools and departments are open to them. A typical Southam plan of study combines general education with concentration in one or two areas. The program is based at Massey College, the graduate school in the University.

A parallel, extra-curricular activity is arranged, where Southam Fellows meet regularly in informal seminars to discuss contemporary issues off the record with distinguished figures from journalism, business, education, and other

professions, as well as from the arts, public service, and academic disciplines.

Applicants must ordinarily be full-time news or editorial employees with newspapers, news services, radio, television, or magazines with at least five years' experience.

The Fellowships, for which there are no educational prerequisites, have been financed by Southam Inc. since 1962. For the eight-month university year, they pay two-thirds of the Fellow's regular gross salary at the time of selection up to a specified maximum; all university fees; travel expenses to and from Toronto; and a living allowance for out-of-town Fellows.

Applications will be available soon, with details of the program, from: Southam Fellowships, University of Toronto, Koffler Student Services Centre, 214 College St., Toronto, Ontario M5T 2Z9.

Deadline is March 1, 1991, and early application is advised. Selections are announced in late April.

Toronto-based freelance writer **Kevin Scanlon** and *Edmonton Sun* copy editor/feature writer **Donna Christensen** have won writing awards sponsored by The Arthritis Society.

The Hugh A. Smythe Science Writing Awards, which carry a \$1,000 cash prize, are offered annually to Canadian journalists for excellence in writing about arthritis, its treatment and rheumatological research.

Scanlon took the magazine prize for an article about Lyme disease published in *Equinox*. Christensen won the newspaper category with an article about the disease scleroderma in *The Sun*.

In other coast-to-coast news, *The Halifax Chronicle Herald* and *Mail Star* have a new managing editor. **Jane Purves** replaces **Max Keddy**, who has been assigned to spruce up the papers' computer system.

Dean Jobb takes on the new position of day news editor, while copy editor **Greg Coolen** joins **Sally Smith** as an assignment editor.

The Truro Daily News has undergone some re-organization. **Larry Powell** has moved from news editor to lifestyles editor. Former sports editor **Dave Conrad** becomes wire editor and sports copy is now directed to **Alan Elliot**.

At *The Montreal Gazette*, **Mel Morris** has retired as executive managing editor

after 11 years in that post.

The St. Thomas Times Journal has a new publisher, **Don Tomchick**, who has moved from *The Cornwall Standard-Freeholder*. He replaces **Laurence J. Beavis** who retired. This is the second big change at *The Times Journal* in recent months. Former managing editor **Jim Blake** went to *The London Free Press* and was replaced by **Bruce Lantz**, formerly with *The Nanaimo Daily Free Press* in British Columbia.

At *The Brandon Sun* two new reporters have joined the sports department. **Jason Bell** comes from *The Selkirk Journal* and **James Shewaga** comes from *The Yorktown Enterprise* in Saskatchewan.

Meanwhile, *The Sun* has added recent Ryerson grad, **Mary MacArthur** to the staff. She takes over as agricultural reporter from **Dave Williams**, who has left with **Leah Bradish** to try freelancing in Europe. The paper also has a new TV guide editorial assistant, **Carla Navid**.

Things are hopping at CFQC-TV in Saskatoon. **Cory Dressler** has joined the station as a sports writer from CKRM in Regina, while **Gary Morton** has arrived from CKBI in Prince Albert as a photographer. Also at CFQC, **Corinne Deshaw** is back on the job after a six-month sick leave. Deshaw is a city council reporter and occasional anchor. During her illness, she was replaced by **Shawna Kelly** who

is now looking for employment, according to news director **Jim Mattern**.

Reporter **Greg Pindera** has left *The Winnipeg Free Press* to travel in Asia.

It's been about six months since *The Moose Jaw Times Herald* "entered the world of color" and the office has been hectic ever since, according to managing editor **John Strauss**. School board reporter **Kevin Dowler** has a knack for computers and has been doing many of the graphics. Several staff changes have taken place since the format re-make. Carleton grad **Susan Winkelaar** has become city council reporter. **Kevin Mitchell**, from Mount Royal College in Calgary, is now a sports writer, and **Carol Carley** is the new lifestyles editor. **Monique Campbell** is a new photographer taking over from **Kevin Dunn**.

CHQR radio in Calgary has a new reporter, **John Vos** from CKRY. Vos replaces **Jay Branch** who has gone to Broadcast News in Edmonton.

Submissions for Short Takes should be sent to Robert Roth, Content Magazine Business Office, R.R. 2, Mountain, Ontario, K0E 1S0. Phone: (613) 989-3388.

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