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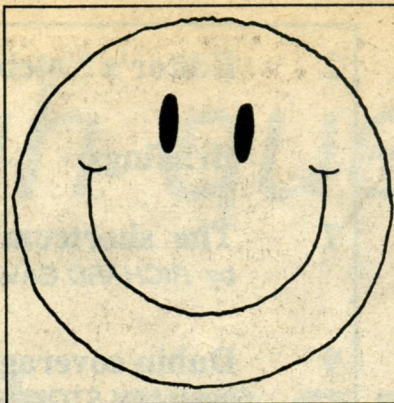
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Sports writers have always been a breed apart both physically and journalistically. Often isolated in a remote corner of the newsroom they marched to their own drum largely unaffected by the changing face of journalism around them. Long after boosterism, homerism and being a public relations adjunct to various interest and pressure groups became taboo in the rest of the newsroom, sports reporting clung to its own rules tenaciously. To some extent that is still true today. There are exceptions, of course, but sports reporting — one dare not call it journalism most of the time — is still largely governed by the same attitudes and rules that disappeared long ago in the rest of the newsroom. As our cover stories by Richard Cavanagh and Mark Stokes clearly indicate, sports reporting by and large has not progressed much beyond the scoreboard and



fluffy human interest reporting. That should, of course, be part of any sports page. But where is the substantive, critical, probing analyses of sports as business, as entertainment, as a social phenomenon, as consumerism? For the most part, it is covered solely as entertainment at the expense of other aspects of sports life. The most outrageous offenders

remain the broadcast media which see sports only in terms of entertainment at best, but much of the print media isn't too far behind. Given that sports is a multi-billion dollar industry, the public deserves the kind of probing, contextual coverage that is evident in other areas of journalism. It is time that we drag sports reporting into the 1980s.

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Greed makes strange bedfellows

The *Globe and Mail* has moved into the distribution business and its first customer is a sensationalist British tabloid.

The Toronto-based daily has agreed to act as Canadian distributor for the weekly edition of Britain's *Daily Express* newspaper in Toronto, Vancouver and Ottawa.

The collection of news and feature stories from the London editions of the *Express* is published weekly throughout the world. In Canada, it was launched in May in Toronto, where 8,000 copies are now available at newsstands, book stores and convenience stores throughout the city. Another 5,000 copies are being sold in each of the other two cities.

"We project that ultimately we'll be delivering between 17,000 and 20,000 copies of the *Express* weekly," said Dimitri Chrus, director of circulation at the *Globe*. Chrus said that the agreement will generate "some place in the order of \$100,000" annually in revenue for the *Globe*.

"This was a natural tie-in for us," Chrus said. "We've got the distribution network in place already for the *Globe*, we've got the retail stands and connections."

Chrus said the *Globe and Mail* has been trying to cut circulation costs for some time, and using the distribution network to generate revenue is a strategy that has worked in the United States.

The *Globe and Mail* is now talking to magazine publishers, including *Time* Inc., to try to increase its contract distribution services. While some national publications have developed their own extensive networks, Chrus said that smaller or more regional publications could benefit by reducing mail or delivery costs to newsstands.

It would be a new venture for Canadians, according to Ron Sellwood, distribution manager for the Canadian Magazine Publishers' Association.

"The system that we have was put in place in the 1940s," he said. "Publishers



make deals with national distributors, who allocate copies of the periodical to 36 regional wholesalers."

Publishers get about 50 cents of every dollar buyers pay at newsstands, he said. The *Globe's* Chrus declined to discuss financial details of the agreement with the *Daily Express*.

The current distribution system has remained virtually unchanged in the last 50 years, participants said. Wholesalers have monopolies and the costs of the system can be high for smaller publications.

The *Globe* is venturing into this new territory at a time when newsstand sales are in a steady decline. Sellwood said that it is logical for the newspaper to attempt to defray its own costs, and that the new service could be an advantage to other publications if priced competitively.

"It would really be a new kink in the system," he said.

So far, few other newspaper publishers have explored the idea of piggybacking newsstand distribution. A spokesman for Southam Inc. said that the company's dis-

tribution system is geared toward delivery of newspapers, not other publications, and there are no plans to change that.

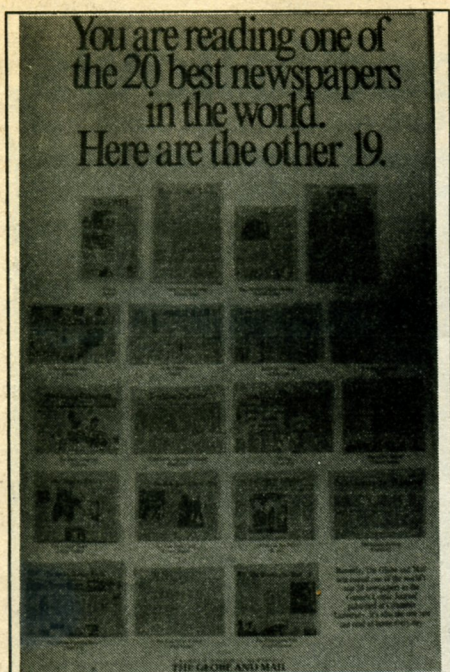
In the meantime, the *Globe and Mail* is exploring a piggy-back venture of its own. Chrus said the paper is talking to the *Wall Street Journal* about delivering the *Globe* to newsstands in Florida, for the Canadian population which flees south during the winter.

—Suzanne McGee

Globe joins circle of elite

Canada's self-proclaimed "national newspaper" received international recognition last spring when it won acclaim as one of the world's top 20 newspapers.

The *Globe and Mail* joined other journalistic giants such as the *Wall Street Journal* (U.S.), the *Daily Telegraph* (Britain), *Le Monde* (France), and *Asahi*



Globe pats itself on the back

Shimbun (Japan) on a list of noteworthy newspapers published annually by the Gannett Center Journal at New York's Columbia University.

William Thorsell, editor-in-chief of the *Globe*, credits the newspaper's national orientation and its "strong foreign bureaus" with vaulting the Thomson flagship into the inner circle of elite newspapers.

"The choice of newspapers for the Gannett list is subjective, but the combination of a national perspective and strong foreign reporting seems to be reflected among all 20 newspapers," Thorsell said.

The Toronto-based *Globe and Mail* maintains more domestic bureaus than any other Canadian newspaper and has a country-wide circulation of over 325,000. It also staffs a significant number of bureaus outside the country.

The *Globe* is the only Canadian publication named to the Gannett list.

"From our point of view, being cited as one of the world's top 20 newspapers is very good news. We just have to make sure it continues to be true," Thorsell said, adding the *Globe* has appeared on the Gannett list in the past.

John Miller, chairman of the Ryerson

School of Journalism in Toronto, said arguments can be made both for and against including the *Globe* among the world's top papers.

"The *Globe* is a very good newspaper," Miller said, "but it certainly doesn't rank with the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post* or the *Wall Street Journal*." (All named to the 1991 Gannett list.)

Editor-in-chief Thorsell said placement on the Gannett list is a low-key affair that carries no prize beyond "the pride of ownership" at being cited among the world's best.

In fact, said Thorsell, the news that the *Globe* had made the grade reached the newspaper via a wire story.

Other countries represented on the Gannett list of top newspapers for 1991 include Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Germany, Italy and Switzerland. □

— Shelley Browne

Newsmagazine curious mix

The CBC's new daily prime time news program focusing on the lives of individual Canadians and regional issues is receiving mixed reviews so far.

CBC Newsmagazine, which must compete against high "jolts-per-minute" programs like *Entertainment Tonight* and *A Current Affair*, is a curious mix of headline news, short cinema verite documentary pieces, regional field reports and a variety of both traditional and unorthodox editorial devices. Those involved in the program, like anchor Alison Smith, go out of their way to label their product as unique. Using jargon such as "newsdifferent," they say it will do what so many programs have aimed to do before — get behind the headlines to "the heart of the story."

"It's the job of *The National* to cover big headline stories," says the program's senior producer, Joy Crysdale. "But there are other needs to talk about — the things that are happening behind the headlines,

that are happening to people on the street level.

"*Midday* covers Canada in a way that no other program in Canada really does," she adds. "We will be doing the same kind of thing except they're an interview-based program and we will be much more a field-based program."

The focus on regional stories and issues is one of *Newsmagazine's* prime goals according to its producers. It picks up where regional programs such as Newfoundland's *Land and Sea*, and Toronto's *Monitor* left off when they were cancelled after last fall's cuts. Indeed, much of the programming originates in the remaining regional bureaus.

The program also eschews the journalism style which focuses on government and institutions — a style which led to accusations during coverage of last year's failed Meech Lake Accord that the CBC too closely followed the federal government's line and ignored the views of ordinary Canadians.

"There's a kind of helicopter view of stories which looks at the whole wide issue," says Crysdale who came to *Newsmagazine* from *Monitor*. "Then there's the on-the-ground view which looks at it through the eyes of the individual. That will be our approach."

The last time CBC launched such an ambitious program was in 1982 when *The National Journal Hour* was created. That undertaking was a clear success partially due to the fact that it was such a big risk. No other North American network, other than PBS, offered a daily news and current affairs package in prime time. That was the selling point.

Newsmagazine, however, does not enjoy a similar corner of the market. In fact, its biggest competition may come from within the CBC. Programs like the regional news, *Midday* and *Life: The Program* which are all picking up on the trend towards "street-level journalism."

"The rest of the news service will be doing this sort of thing as well," says Crysdale. "*Newsmagazine* does not have an exclusive hold on it but it is our particular mandate."

For some critics, it's already too much.

NEWS magazine

The *Globe and Mail's* television critic John Haslett Cuff wrote that the addition of *News magazine* to the CBC schedule represents "a questionable use of resources involving a great deal of barrel scraping, duplication and, for the viewer, endless repetition.

"We don't need CBC *News magazine*, or for that matter, any more CBC current affairs programs," Haslett Cuff writes.

The *Montreal Gazette* was somewhat kinder calling it "pretty good television — different in pace, tone and content from the CBC news we're accustomed to seeing." However, it still dubbed the product "McNews — easily digestible" (the reviewer was probably not watching the program from the dinner table, as some people were, when it showed the birth of triplets by Caesarean section).

Meanwhile, another CBC program is revamping its look beyond the network's slick, new animated logo.

CBC *Sunday Report's* weekly panel of old journalism hacks has been replaced by a 'new' panel of old political hacks. Former NDP BC cabinet minister Rosemary Brown, former Conservative party president Dalton Camp and former federal Liberal cabinet minister Jean-Luc Pepin replace CBC correspondents David Halton and Wendy Mesley and *Globe and Mail* columnist Jeffrey Simpson. The new threesome will be joined occasionally by former Parti Quebecois cabinet minister Claude Morin and the single newcomer to the political scene, Reform Party policy director Stephen Harper.

Sunday Report's anchor Peter Mansbridge introduced the new panel members saying they would be better able to "reflect the new reality" of Canadian politics. His reference to the new reality seemed to contradict the old faces and

prompted *Ottawa Citizen* columnist Roy MacGregor to write that "the last time they had such an introduction, the Union Jack flew over Canada."

As far as the CBC's new venture, *News magazine*, is concerned however, it's counting on Canadians to choose the views of ordinary Canadians over the sleaze of *A Current Affair* or the glamour of *Entertainment Tonight*. □

— Kenton Vaughan

Service brings printed word to visually impaired

A whole new world of information is opening up for people who have difficulty reading newsprint.

VoicePrint is the first service aimed at providing visually impaired Canadians with more news and information. Volunteers are recorded reading stories from daily newspapers and magazines and the recordings are broadcast on cable TV.

Most cable systems are distributing the service free of charge on alpha-numeric channels — those that carry stocks or TV listings — 24-hours a day, seven days a week. The non-profit service, which has been on the air since Dec. 6, is by many counts a success.

Vera Malec, executive director of a newsletter called *Views for the Visually Impaired*, calls the VoicePrint an "absolutely phenomenal idea." If it wasn't for the service, she says, "many visually impaired people would have no access to current news."

Ian Sutton, general manager of Voice-

Print, says it is structured like a newspaper so listeners not only get news, sports and entertainment, but also analysis, editorials and columns — pieces they may not normally get on broadcast news.

While items are taken from a variety of sources, about 80 per cent of material is Canadian content. Sutton says one of things he has come to appreciate "is the quality of Canadian journalism. It's terrific stuff and very interesting material."

Material is drawn from all major Canadian dailies and magazines, including *Maclean's*, *Saturday Night* and *Canadian Living*, as well as from special-interest publications.

Fran Cutler, one of the founding directors of VoicePrint, is visually impaired to the extent that she can't read print for extended periods of time. She agrees the service gives listeners more in-depth information. And, she says, "by tuning into VoicePrint, I become mesmerized by material I would never read."

But she doesn't believe the service will take away from the print market since, "it's faster to read than to listen."

Sutton is hoping the service will be expanded to the rest of the country by the end of September.

While the idea of giving visually-impaired Canadians access to the print media has been bandied about for many years, Sutton says it wasn't until 1988 that a House of Commons committee recommended something like VoicePrint be established.

The federal government has agreed to pay for \$100,000 of VoicePrint's estimated \$200,000-\$300,000 annual budget, with the rest coming from corporate donations.

Another thing that has impressed Sutton is the quality of the volunteer readers. While some are well known news readers — notably Peter Mansbridge and Lloyd Robertson — most people are from a variety of ages and backgrounds. For example, one reader is a teacher, another is a factory worker and there are a variety of ethnic accents, which Cutler says reflect Canada's cultural make-up.

Potential readers must be able to "read

well and with understanding," Sutton says. That's no mean feat when using copy that's "intended for the eye."

"The articles are longer and it's not written for broadcast so it is a bit of a challenge," he says.

The quality of the service is "remarkably good," Cutler says. "I was prepared to be critical but tolerant" when the broadcasts first began, but she says she has been "steadily impressed" by the quality of the reading and of the productions.

"Listening to stuff that's written for the eye is very difficult, but the volunteers are doing a great job," she says. □

— Jean Cruickshank

Advertisers

'kill' alternative

St. John's daily

One of the most feisty newspapers in Canada died last month. The *Sunday Express*, in St. John's, Newfoundland, was a victim of its own uncompromising journalism. It was so uncompromising that eventually the advertising community of Canada's second-smallest province cut off the money.

In its short life, the *Sunday Express* gained much respect throughout Canada's journalistic community. In less than five years, the paper won two awards from the Canadian Association of Journalism for investigative reporting. It was also runner-up for the prestigious Roland Michener Award for Public Service in Journalism.

Probably the finest hour for the *Sunday Express* came when its staff played a pivotal role in assuring that the stories of the sexual abuse at Mount Cashel orphanage came to the attention of the public — not only in Newfoundland, but across the nation. That story, together with the prestige of tenaciously covering the events surrounding the ill-fated Sprung greenhouse made certain the *Sunday Express* proved its worth in the homes of the Newfoundlanders who consistently read it.

But for the newspaper, there were just too few of those Newfoundlanders.

The circulation of the *Sunday Express* never went beyond the 20,000 mark.

Consumer costs rose as the price of the paper went from 50-cents to one dollar in the last year. But the advertisers stayed away.

Before the recession The *Sunday Express* was black-balled from the lucrative coffers of government ads presumably because of its determination to expose the

shortcomings of the Sprung greenhouse project. But other advertisers also avoided the paper, both before and after the recession.

Eventually, Harry Steele, the millionaire owner of the *Sunday Express*, decided it was time to quit.

The last publication was on August 11.

The editorial staff on the paper also decided it was time to quit.

All 12 resigned. They refused to work for the publication which is replacing the *Sunday Express*.

The new paper is simply called the *Express*. It's a Wednesday give-away that concentrates on its real estate guide. And the new paper makes it clear that it will avoid the hard journalism that was so much a part of its predecessor.

There were only two editors during the two-year life of the *Sunday Express*.

Michael Harris, the author of a book about the Donald Marshall affair and another book about the Mount Cashel scandal, was its founder.

The man who replaced him is David Stewart-Patterson, formerly of the *Globe and Mail*.

As Stewart-Patterson put it, "An odd newspaper in a far corner of Canada during troubled times has died. Only the spirit lives on." □

— John Steeves

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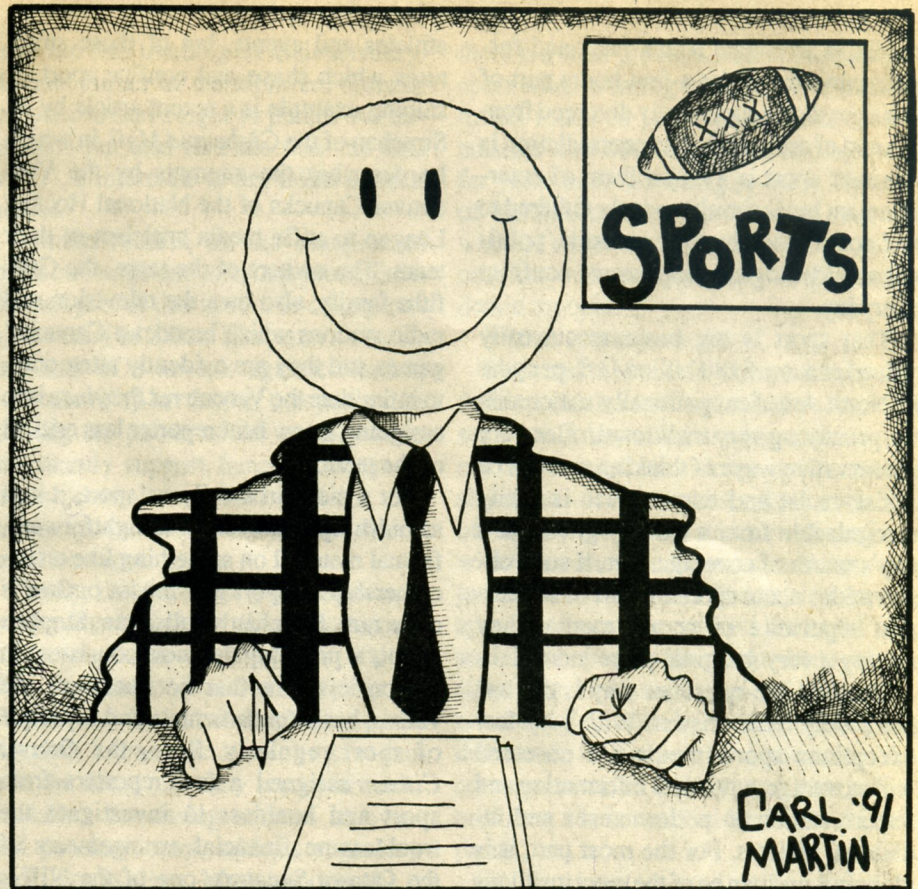
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Leading the cheers

*Sports journalism
for the most part
insidious idolizing*

by RICHARD CAVANAGH



Item: The International Olympic Committee re-admits South Africa to the Olympic Games for 1992, citing efforts by that nation's sport community to dismantle racial divisions between sport organizations. Days after, the United States announces the withdrawal of economic sanctions against South Africa.

Item: Michael Smith, decathlon competitor from Kenora, Ontario, competes for the world championship in Tokyo. He is attractive in looks and personality, but more importantly, he might make people forget about Ben Johnson. Should he win an Olympic gold medal in his 10-event specialty, he will earn the traditional title of World's Greatest Athlete (he comes second, for a silver medal). The CBC devotes an unusual number of resources to produce a primetime documentary entitled *Michael Smith: Anything is Possible*. It airs just days before Smith competes in Tokyo.

Item: A survey from a small number of American dailies indicates that stories on women's sport comprise 3.5 percent of the total, while stories on men's

sport makes up 81 percent.

Item: "Hey, it's the maggots. C'mon in maggots." A comment made by a major league baseball player as reporters await entrance to the locker room for post-game interviews.

★ ★ ★

Wither sports journalism? The question tends to fall well below inquiries regarding the status and direction of "hard news," perhaps a notch above changes to weather coverage. Too often, queries about the status of sports journalism are answered with either pining laments for the good old days, the golden age of sport, the writing of the Red Smiths and Jim Colemans, or with snide suggestions that "sports journalism" is a mutually exclusive turn of words.

But within the current climate of massive public consumption of sport products generated by media outlets, huge amounts of money paid by television networks and corporate advertisers to ensure the flow of these products, enormous status and earnings apportioned to a small but highly visible number of athletes and the amazingly high profile of sport around the globe, it's a question that begs not only a response, but serious evaluation.

The truth is, of course, that we are dealing with one of the greatest paradoxes of modern society when we talk about sport as a kind of cultural phenomenon. This is because sport is traditionally and popularly defined, with strong support from

media, as an escape, a kick-back-and-forget-your-worries-for-a-few-hours part of our lives that is supposedly divorced from the rest of our world. The contradiction is obvious: sport is a major form of entertainment but is simultaneously tethered to and conditioned by the economic, political and ideological realities we confront everyday.

That sport is big business currently valued at some \$180 billion U.S. per year in North America, politically nationalistic, promoting very traditional, often very conservative ways of thinking and can be sexist, racist and ethnocentric is easily recognizable from a cursory glance at a day's worth of coverage. Yet, if such observations about sport are part of the current repertoire of sports media, they occupy a very marginal place indeed.

The first sub-question: why is this so? has a very basic answer. With very few exceptions sports media are obsessed with coverage, statistical information and feature stories on performances and individual athletes. For the most part, it is idolizing, and can be of the most insidious variety — see Ben Johnson, whom the press abandoned like a rat in a sinking ship when the stanazolol hit the fan in Seoul. The object of sports productions on television and radio is to provide entertainment in an atmosphere of anticipation and promotion, while limiting "criticism" to a sub-category of the entertainment process — see Don Cherry. In the case of television sport especially, it's a case of "don't bite the hand that feeds you," i.e. networks pay big bucks to carry games and events and advertisers pay networks big bucks to show up in the course of a telecast. Noting that cheerleaders are an archaic throwback to an ignorant past just isn't on the teleprompter.

Of course, it's much too easy when discussing something so virulent as sports journalism or the incipient relation between sport and media to link print, radio and television in a single equation and come out with a sum that reads "impossible to be critical of sport." There are occasional examples of sportswriting that are very critical of sport, i.e. not only of

athletes and events, but of those structures which shape and confine sport. A shining example is a recent article by Al Strachan of the *Globe and Mail* in which he describes the attempts by the Vancouver Canucks of the National Hockey League to stifle media criticism of their team. The owners of the team, the Grif-fiths family, also own the television and radio stations which broadcast Canucks' games and they are evidently attempting to intimidate the Vancouver *Province* into assigning a new beat reporter less critical of the team.

For a piece in a daily on sport, it was astonishing, since such straightforward, factual material on something like cross-ownership in sport and media outlets is quite rare. Strachan's colleague, Stephen Brunt, is probably the most consistent in his criticism in that he questions the values, basic fundamentals and mystique of sport regularly. Sure, the *Ottawa Citizen* assigned a few reporters from sport and business to investigate the troublesome financial arrangements of the Ottawa Senators, one of the NHL's expansion teams, but it seemed to be more a case of bad blood between the team and local media than anything else. And *Sports Illustrated* recently ran feature stories on blacks in sport, which reflected both what is good and not so good about the more critical side of sports coverage: while addressing some substantive issues relating to sport and racism in the United States, the articles generally fell short of asking any pertinent questions about social structures that continually reproduce conditions found at the time of the so-called Black Power salute during the 1968 Summer Olympics.

The second sub-question is a little trickier: *should* sports journalism be more critical of its subject matter? I think most sports journalists would argue that their role is to report objectively and to entertain, that criticism is not in the job description. But I think this is wrong-headed, a conflation of criticism and negativism, embodying a misguided notion of what being critical is all about. The news items noted above demonstrate both

the limitations of sports journalism and the avenues of critique it could successfully assume.

First, South Africa's re-admission to the Olympics. It is a telling point of the power of sport organizations such as the International Olympic Committee that its decision *preceded* the U.S. decision to withdraw economic sanctions. And it is also telling that barely a word was written on how premature the IOC's decision was, given that apartheid persists in South Africa. Yet when South African distance runner Zola Budd sought British citizenship in order to compete in the 1984 Summer Olympics, the international press had a field day annihilating her and her family. Sports journalism is obsessed with personality and is indifferent to politics unless a personality is involved, so South Africa's status in international sport goes unquestioned.

Second, speaking of personality, we have Michael Smith, the decathlon competitor from Kenora, Ontario. The CBC documentary, hosted by one of the best sport journalists in Canada, Mark Lee, was solid hero-worship, replete with references to Smith's drug-free status and close-ups of his clean test results. Locked in the shadow of Ben Johnson, the sports media in Canada stubbornly refuse to examine the organizational deficiencies of amateur sport, such as the carding system that remunerates athletes at levels well below the poverty line and insists on carving icons out of the paltry number of competitors who can succeed internationally and secure major corporate sponsorships. Never mind the bizarre contradiction of Smith's major sponsor, Mars Candy, with his profession; it's more important that we forget a Canadian-Jamaican immigrant who cheated because everyone from his coach to the international association told him, openly or through silence, it was the only way to win.

Those same sanctioning structures went by and large unscathed during the course of Dubin Inquiry into drug use in sport as well. The one exception was a refreshing piece by Wayne Parrish, then with the *Toronto Star*, on Dubin's

patronizing tone and the unfair share of blame he placed on the athletes during testimony.

Third, there is the almost non-existent place for women's sport in media. Unless it's a story about lesbian relationships among high performance females, which *Sports Illustrated* has highlighted titteringly for years, or a place on the victory stand, sports journalism's subject matter is almost exclusively big-time male sports and athletes. Even victories by women can go unnoticed. When rower Silken Laumann of Toronto won the world championship in her event last month, she barely made the front page of the sports section. When male paddler Renn Crichlow of Nepean won a world championship in his event, it was time for a personal profile, a photo of his homecoming, extensive coverage of his exploits.

Why the difference? Those in the profession might argue that the audience for sport is predominantly male, as are most editors and sport reporters. But the question of sexism goes beyond this to the heart and soul of the profession. When *Boston Globe* reporter Lisa Olson was sexually harassed in the locker room of a pro football team, there was a nasty undercurrent throughout coverage of the story that little else could be expected,

since she was treading on male territory. Michael Farber of the *Montreal Gazette* defended Olson's right to pursue her occupation but also said she was "no Red Smith", a reference to her talent or lack thereof.

Women remain on the margins of sports coverage and of sports journalism. The sad part of this is that, in championing the story of Silken Laumann's victory over that of a lawsuit against Martina Navratilova by her former companion, in utilizing the power of the profession to unhesitatingly support female colleagues, sports journalism could make a difference in the structured sexism which conditions sport itself.

Finally, the disparaging remarks made by a pro baseball player about sports journalists. Innocuous as it may seem, it identifies the antagonism that many sports officials, coaches, administrators and athletes feel toward the media, and it has been the focus of many recent articles: journalists dismissing athletes as overpaid petulant brats, athletes regarding journalists as slime. More importantly, it raises another problem in trying to be critical in sport journalism: it's difficult to research and write stories if no one will talk to you. Clearly, it appears that the relationship between sport and the media must be friendly if it is to exist at all. But

there is a clear problem with approaching sport when wearing blinders. The world media followed Ben Johnson and other athletes who were implicated in drug use for years and, according to Mary Hynes of the *Toronto Star*, no one ever caught wind of what was going on. If there is a problem with the sports media, it is pandemic myopia.

Wither sports journalism?

Now and then sports journalists put on their spectacles and look a little closer. I see a lot of hope in these cases, just as I see that the road to criticism itself can be shortened — if journalists don't run off of it — by the power structure of media, whether owners, editors, advertisers, or just plain fickle nature. The key is that, as sport becomes a more dominant part of social life, sport media need to keep pace, supplying more than pages of stats and columns of opinion by rooting out larger debates, taking the occasional courageous stand and trying a little self-criticism. I bet even Red Smith would be proud. □

Richard Cavanagh is a writer and researcher specializing in sport and media studies. He is based in Munster Hamlet, Ontario.

Dubin coverage lacks substance

by Mark Stokes

Official reinstatement well in hand, and despite recent shortcomings on the track, Ben Johnson is once again a durable drawing card for the sports pages of Canadian dailies.

And, it seems as though the events of the past two years are but an interesting sidelight to an athlete's pursuit of worldly prizes. Certainly, the press have maintained an uncritical eye throughout the Seoul-to-Dubin-and-beyond story. Their

coverage, I would argue, has been characterized by a frenzy of attention yet a lack of substance.

Though not the darling of the media he was in 1988, the onetime deity, now athletic novelty, is still a major source of copy. The early stages of Johnson's comeback — his preparations in the weeks leading up to the Hamilton and Los Angeles indoor meets in January — were met with a media buildup vaguely reminiscent of the Seoul Games.

Most of the recent attention has been on the sprinter's attempt at a comeback without the benefit of anabolic steroids. Mention has seldom been made of the Dubin commission's legacy or the nature of the Canadian high performance sport system in the post-Dubin era.

So, little surprise when the press failed to communicate a Canadian Olympic Committee official's criticisms of the Dubin report. The IOC's Richard Pound, at a conference in Kingston a year ago,

(coincident with Johnson's return) characterized the report — a year in the making — as shallow and inconsequential. With few exceptions, the press overlooked the conference.

Such an omission seems odd given the massive amount of copy devoted to the rise and fall of Johnson, the daily testimony from the lengthy inquiry and the sprinter's phoenix-like revival.

However, the failure to acknowledge Pound's address seems utterly consistent with the superficial treatment the wide-ranging story received on the front pages and sports sections of Canadian newspapers.

The press is routinely taken to task over its analytical shortcomings and chronic inability to recognize historical context. Nowhere do these criticisms seem more valid than with the coverage — either as hard news, editorial, or sports story — afforded the Dubin affair and its many preludes and postscripts.

In the *Globe and Mail* James Christie narrowly assessed the inquiry as "a royal commission to wrest the truth about rampant steroid use by Johnson and other sprinters."

Christie was, in a sense, correct. Initially, the Commission of Inquiry Into the Use of Drugs and Banned Practices Intended to Increase Athletic Performance had sought a wide frame reference. Lamentably, as the inquiry unfolded, its focus became the compelling and equally restrictive story of steroid use among Canadian sprinters at the Seoul Olympics. As Varda Burstyn notes, in the March edition of *Saturday Night*, "the investigation seemed to veer away from examining the factors underlying the revelations it chronicled so unflinchingly."

So too, the press. The coverage, from the debacle in Seoul onwards, faithfully offered spectacle rather than substance. Eschewing any investigative role, the press failed to evaluate the inquiry in its unrealized promise of exploring the deeper context of the problem.

Through its proceedings, the Dubin commission did not come to grips with

the fundamental question of the government's role in the evolution of high performance sport in Canada. The relevance of recent traditions in federal sport policy and programming to an environment conducive to the use of anabolic steroids was, as Burstyn noted, "minimized."

The Dubin report, released in the spring of 1990, did go so far as to identify the state as a vital cog in the high performance sport machine, but steered clear of the sticky implications of such an observation.

In either instance, the press displayed little concern. During the inquiry the newspapers were silent over the lack of attention to the federal role and were equally mute a year later with their fleeting appraisal of the report. Conversely, there had never been hesitation by the Canadian press to view steroid use by eastern European athletes as the result of state policy.

Yet, despite the impetus of the Dubin inquiry, the press did not attempt to measure the Canadian sport system by the same yardstick. If they had, they might have found that the federally engineered sport system has, for over 20 years, been dedicated to, and preoccupied with, a rarefied notion of success.

The press may have found that subsidies to both athletes and sport governing bodies have been based on rankings and standards established outside Canada; in other words, on an athlete's potential to hit the big political pay-off by striking gold at the Olympic Games. By so doing, they may have discovered that the relationship between the federal government and the Canadian Track and Field Association (now Athletics Canada) has been bound by the very tightest of funding-performance links.

The press were quick to identify a win-at-all-costs-mentality behind the steroid use by Johnson and others. They did not, however, go a few steps higher. They did not bring that evaluation to an administrative or executive level.

With few exceptions, the press attended to the personalities, the "who

prescribed what to whom," and "who's clean and who's not" stories. An editorial in the *Ottawa Citizen* on June 13, 1989, spoke of a "single-minded obsession with gold" but did so in relation to the individual athlete and not the system. And, while the *Citizen's* Lyn McAuley on June 25, 1989, did acknowledge the presence of government, she chose to view any emphasis on high performance success as a case of spontaneous opportunism, some form of ad hoc excitement in the heat of competition, rather than the result of strategic planning.

In a sense the whole Dubin affair was covered strictly as a sports story, despite the odd front page lead. Emphasis was placed squarely on the athlete, the race, the dope test, the coach, the doctor and so on. The focus was the human drama — a retreat to the safety of 'bottom of the ninth, bases loaded,' or 'two minutes to play, down by one.'

What happened on the track in Seoul and in the chambers of the Dubin inquiry had everything to do with sports. However, sport is not some dislocated form of human expression. Sport is part of the social and political fabric — it defines and reflects how we order our existence through individuals and institutions. It has a deep-rooted historical context.

The post-war efforts of successive governments at nation building through the symbolism of cultural expression, the creation of a large and intricate sport bureaucracy, the development and growth of federal grants to the Canadian Track and Field Association, the corporate and political investment leading up to Seoul, the failed dope test, the inquiry, the report's low profile and quick dismissal and the sprinter's return to work can all be linked together.

The press has done little to lift the covers and move beyond the spectacle. For the time being, the dominant view of sport offered to us by the press will continue to bear little relevance to the rest of the world around us. □

Mark Stokes is a Toronto-based writer who specializes in sports issues.

Is media going too far?

by Charles Lynch

Every year there is a book exposing Brian Mulroney, just as there used to be about John Turner, Joe Clark, Pierre Trudeau, Lester Pearson and John Diefenbaker.

Publication of these volumes is as much a rite of autumn as the changing of the leaves, and they sell like hotcakes.

This year's author is John Sawatsky, who says Mulroney's going to hate the book, adding he wouldn't want anybody doing to him what his book does to Mulroney.

Well, let's see. What Sawatsky has done is take advantage of his position on the journalism faculty of Carleton University, and use his class of students as "researchers," the project being part of their training. Their technique consisted of robot-like recital of Sawatsky's pages of questions, and after two hours of it, I hung up the phone.

Sawatsky gets his name on the book, together with the proceeds which, if hype is as strong as for previous prime ministerial exposés, will be considerable.

For Mulroney to do unto Sawatsky what Sawatsky is doing to him, he would

Adapted from a column that first appeared in the *Ottawa Citizen*. Reprinted with permission.

have to muster a brigade of people on the public payroll and turn them loose on the author's life.

The outcry at this misuse of public servants can be imagined. There is a precedent, Pierre Trudeau having once threatened to turn "his" police loose on the Ottawa press corps if we persisted in prying into his private life.

He was dissuaded when the press probes eased off.

But in today's context, should Sawatsky and his brigade of students be as answerable for their personal conduct as they deem Mulroney to be, from childhood to the present day?

We can assume that Sawatsky would hate any book about himself that Mulroney might produce with the help of staff snoops on the scale mustered for *Mulroney, the Politics of Ambition*.

But Sawatsky, and those of us who write for a living, run no such risk, and the public wouldn't be interested anyway.

Time magazine has been wrestling with the question of media conduct, and says the American press almost always strikes some people as having gone too far, adding: "The real question is not just who benefits from a media decision. Rather,

it is whether the media behave thoughtfully and ethically."

This is old-fashioned stuff, going back beyond the time when U.S. vice-president Spiro Agnew, before his fall, complained about "the nattering nabobs of negativism."

Echoes of Agnew grow louder, as witness a sombre pamphlet put out this month by the United States Embassy in Ottawa, titled *The Role of the Press*.

If the Canadian government distributed anything similar at public expense, we would howl, but the Americans work on a broader canvas. ...

The Washington pamphlet's main article concludes: "For all their good intentions, journalists have assumed a role that is not only beyond their abilities, but also destructive in design. The American public has sensed the change and responded with disapproval. Already, solid majorities support substantial restrictions on the power and autonomy of the press. Journalists may ignore these warnings only at their peril."

What say, Sawatsky?



Charles Lynch is former chief of Southam News Services.

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Our product is steel. Our strength is people.

Ted Byfield was in an upbeat mood on the day in mid-June when he arrived at *Alberta Report* magazine's office in a west Edmonton warehouse district to go for lunch with his son Link.

He had reason to be cheerful. The Byfields had just received word that their campaign to sell stock in *British Columbia Report* had gone over the top. Not only had they sold nearly \$1 million worth of shares in a newsmagazine that has been a steady money loser since its launch three years ago, they had done it at a time when the entire media industry was in a major slump.

The good news came almost exactly a year after the Byfields' magazine empire went briefly into receivership when the Alberta Treasury Branch called in a loan. Two Calgary oilmen bailed out the parent company, then \$4 million in debt, and promptly turned back part of the equity to the Byfields. It wouldn't be *Alberta Report* without them, they explained.

But there was more to it than that. Chances are good neither the Calgary oilmen nor the hundreds of small investors who put an average of \$800 to \$1,000 into *BC Report* expect much of a return on their investment. They're clearly putting their money where their beliefs are. To them, the Byfields are a strong voice for the West that they don't want silenced.

What they and 63,000 subscribers to *Alberta Report*, *BC Report* and *Western Report* (sold in Saskatchewan and Manitoba) get is a weekly dose of right-wing, Christian opinion and reporting.

In an era when newspapers are continually remaking and redefining themselves, *Alberta Report* and its sister publications know exactly who they are and what they want to say.

The magazines' philosophy and approach have changed little since 1973 when Ted Byfield launched *St. John's Report* as an outgrowth of St. John's School, an Anglican boys school located in bush country west of Edmonton.

The purpose of the school was to propagate the Christian faith through education, and when Byfield, a onetime national newspaper award winner at the *Winnipeg Free Press*, started *St. John's Report*, he applied the same Christian principles to the news media.

The result was a newsmagazine that looks like *Time* but is quite unlike any other news publication in Canada. Some call it a throwback to the turn-of-the-century party press and par-

tisan reporting. Others call it a throwback, period. And still others call it the unofficial organ of the Reform Party.

From the sign in *Alberta Report's* entrance foyer that announces smoking is allowed everywhere except in designated areas to the magazine's unrelenting attacks on feminists and other liberal-socialist elites, it's plain that this journalistic enterprise takes delight in bucking the fashionable trends of the day.

When everyone else was doing stories on men beating up their spouses, *Alberta Report* found some men who claimed they were assaulted by their wives.

Amid negative publicity about old missionary residential schools and their treatment of natives, *Alberta Report* wrote about Catholic mission educators who refused to surrender to historical revisionists.

In recent months, the *Report* argued that federal gun control legislation would make criminals out of hundreds of thousands of responsible gun owners. It raked federal and provincial governments over the coals for trying to tax away the right to smoke and staunchly defended John Crispo's appointment to the CBC.

But more than anything else, *Alberta Report* loves to take on the feminists. Their headlines alone convey the message:

"Fembos in Academe" was a January story attacking women's studies programs.

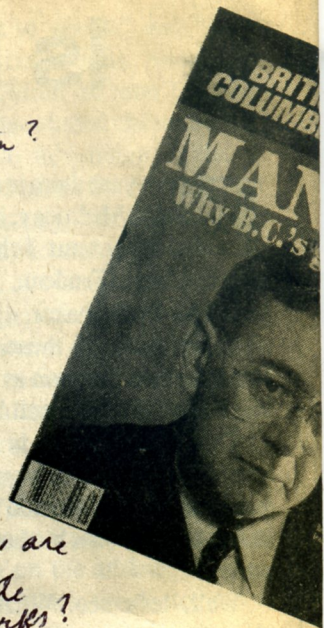
"Fembos in Fantasyland" was about a meeting in April of the status of women committee of the Canadian Association of University Teachers at the Fantasyland Hotel in Edmonton.

"Fury in the Femisphere" and "Fembo gender-bender in Banff" were both about a national women's meeting in Banff in May.

Davis Taras, a communications specialist and chairman of the Canadian Studies department at the University of Calgary, cites the magazine's coverage of women's issues when he accuses *Alberta Report* of some pretty slipshod and kneejerk reporting.

"They did some things which were just literally written from Mars," Taras says. "The thing on women's studies, that was, you know, the dinosaurs are stalking the land. They have a point of view, and the point of view is right there on their sleeves. They're not sensitive to other points of view in the stories they write."

But if *Alberta Report* loves to hate feminists, the magazine just plain loves the Reform Party.



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If the Reform Party didn't exist, the Byfields would have had to invent it. In fact, they did play a big part in its formation. Ted Byfield was the featured speaker at the party's founding convention in Vancouver. Link Byfield's name was on a resolution tying taxes to balanced budgets at the party's assembly in Edmonton two years ago.

Party leader Preston Manning appears frequently on the magazine's covers. "Manning's Hidden Agenda (Psst...let Quebec Stay)" said the cover of an April issue. Inside, under the headline "Enter Manning the Moderate," readers found that contrary to what the national media was saying, Manning was not proposing to let Quebec go so he could lead English Canada. In fact, Manning was presented as a conciliatory moderate compared with two academics in the magazine who suggested Canada would be better off as two distinct countries. In case the readers missed the point, Link Byfield called Manning a sincere Canadian patriot in his front-of-the-book editorial and then suggested only the Reform Party is capable of keeping the country together.

Manning was on the cover again in June. "MANNING, Why B.C.'s going for him" was the headline this time. While Link poked fun at the NDP's announcement that in the next election half of its candidates will be women, Ted offered an explanation why the Reform Party was suddenly so popular in Ontario.

The column also offered a concise view of the world according to Ted: "Government has been taken over by the Big Three — the lobby groups, the bureaucracy and the media...The lobby groups propose, the bureaucracy enacts, and the media approve and facilitate. The elected politicians look on powerless and fearful."

"Against all this, the Ontario voter is suddenly offered the simple sanity of a Preston Manning — cut back government, cut off the lobby groups, tighten our belts and stay out of Québec until it decides if it's in or out..."

Link Byfield bristles at the *Edmonton Journal's* editorial reference to *Alberta Report* as the unofficial organ of the Reform Party. *Big lie*

"We're not in any sense at all an organ of the Reform Party," he says. "One thing that I think journalists have forgotten is that certain forms of advocacy are central to journalism. And in that sense there is no objectivity. There is such a thing as fair play, but objectivity and fair play are not the same quality. They're different things."

"What our political method is, here, is to establish to our own satisfaction what overall political

objectives should be embraced by people in the West and then to pay a lot of attention to people who seem to be either very supportive of those goals or very hostile towards them.

"So, federally, we tend to pay a lot of attention to the Reform Party because we believe they have a very positive contribution to make. And also to the NDP because we think they have a negative contribution to make."

But just as newspapers do, *Alberta Report* distinguishes between straight news and editorial opinion, Byfield says. But the line between them is more blurred than it is in newspapers, he explains, because the magazine takes an analytical approach as opposed to the "so and so said this and so and so said that" tack that daily newspapers take.

"That's not our job at all. We'll do a whole story without quoting anybody. Now that doesn't remove from me the obligation for fair play. But what makes objectivity impossible is the exercise in defining what's relative. Relative to what? Relative to whom?"

But the big difference between *Alberta Report* and the rest of the industry is the other media's conviction that they do not grind axes, Byfield says.

"At *Alberta Report* we never pretended otherwise. We grind axes and lots of them and find it both necessary and very stimulating to do that. Now if you go too far, the reader will lose interest and that perception will accumulate. And we do go too far for many people."

What irritates him, says Byfield, is how the other media, especially Southam, don't admit their biases, claiming they only write about those things that are relevant and do so objectively.

"You have to decide what is worth writing about, and in that process all of your biases show," he says. "And you can't avoid it. You can still be fair to the other side. When you present the other side's argument, you have to do so with as much force as you can. And we try to do that actually."

"In the abortion debate, for example, the pro-choice side is definitely presented. but — and this is an important distinction — *Alberta Report* doesn't agree with that side and that is very plain by the end of the story."

Former *AR* reporters say the line between editorial opinion and analytical reporting sometimes can and does get more than a little blurred. The magazine's bias, says Stephen Weatherbee, a longtime *Alberta* and *BC Report* reporter now working for the Sterling newspaper chain, comes

less from not covering the other side than from a certain "snideness" in many stories.

"The way the bias comes through," he told the *Vancouver Sun*, "is with certain words, certain adjectives and adverbs. You know, like you use pro-abortion instead of pro-choice or tree-hugger instead of environmentalists."

Ashley Geddes, *The Calgary Herald's* legislative bureau chief, who worked for *Alberta Report* for two years during its heyday in the early '80s, agrees.

"There is an *Alberta Report* philosophy on many issues," he says. "It wouldn't affect things like people stories, avalanches, things like that where it didn't matter. But something like abortion, or there was a particular stance on energy issues, things like that which you knew and you wrote it that way."

"I didn't pretend to be objective. You were hired to do the job with their philosophy. If you didn't want to do that, you left the magazine."

One person who did just that was Fay Orr, one of the few women to rise to the top editorship ranks of the magazine. Orr started at *Alberta Report* as a reporter in 1982 and was assistant executive editor when she left in 1987.

"Ted really does have antiquated views on women," says Orr who now works for Alberta Labor Minister Elaine McCoy. "He basically doesn't think men and women are equal. He doesn't want to go back just to the 1950s, he'd like to go back to the 15th Century — he actually said that once."

Despite those views, in actual practice Byfield was a fair person to work for, Orr says. "I think his public face is much harsher than he is in private. He treats people on an individual basis and he did promote me. I was the only female editor besides his wife Virginia."

"But his views became increasingly harder for me to take the higher up the masthead I moved. As a reporter, I could just say, well those aren't my views, they're the editor's. But as the assistant executive editor, suddenly I had to support those views myself."

At the time, she says, the magazine

wasn't as vociferous about feminism as it is now. "They really seem to be focusing on the fembo stuff now. They're really going wild with it. But they tend to do that. They get on an issue and milk it for all it's worth."

Orr recalls her days at the magazine as hard work but fun. "It was an interesting place to work. I learned a lot about journalism and writing."

Ironically, Orr's work did appear in the magazine recently, albeit indirectly.

She wrote the speech that McCoy gave at the women's conference in Banff that *Alberta Report* covered in great detail. "They tore the speech to shreds," Orr says with a chuckle.

Geddes says *Alberta Report's* coverage of the Reform Party has been extremely favorable. In fact, he says, if the *Herald* does a tough piece on the Reform, *Alberta Report* will often do a story defending the party from the *Herald's* attack.

But to Geddes, this embrace of a political ally has a familiar ring. He was the magazine's resources editor during the Alberta-Ottawa energy wars of the early '80s.

"Back in those days," Geddes says, "Byfield used to take the Alberta government stand completely. When I was there, it was well known that Ted had let Lougheed review cover stories, at least one or two, before they went to print. And his philosophy on that was 'Well, we are the Alberta magazine.'"

"And he thought there were some benefits journalistically, because if Lougheed reviewed something and saw there were errors, he would correct them. So anything that appeared, at least you knew that it was accurate from his point of view."

Geddes also recalls writing a story with Byfield on Dome Petroleum which Byfield sent to Dome executives for review. "Again, it was the same argument," he says. "There was quite a bit of material from private closed-door meetings between government and Dome officials and we weren't 100-per-cent certain on some of it. His argument was: if we let them review it and they don't

change it, that means it's accurate."

Geddes' conclusion: "He backs horses and goes with them."

He calls the practice a "highly unusual form of journalism compared to other publications. But I don't think you'll find the Byfields will apologize for anything that goes on there."

Geddes remembers his days at *Alberta Report* as mostly unrelenting work, including several all-nighters on cover stories. Byfield expected that, but he did it himself too, he says. Geddes also credits the magazine with doing some things very well, particularly people stories.

"They're not afraid to print things," he says. "They take a lot of chances. For those kinds of stories, adventure kinds of stories, they can do a pretty good job."

The U of C's Taras calls *Alberta Report* the most highly-charged "political" news outlet in the country.

"There was a lot of talk in the last election about the *Suns* and their relationship with the Tories, and that everyone else was critical but the *Suns* were onside on the plane," Taras says. "But the *Suns* are still a complex organization having to appeal to a wide market."

"So it's really out there on its own. It's in the tradition of the party press almost. In this case it's an alliance, whether written or unwritten, with the Reform Party. And before that, of course, it was very much a pro-Alberta, Peter Lougheed, let's-beat-up-Ottawa kind of thing."

Taras says despite the fact that the magazine and the party are "in bed with each other," he would make a distinction between news and editorial. "Pieces I've read on the Reform Party have been quite solid and informative. There's no critical edge to them but it's probably the best source on how the Reform Party is doing."

They certainly cover the province well, raise a lot of issues, he says. "But there is no magazine out there to present an alternative point of view. They have the newsstands to themselves." □

Andy Ogle is a reporter for the Edmonton Journal.

Community cable 'stifled' by industry

by Ron Verzuh

So you wanna change society! Well, get down to your local community cable TV channel and step right up to the camera. Harness up to the world's most powerful medium and use it to make your town a better place to live. That was the dream when the 'people's' channel came along in the activist, hippie, counterculture 1960s.

The reality of the 1990s is that few activists use the channels, which the industry says are watched in about 700,000 homes. Some critics complain the cable industry is stifling such use and that the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission is letting them do it.

When the CRTC's Public Notice 1991-59 came out in June, those critics hoped to see an order for more community control. But the 25-page document says the channel is unfolding as it should.

The notice came after a review last fall when 52 submissions came in on the state of the community channel. Some called for a brake on what they saw as the cable industry's efforts to commercialize the channel and undermine community control even more.

The CRTC didn't go quite that far, but it did "allow local channels to look beyond their own backyard," says Patrick Tourigny, the CRTC broadcast programs analyst who conducted the review. "The channel used to be a telephone with pictures — but a party line," he says. Now, the channel is being told it must stay a party line, but one with that long-distance feeling.

What that means is there can be more programming exchanges between one channel and another, something that was taboo before because the CRTC wanted to ensure that the channels promoted original local programming.

In effect, the notice is saying that the channels should be used to do what the Spicer commission on Canada's future suggested: foster unity by allowing

people to get to know each other, in this case, using TV.

The commission also may have felt some collective guilt over the massive CBC cuts which have left some communities without any local TV except the community channel, says Tourigny. So the notice could be saying, "use the channel to replace the defunct CBC station."

The notice was hardly music to the ears of either the industry or the activists. But the industry seems to have the edge in deciding how the channel will develop into the 1990s.

"We've gone the next step (with this policy)," says Gerry Lavallee, regulatory affairs vice-president for the Canadian Cable Television Association, the cable industry lobbyist in Ottawa. "We're talking about sharing programming with other community channels. That's great. Finally!"

But the cable companies had also hoped for some breakthroughs on funding. For the companies to operate, the CRTC requires them to fund the channel. Over the years, that funding has settled at about 5 per cent, on average, of company budgets.

The critics scoff, saying this is a shoe-string that doesn't allow for quality programming. They want it to be a CRTC regulation, not just a promise.

The June notice might have made it a regulation, but the cable companies argued that it could have a negative impact. Some companies are funding the channel by more than 5 per cent, they said.

The companies won that round. But they had also hoped for a loosening of the rules on paid advertising. Right now they can't use video footage in ads. They can have a sponsor, but it's all still-life. No moving pictures.

The CRTC said no. That was a notch in the gun of the community activists and cable company critics, led by people like Kim Goldberg whose 1990 book *The Barefoot Channel* pushed community

control and urged activists to use the channels.

The companies argue that community control is difficult given what Lavallee calls "limitations" in the Broadcasting Act and CRTC rules about balanced coverage. They argue that achieving this would be impossible under a community board made up of various interest groups.

"You're just going to get a couple of groups who are going to monopolize it," says Lavallee, who worked for the CRTC in the 1970s and helped develop the 1975 policy that set up the channel regulations.

One of his colleagues at the time was Frank Spiller. "The original guidelines foresaw the notion of community programs which would be very much a citizen-based initiative ... not dominated by the cable companies," Spiller says. "That component of community programming really hasn't developed in line with those original expectations."

Toronto media critic Barrie Zwicker is not quite so kind. "The cable companies continue to have no interest in the public good," he says. "They're only interested in their massive swollen profits. They never had any interest in making them work. And regrettably, volunteerism has its limits. How many people can devote hours and hours to producing TV?"

Lavallee says the industry is committed to the channel. "We have no interest in not doing community programming. In fact, it is the soul of the industry," he says. "We really believe that we are tomorrow's TV, real TV in that the rest of it is passive, entertaining, informational, narrowcast."

Listen up, Newsworld! After 25 years of trying, the community channel could be the new kid on the TV block. But it doesn't seem likely that it will be true to its activist roots. □

Ron Verzuh is Content's Little Media columnist.

Winning seats wins coverage, too

by Michael Dolenko

What happens to a federal political party challenging Canada's status quo when it elects its first member to the House of Commons? Besides getting an office in Ottawa and a seat about as far away from the Speaker as possible, the party's press coverage increases substantially.

With the birth of the Reform Party of Canada at a Winnipeg convention in the fall of 1987, a new player took the stage in Canadian politics. Observers in the media were justifiably skeptical of the impact or longevity of the new party; after all, western-based parties have come and gone before.

But the Reform party not only survived its first prairie winter, it flourished, attracting members at an astounding rate in Alberta and some areas of British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

An examination of press coverage of the party from its days as the Reform Movement of Canada to the end of 1990 shows, not surprisingly, that media attention grew as the ranks of Reformers swelled. But growing enlistment is probably only a small reason for increased media attention. Reform party coverage from June 1987 through December 1990 in the *Vancouver Sun*, the *Calgary Herald*, the *Winnipeg Free Press*, the *Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star* and the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* strongly suggests that parliamentary legitimacy, especially for the papers east of Manitoba, played a central role in increased coverage. After Reform candidate Deborah Grey won an Alberta by-election in 1989, press coverage of the party became more frequent, more prominent and qualitatively different.

For almost identical time periods of 21.5 months before and after Grey's election in March 1989, the number of items published about the party increased almost 50 per cent to 148 from 100 after Grey's election. The total prominence, based on item, size, location, headline



Deborah Grey

size and graphics/photos, jumped 78 per cent after Grey's election.

With parliamentary legitimacy, coverage changed in type as well. When the Reform Party operated outside parliament, it received less in-depth coverage in the form of features, columns and editorials than it did once legitimized by one — probably disgruntled — rural riding. For the period before Grey's election, features, columns and editorials accounted for 32 per cent of all items in the papers surveyed. After her election, the proportion increased to 47 per cent. A greater willingness to express opinions and devote more resources to coverage shows that the press was taking the party much more seriously.

A change in focus emerges when the coverage is divided into pre- and post-election. Before Grey's election, 60 per cent of newspaper items studied were concerned with Reform party policy. For the second half of the study period, 63 per cent of the stories were about party leaders, strategy, recruitment and so on. The passage of time clearly plays a significant role in the shift. When a new party emerges, the press and the public it serves are naturally curious about the philosophy that caused people to develop a forum for its expression and implementation. Still, parliamentary legitimacy remains the best explanation of focus shifts. With the election of Grey in March, 1989 and the appointment of Stan

Waters to the Senate later that year, the Reform party was on the minds of reporters and editors.

The press did not behave uniformly vis-a-vis the Reform party. Predictably, the newspapers west of Ontario accounted for 192 out of 248 items. In fact, a rough geographical pattern emerged: the closer the newspaper to the party's headquarters in Calgary, the more items on the Reform party it carried.

More interesting is the greater effect parliamentary legitimacy appeared to have on papers east of Manitoba. While coverage in the West became 30 per cent more frequent and 59 per cent more prominent, eastern coverage doubled in output, rising to 40 items from 17, and total prominence increased 269 per cent.

Although all papers sat up and took more notice of the party after one of its members became an MP, the change in coverage focus that followed differed in Eastern and Western Canada. Focus was split 60-40 between policy and leadership in western papers before Grey's election. Afterward, the ratio reversed, becoming 34 per cent policy and 66 per cent leadership, and stayed thus after Waters' appointment. Similarly, in the East, items concerned primarily with policy accounted for 59 per cent of coverage before Grey's election. But afterward there was a brief period in which leadership dominated with 55 per cent, largely due to coverage of the by-election win, and policy items accounted for 60 per cent of coverage after Waters' election in October 1989. Unlike their western counterparts who had already devoted considerable space to Reform party policies, the eastern press was forced to start at the beginning, as it were, and examine the platforms whose appeal was spreading in the West.

The legitimacy obtained by Grey's election also marked a change in the media's characterization of the party. After Grey's election, disparaging items

accounted for a smaller proportion of the total, dropping to 21 per cent from 32 per cent. This was accompanied by a sharp increase — from 11 per cent to 22 per cent in the number — of items describing the party in an approving manner. Although the number of disparaging articles dropped to 29 from 30, the number of disparaging descriptions almost doubled, increasing to 131 from 71. Thus critical opinion of the party became more vehement after Grey's election, something to be expected once the party became more legitimate in the eyes of the press.

Press support for the party, as expressed in description and characterization, also differed regionally. Because the party's platform sought to redress inequities suffered by Western Canada at the expense of Ontario and Quebec, newspapers west of Ontario were more likely to describe the party in favorable terms than their eastern counterparts, especially after the party established a toehold in parliament. After Grey's election, one-quarter of the items published in the western papers characterized the party in approving terms while 16 per cent painted a distinctly negative picture.

The Ontario-based papers, however, were more critical of the party — 35 per cent of the items portrayed the party in disparaging or dismissive ways while only 18 per cent used predominantly positive descriptions. The Ontario newspapers, fearful of a movement that might diminish the political and economic domination of central Canada, were more prone to characterize the Reform party as holding views and harbouring members unacceptable to Canadian political culture. Terms such as *ultra-conservative fringe*, *redneck*, *parochial* and *racist tendencies* were more likely to appear in eastern papers' articles about the Reform party.

As the party gains momentum, the eastern press seems to be even more eager to paint negative portraits of the party. For instance, this spring, the *Globe and Mail* reprinted a racist quote from a Reform party supporter with the qualification that such views were easy to

find within the party.

These qualitative and quantitative changes in press coverage of the Reform party since Grey's election are undoubtedly the result of several factors. The passage of time, the growth of the party, the changing mood in Canada and other intangibles shaped the evolution in coverage. After all, just because changes occurred after Grey's election doesn't mean they were caused by it. But the by-election played a big part. The observed changes all concur with the

Reform party's attainment of parliamentary legitimacy. Changes in policy or popularity show no relationship to the coverage.

If the Reform party is any indicator, new political movements should take heed. They best win seats if they want column inches. □

Michael Dolenko recently completed the graduate diploma course in journalism at Concordia University.

Atkinson Fellowship 1991 Winners



Linda McQuaig



Daniel Stoffman

Linda McQuaig and Daniel Stoffman, freelance journalists, have been awarded an Atkinson Fellowship in Public Policy.

Established in 1988, the Fellowship is named after The Star's founder, Joseph E. Atkinson, and is designed to further Atkinson's tradition of liberal journalism in Canada.

Under the terms of the Fellowship, McQuaig and Stoffman will spend a year doing research and then prepare a series of in-depth articles, which will be translated and made available to all Canadian newspapers next year.

McQuaig will study the federal government's assault on social spending and develop policy alternatives. Stoffman will analyze Canada's immigration policy and what its goals and targets should be.

Under the terms of the Fellowship, each journalist will receive a stipend of \$60,000 plus an expense budget of \$25,000.

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

We congratulate the winners and wish them success in the months to come.

Applications for next year will be available after January 20, 1992. Telephone inquiries: (416) 869-4801.

Media self-flagellation waste of time?

by Kenton Vaughan

Coverage of the Persian Gulf since the end of the war with Iraq has been lacking to say the least. Few media organizations, whether for reasons of economy or interest, have sent reporters into Iraq to find out what really happened during the weeks of the air bombardment.

Such behavior seems a contradiction given the spate of introspection and self-flagellation members of the media are currently engaging in over their behaviour during last winter's crisis.

Instead, media organizations, especially American ones, seemed more concerned with emphasizing their role in "supporting the boys overseas" rather than their role as providers of information to a democracy's public during a time of war.

Of course, there have been exceptions. News reports in the period after the war focused on the plight of the Kurds rebelling against Saddam's diminished but still threatening authority. We've also been updated on the progress of the United Nations' attempts to force Iraq to live up to the conditions of the ceasefire.

But for the most part, the coverage has been selective. While the Kurds in the north were fleeing to the mountains, the Shiite rebels in the south had already been slaughtered. While UN teams were arguing with Iraqi authorities over access to weapons locations, other UN teams were battling against the ravages of disease and starvation among the general population. Yet these latter items receive scant attention in the media.

This type of selective reporting suggests that, despite all the posturing and self-flagellation about the failure of the media to provide fair, balanced and thorough coverage of the Gulf War, we're back to business as usual — providing news devoid of context historical background.

It's the observation that despite the

sharp criticisms of the war coverage, from both within and outside the media, nothing seems to have changed in the media's day-to-day operations which tends to make a person cynical about spending two days in one of Ottawa's swankiest hotel ballrooms performing a post-mortem on that very subject. But that's what a number of journalists, academics, military officials, diplomats and self-described news junkies did during a recent conference sponsored by the Ottawa-based Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security.

And indeed, the criticisms from the assembled mass were many.

"Journalists were manipulated during the war," said Radio-Canada's Genevieve Rossier who reported from the Gulf last winter. "As a result we have lost some credibility."

"The media," said Southam News editor Jim Travers, "misspent so much credibility on sensationalism that the public would not rally around us and favored restrictions."

The criticisms were also backed up by statistics. Retired U.S. army Major-General Winant Sidle pointed out that during all the years of the Vietnam War, purported by journalists to be the best reported modern war, only nine journalists lost their accreditation due to violating press restrictions. In contrast, 55 violations of the ground rules occurred in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War's six week duration.

But much of that can be attributed to the fact that over 1,000 journalists and crew members were competing against each other in Saudi Arabia. At the height of the Vietnam War, the number of accredited journalists never exceeded 650.

Perhaps these figures attest to the real problem of the Gulf War coverage. It was not necessarily the political or military institutions which made the coverage flawed. Instead, it was the nature of the

media which did in the media's credibility.

The first mistake in examining the war's coverage is to look at it in isolation. The Gulf War coverage was predicated on the same day-to-day news values journalists use to decide how to cover scandals, diplomacy, fires and every other type of happening. Is it interesting, new and exciting?

A telling incident which could have given us some clues as to how the war would be covered involved Ted Turner's Cable News Network, the network that, according to many people won the media war in the Persian Gulf. The incident in fact had nothing to do with Iraq or Kuwait. Instead, it involved Margaret Thatcher's fall from power in Britain last fall.

On the day Conservative Members of Parliament voted on their party's leadership, CNN tapped into Britain's Independent Television Network to provide coverage of the vote's outcome. CNN then cut away entirely from Britain and for the next hour or so provided live coverage of the press conference of Milli Vanilli, the now-infamous pop duo who lip-synched the words to their Grammy-winning album.

What is the viewer to think of this coverage? Is the fall of a witless and talentless pair of defrocked pop entertainers as important and newsworthy as the fall of Britain's Iron Lady? Obviously not. But the incident shows us the kind of news culture predominant in today's media where the "liveness" of an event takes precedence over the significance or implications of an event. Why were we surprised when this type of news *ethos* consequently drove coverage of the Gulf War?

For people like Mark Starowicz, the executive producer of *Midday* and *The Journal*, the news culture in which "immediacy is veracity", and where the

1 dramatic is emphasized over the contextual, marked the real failing of the media's coverage of the Gulf War.

33 This focus on drama and setting was not an aberration in the Gulf. It is, in fact, the norm.

One of the other criticisms levelled at the media during the conference was the lack of readiness on the part of the media. Indeed, many of the reporters in the Gulf had never before covered a war. At most times, that would be a positive sign of a peaceful country. During the Gulf War, however, this was trotted out as a lack of understanding about the Middle East. But would the media have been better prepared had the crisis occurred anywhere outside of North America or western Europe?

Columnist Charles Gordon, a participant in the conference, writing in *The Ottawa Citizen*, defended the media saying that this notion of preparedness is an expectation placed on the media by the public. "In the equation of news, the

Valid point
reader and viewer are also factors. Too often the reader ignores news about an area before war hits it, then demands the same news after the shooting starts — at which point the media fail to provide it because 'we ran something on that three months ago.'"

Still, as Starowicz pointed out at the conference, the news media ^{is} too often guided by conventional ideas of what is newsworthy for the home market.

Indeed, if we want to question our role in the Gulf War, we have to look at the broader issues affecting journalism, not merely the restrictions imposed on us during the conflict.

Others said that there should be more background provided before the war occurs in order to provide the public with the information necessary to make decisions on the war's progress. But we don't always have the luxury of five months advance notice of an impending war.

Many people feel we should forgo the

technical wizardry of satellite uplinks and live on-the-spot reports. But will we be able to resist the drama and convenience of such technology the next time around?

Indeed the answers to the media's problems over the Gulf War do solely lie within the coverage itself. If we insist on bouts of introspection and self-flagellation, we must not restrict our examinations to a post-mortem of the most recent war, an examination where it is far too easy to use cliches such as truth being "the first casualty of war" or the "fog of war" to rationalize our failings. Instead, we must examine the news values which regularly affect our day-to-day behavior. We cannot pick and choose different sets of news values to fit different situations.

Gordon, for one, concluded that "the media did it to themselves. Before the next war begins, they must figure out how to avoid doing it to themselves again." □

Kenton Vaughan is a Toronto-based freelance writer.

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Advocacy journalism not the answer

by Doug Herrington

Some critics of North American journalism have argued that attempts to be objective, especially in the daily press, have led to increasingly flat and superficial news coverage. In a recent issue of *Content*, former Carleton University student Linn Meieran calls objectivity "nothing more than a defence used by reporters who are unable to get to the heart of issues."

Editor Klaus Pohle compares the daily press to a three-ring circus and suggests a shift to a more partisan, advocacy-oriented style of journalism.

Though Meieran and Pohle make a number of valid points, they have oversimplified the problems facing the daily newspaper industry. Blaming objectivity

for declining readership and poor coverage of events such as the Persian Gulf War and Oka borders on one-dimensional reasoning.

The pack mentality often present in the North American press springs from a problem more onerous than misguided objectivity: increasing laziness among journalists in all branches of the media. Editors and reporters alike quickly succumb to the urge to cover safe, predictable stories. Digging deeper to find original and thoughtful pieces requires more work and time than most newsrooms seem willing to invest.

Is the ideal of objectivity at fault or laziness on the part of its practitioners?

Opponents of objectivity pose com-

PELLING arguments. Some point out, quite correctly, that a journalist's cultural biases make true objectivity impossible to attain. Others, like Pohle, contend that the obsession with providing both sides of a story encourages journalists to settle for talking heads rather than probe deeper into questions and issues.

But abandoning objectivity as a goal is not the answer. Instead, journalists should force themselves to go beyond the superficial and easy, a task which can be accomplished while still striving for fair and balanced reporting. In fact, truly thoughtful reporting demands that some semblance of objectivity remain.

Shifting to advocacy-oriented journalism would only perpetuate the style of



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lazy reportage inherent in the pack mentality. Equating thoughtful coverage with advocacy is a fallacy. A journalist's primary responsibility is to cover events and provide insight into the issues of importance to society. Such issues almost always have opposing points of view. Keeping this in mind, journalists have to ask themselves what their roles should be in passing information on to the public.

Should they present their own assessments and value judgments for public consumption? Or should they present the views of those directly involved, in-depth and thorough, and let the public reach its own decisions? The first approach would free journalists from a lot of annoying constraints they now face. Why bother showing two sides of an issue when one

side is clearly wrong?

Advocacy journalism would give reporters the freedom (at last) to speak their own minds, to tell people how *they* feel. And if one side does not get equal or accurate coverage ... oh well.

Perhaps a more challenging goal for journalists would be to devote more thought to *how* a story is covered and search for ways to provide depth and insight while still striving for objectivity. Meieran's suggestion that journalism students take mandatory courses in world history and philosophy would certainly be a step in the right direction. But to think a few college or university courses will provide the knowledge necessary to pose "meaningful questions" is probably unrealistic.

Journalists will never completely understand the events they cover, especially abroad. By the same token, those more familiar with an issue because of their closer involvement also suffer from personal biases.

Journalists must work harder to understand their stories and not accept at face value what sources tell them. Challenging their own beliefs and those of sources, synthesizing both sides of an issue and digging into its history will provide the thoughtful coverage that the public may now find lacking. □

Doug Herrington is an Ottawa-based freelance writer and a recent graduate of the Carleton University School of Journalism.

Journalism schools unnecessary

by Chris Szuskiewicz

The problem with journalism schools is not, as Linn Meieran suggests in the May/June issue of *Content*, that they dwell on objectivity in reporting. The problem with journalism schools is that they are unnecessary.

I disagree intensely with Ms. Meieran's assertion: "Objectivity is nothing more than a defence used by reporters who are unable to get to the heart of the issues. The journalism it creates is one of the most serious flaws of the Canadian media." What? The lack of objectivity in reporting today is what has given us tabloids that use the one-sided emotions of a "reporter" to sensationalize events and sell newspapers to those who think *A Current Affair* is a news program.

Objectivity is not a weakness, but a strength. In theory, it allows a reporter to impartially and unemotionally absorb all sides of an issue/news event and present the facts in a coherent, logical and concise way. It is not the role of the reporter to pass judgment on a news event. Reporters are not philosophers or theologians. If they think they are, they should get themselves professorships right away. The only forum in which a reporter can legitimately "pose the mean-

ingful questions" (which in Ms. Meieran's context implies passing moral judgment) is as a columnist or in an analytical piece. In both cases, it must be clear to the reader or viewer that what they are reading or seeing is indeed analysis or commentary.

As for journalism schools, they are quite right in emphasizing objectivity. Human nature being what it is, the graduate who is lucky enough to find a job reporting the news will undoubtedly be emotionally affected by at least one story he or she reports, and some bias will filter into the piece. After all, we are not machines, and complete objectivity, as a principle, is humanly impossible.

The herd mentality is obvious in the media. But is this the fault of journalism schools? I think not. Press gallery members are governed by what their editor — who in turn is governed by the publisher/station owner — dictates to be the slant of the publication or the newscast for which he or she is reporting, not by what a journalism instructor said five years ago. So I don't think it's fair to place the blame there.

I agree, however, that journalism students should be introduced to subjects

beyond picture cropping, proofreading, page layout and so on. That's why I feel journalism schools are redundant. Upon graduating from Ryerson's journalism program, I didn't feel I had received a real education. I knew I could write, but I knew that in high school. After furthering my schooling by going to York University and learning about Immanuel Kant, Octavius Caesar and Joseph Stalin, I realized that what I had learned during my three years at Ryerson I could have learned after one week on the job at a daily newspaper.

The bottom line? Either you can write or you can't; either you can report or you can't. Neither can be taught in school. The best journalism education is a liberal arts degree that teaches you about Ancient Rome, literature, the danger of the tyranny of the majority — stuff that won't get you a job in 1991 — supplemented with a course in the technicalities of journalism. After all, isn't life supposed to be the best teacher? □

Chris Szuskiewicz is a graduate of the Ryerson School of Journalism and has worked as an editor of a financial newsletter.

Rethinking the lingo of journalism

Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century,

edited by Norman Sims,
Oxford University Press,
296 pages, \$45.50

Reviewed by Stuart Adam

The New Journalism, a term associated with the work of Tom Wolfe and like-minded writers whose articles appeared in jazzy New York publications in the Sixties, now seems old.

But it isn't old; and when Wolfe and others said it was new, it wasn't all that new. It was a burst of creative energy — part of a generational conflict, as one of the authors in this thoughtful collection argues — which advertised itself with the term "new" as it re-discovered and re-explored literary dimensions of journalism for which there was substantial precedent. Its short-run effect was to reinvigorate journalism practice as successful experiments in reportage and narration were recognized and incorporated. A continuing effect is to invigorate the study of journalism as teachers of the craft contemplate, dissect and, in degrees, celebrate the imaginative attempts of journalists to capture larger chunks of human experience and describe them more elegantly than routine standards have encouraged.

So what is "newish" these days is that the field of Journalism Studies, an inchoate discipline which has grown hesitatingly within university schools, has begun to absorb the language of literary criticism in order to do its work. This excellent anthology is a testament to that enterprise.

The editor, Norman Sims, chair of the Department of Journalism at the University of Massachusetts, says in his Introduction that the broad aims of the volume are, first, to demonstrate that the "New

Journalism of the 1960s was preceded by substantial American experience with literary journalism" and, second, "to bring some of the insights from contemporary theory to bear on the works of literary journalists since the 1900s." The second of the two aims is dominant. Texts of substance, whether old or new, cast up problems for — let's call them — Journalism's New Critics.

The problems such critics ponder include the analysis of the essential properties of, respectively, journalism and fiction, the identification of the boundaries between them, the examination of the devices of each craft, and the relationship of journalism to literature not so much in the models we construct to view them but in the real world. The last of these is the subject of William Howarth's scholarly account of the birth of John Steinbeck's most widely-read novel in an article entitled, "The Mother of Literature and *The Grapes of Wrath*." Howarth's title comes from Steinbeck himself who once said that journalism is "the mother of literature and the perpetrator of crap." In light of Howarth's analysis, it is hard to believe that Steinbeck believed completely in his dictum for, as Howarth demonstrates, *The Grapes of Wrath* was the product of Steinbeck's reportage. He published journalistic accounts of the fate of migrant workers in California before he composed his masterpiece. His journalism came before his fiction and the devices he used to move to fiction were borrowed "from the newsreel, photo-text, radio drama, and proletarian fiction." So fiction borrows from — indeed, is dependent in part on — journalism and reportage.

To say that fiction is parasitic, functioning in territory cleared by journalists, is to show the relationship between the two forms of expression in a new light. That light, although it does not contradict, conflicts with the artistic understanding of the relationship. Gerald Stanley Lee "argued in 1900 that the

problem with daily journalism was not that it dealt with 'passing things', but dealt with them in a 'passing way'." Thomas Connery introduces us to Lee in his essay, "A Third Way to Tell the Story: American Literary Journalism at the Turn of the Century."

Hemingway also promoted such a view. As Ron Weber writes in "Hemingway's Permanent Records," Hemingway believed that fiction "had its source in the recollected and observed facts of experience." He believed that "if the work was to last, the material had to be intensified through invention..."

But must it always be so? Must journalism be viewed as a preface to art but not the real thing? And must journalists make such substantial donations to fiction without getting anything back?

The answer to such questions in this volume is a resounding no. Journalists occasionally create works of art; and literary journalism is the result of a healthy appropriation from fiction.

On the first score, John McPhee seems to be everyone's first example of an individual who successfully maintains the boundaries between documentary and invention. In "John McPhee Balances the Act," Kathy Smith argues that this writer, whose reputation was established when he started writing for *The New Yorker*, "crosses and tests the boundaries" without violating the requirements of authenticity and trustworthiness which are the marks of careful reportage. Art is the result. As Ms. Smith states so eloquently, the "McPhee style consists of well-crafted sentences, fresh and spirited metaphors, consistency of mood and tight organization, control, strong narrative voice ... and an organic unity that reaffirms the aesthetic value of parts fitting the whole."

The book contains a short, but thoughtful reflection on "The Politics of the Plain Style," by Hugh Kenner. Kenner says that Swift and Orwell are two of its masters and in its original incarnation it was

"prose as an art form with a new set of norms — feigned casualness, hidden economy."

Mary McCarthy's reflections on her writing method, tucked into the end of the book, are treasures.

If there is something missing in this set of reflections on journalism and literature, there is very little consideration of what sets the imagination of journalists in motion in the first place. I would say it is news, and a more ambitious book might say something about that. It might, in other words, promote the development of the vocabulary of news and news judgment, but in the spirit of art.

Still, this is a book for journalists, teachers and students to read. Each should take seriously what its editor states hesitatingly. Sims says in the Introduction: "If the insights of literary theory apply to a realist like McPhee, then perhaps all journalism, even the newspaper, can be seen from this perspective."

No need to hesitate. Of course, they can. □

Stuart Adam is a professor in the School of Journalism at Carleton University.

Romantic chronology

CNN: The Inside Story

by Hank Whittemore

Little, Brown, 319 pages, \$24.95

Reviewed by Kirk LaPointe

There is a new verb whipping around the news business: to CNN-ize. It's a flattering — usually, anyway — reference to journalism's recent technological capacity to instantly deliver information, generate images and shape opinions.

Now 11 years old, the Cable News Network has changed the rules of journalism, broadcast and print, in evolving from toothless caged animal into roaming jungle beast — perhaps even king of that

jungle.

Its open window on the world has pressed journalistic others to adapt their craft. Broadcasters now dare not fail to track a story to its conclusion; there is someone now who will. And the written word can no longer merely provide a journalistic service of record; a video wire service abounds, so print must leapfrog the event people have seen to analyse and provide next-day implications.

And while what CNN does often lacks polish, and occasionally lacks authority, it more than makes up for faults by arriving first and staying longest at the story. There is no denying its pull anymore. Every office in Washington — indeed, despite CBC Newsworld, many in Ottawa — leave it on, albeit at low volume, as some form of early warning system to world developments.

The subtitle of Hank Whittemore's book — *How A Band of Mavericks Changed The Face of Television News* — promised to explore this phenomenon. Unfortunately, it delivers little beyond a romanticized chronology of infant first steps through adolescence.

I was there on the first day of CBC Newsworld, feeling much like those in the book no doubt felt nine years earlier on CNN's debut, but that sense of anticipation or revolution never comes off the pages. It's bottled up in some clinical anecdotes and so-so snapshots.

I can attest to this day of the profound competition CNN provides. It has created an expectation of instant pictures and quick analysis — something that Newsworld, in only its third year, can't yet match — but has somehow simultaneously broken TV's age-old, entertainment-style segmenting of news in half-hour blocks.

Now, if the story runs past the bottom of the clock, so be it. And if the content isn't necessarily earth-shaking hang in there and it may be soon. In news emergencies, it evokes a we-are-there, we-will-stay-there, you-should-too siren song.

Where once this long-form news channel was static interrupted by pockets of action, now it has enough depth and con-

tent to produce context for the information-heavy, implication-light viewer. And the technology it has employed and implored others to use — the live shot, not always dramatic, but often just there — has wrought nightmares for the information managers who seek to control images and public opinions. Cultivating the sound bite for the supper-hour news is no longer as easy for the spin doctors in an age of day-long grazing.

But Whittemore hasn't the stomach, or muscle, to be social scientist. He plays the cable community channel game here, with a writing technique that frequently hands over control of the story to first-person accounts to carry the book. Fine when the tales from the microphone are compelling, but too often they couldn't even carry the crowd at the Press Club.

There are a few nice touches and memorable stories — of Jesse Jackson's help to a CNN crew at its first Democratic party convention, of network chief Ted Turner's stormy confrontations to get CNN technically up and running, of the long hours and ragged work conditions.

But most disappointing is the incomplete portrait of Turner, arguably the most interesting journalist of this half-century, certainly one of our generation's most fascinating entrepreneurs. Whittemore's writing, never florid, never delivers his eccentric or exaggerative qualities and is unconvincing about Turner's motives to do news. Too often curriculum vitae is the vital currency.

And even more troubling is the book's rosy view of the beast in CNN. The network's public reputation may be as an authoritative prime source, but it has taken a private journalistic rap as a sweat-shop-style haven to inexperienced low-paid, highly-worked disposables. Whittemore neither tackles nor debunks this myth, and in choosing to ignore the much-circulated criticism of his subject head-on, leaves open too much about his own credibility.

And credibility is everything in news. □

Kirk LaPointe is Canadian press's Ottawa bureau chief and host of CBC Newsworld's Week's End.

Short Takes

The CBC has eliminated the position of vice-president of English television. **Denis Harvey** will not be replaced after moving into a consulting position with the network.

Harvey's two senior network executives, director of programming **Ivan Fecan** and director of news and current affairs **Trina McQueen** were promoted to new vice-presidential positions similar to their old jobs. Fecan becomes vice-president of arts and entertainment and McQueen is the new vice-president of news, current affairs and *Newsworld*. In addition, McQueen is responsible for general administration and Fecan handles TV advertising and program sales.

The two programming vice-presidents will report to senior vice-president **Michael McEwen**.

In Calgary, former news director of CKXX/TV **Ted Arnold** has been appointed executive vice president of the Alberta Television Network. Network president **Wendell Wilks** has applied to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission for licenses for two new stations in Calgary and Edmonton. The stations would each include a newsroom and would mount local newscasts to compete with the CBC's province-wide newscast broadcast from Edmonton.

Meanwhile, the *Globe and Mail* is expanding its horizons with the opening of two new bureaus. **Patrick Martin**, an editorial writer, heads the new Middle East bureau in Jerusalem, while **John Stackhouse** heads the new development issues beat bureau. Stackhouse starts in Toronto and will move to New Delhi this autumn. Also, in the Rio de Janeiro bureau, **Isabel Vincent** replaces **Paul Knox** who returns to Toronto. And **John Gray** moves to Moscow replacing **Jeff Sallot**. Sallot heads back to reporting from Ottawa. The *Globe* has also taken on two new editorial writers to fill spots left by retiring **Al Lawrie** and Middle East-bound Martin. **Tony Keller** and **Andrew Coyne** will fill the gaps.

Thomson Corp. is buying fewer newspapers. Chairman **Ken Thomson** has told the company's annual meeting

there will only be a few acquisitions in the near future compared with the buying heydays of the 1980s.

Last year, the firm spent \$314 million U.S. on acquisitions, compared with more than \$1.1 billion in 1989, including \$800 million for a legal publishing firm in Rochester, N.Y.

In 1990, the company reported earnings of \$385 million U.S., down from \$420 million the previous year.

Despite the tough economic climate, special purpose publications continue to proliferate.

Momentum Magazines has launched *Church Business*, Canada's first publication exclusively devoted to religious institutions across the country.

Momentum president **Hugh Parkinson** said *Church Business* will be issued six times during 1991 and distributed to more than 12,000 clergy and church officials of all denominations.

Editorial coverage includes an examination of the latest trends, association news, columns and features.

Momentum Magazines also publishes *Government Business Magazine*, a tabloid publication issued 10 times a year dealing with issues affecting public sector policies.

Terry Hrynsyshyn was recently promoted to the associates publisher's post of *Government Business*. He maintains overall editorial responsibility for the publication as well as taking on managerial duties.

And in Ottawa, the Consumers Association of Canada has announced the hiring of a contract publisher, Ramsden and Associates, Inc., to oversee the new *Canadian Consumer* magazine. **Sue Ann Ramsden**, a private consultant, has assumed duties as publisher. **Leslie Burtch**, former editor of The Canadian Toy Testing Council's *Toy Report*, replaces **Paul Reynolds** as editor. *Canadian Consumer* is now being published six times a year instead of monthly. It will contain a greater range of editorial features and be printed on recycled glossy stock. □

Submissions to Short Takes may be sent to Content, Rural Route 2, Mountain, Ontario, K0E 1S0, or faxed to (613) 788-5604.

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WILLIAM BENTON FELLOWSHIPS IN BROADCAST JOURNALISM
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Newsworld modest success

Newsworld, CBC-TV's round-the-clock news service, has completed two years of operations with a creditable record — better than its critics suggest, not as good as its admirers proclaim.

Newsworld, functioning on a \$25-million annual revenue base, has by and large fulfilled its original mandate: to mirror Canada across a broad range of political, economic and social concerns.

On the world stage, it is not at the level of CNN; CBC's 24-hour news service doesn't have the glitz and sweep of NBC, CBS or ABC either. But should the *Edmonton Journal* be compared on equal terms with the *New York Times* or the *Los Angeles Times* or the *Washington Post*? Does even the *Toronto Star* or *Globe and Mail* compare with those publishing giants?

In Newsworld's defence, one should pose another question. Did any of the U.S. TV networks cover the Oka standoff or the recent provincial premiers' meeting or the continuing Canadian constitutional crisis? Or will they dwell for even a moment on the upcoming B.C. and Saskatchewan provincial elections?

Of course not. Nor should the big U.S. networks be expected to focus on these made-in-Canada events or situations. These are within Newsworld's natural purview.

Newsworld operates from a Canadian perspective — and it should be judged within that framework.

Newsworld has a staff of about 200. The current \$25-million-a-year revenue base is derived from two major sources — cable fees and advertising income. There is no direct CBC sustenance although there is a measure of support from the Mother Corporation in terms of cross-pollination of staff. CBC-TV reporters provide news and commentaries throughout the broadcast sked. However, on the financial side, Newsworld maintains an "arms-length" relationship with

CBC, according to Michael Harris, head of Newsworld.

The Newsworld sked includes regional, national and international elements. Newsworld is not as strong on the international front as in other areas, but it does try.

Budget cuts have put extra pressure on Newsworld with its cross-country network based primarily in Halifax, Calgary, Ottawa and Toronto.

In Halifax, a Newsworld staff of more than 50 churn out a wide range of programming from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. There is an international affairs panel keyed to breaking news, a business panel, an entertainment panel sandwiched between news and sports packages. In an arrangement with the *Financial Times*, Newsworld produces Business Week.

In Calgary, a Newsworld staff of 25 produces a roughly parallel set of programs from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Newsworld operations are complemented and bolstered by access to CBC-TV's roster of national and international correspondents.

Calgary Newsworld generates six hourly newscasts a day and a Business World prepared in co-operation with Southam Inc. In addition, there is Cover Story, a daily background interpretive feature on a regional, national or international issue.

In Ottawa, Don Newman, senior CBC-TV parliamentary editor, heads a small group providing Newsworld originals from the national capital. This operation has links to CBC-TV's national bureau chief, Elly Alboim.

The Ottawa unit also covers national stories such as premiers' conferences, election campaigns and leadership contests. Regular national stories are covered Monday to Friday with a special report or interpretive summary on the weekends.

In Toronto, a Newsworld unit of about 30 supplies regular newscasts on weekends plus international documen-

taries and the regular nightly diet of the National News and The Journal.

This cross-country lineup reveals Newsworld's weaknesses as well as its strengths. It suffers from too many panel shows, too many "talking heads," too much borrowed material.

But to do more live coverage and more aggressive news coverage would require a larger budget and a larger staff.

Despite its restrictive budget, CBC Newsworld has already fulfilled its basic mandate — to reflect Canada to Canadians. That is a worthwhile accomplishment from which the fledgling network can derive a quiet sense of satisfaction. □

Murray Goldblatt is a journalist, broadcaster, journalism educator and regular contributor to Content.

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