

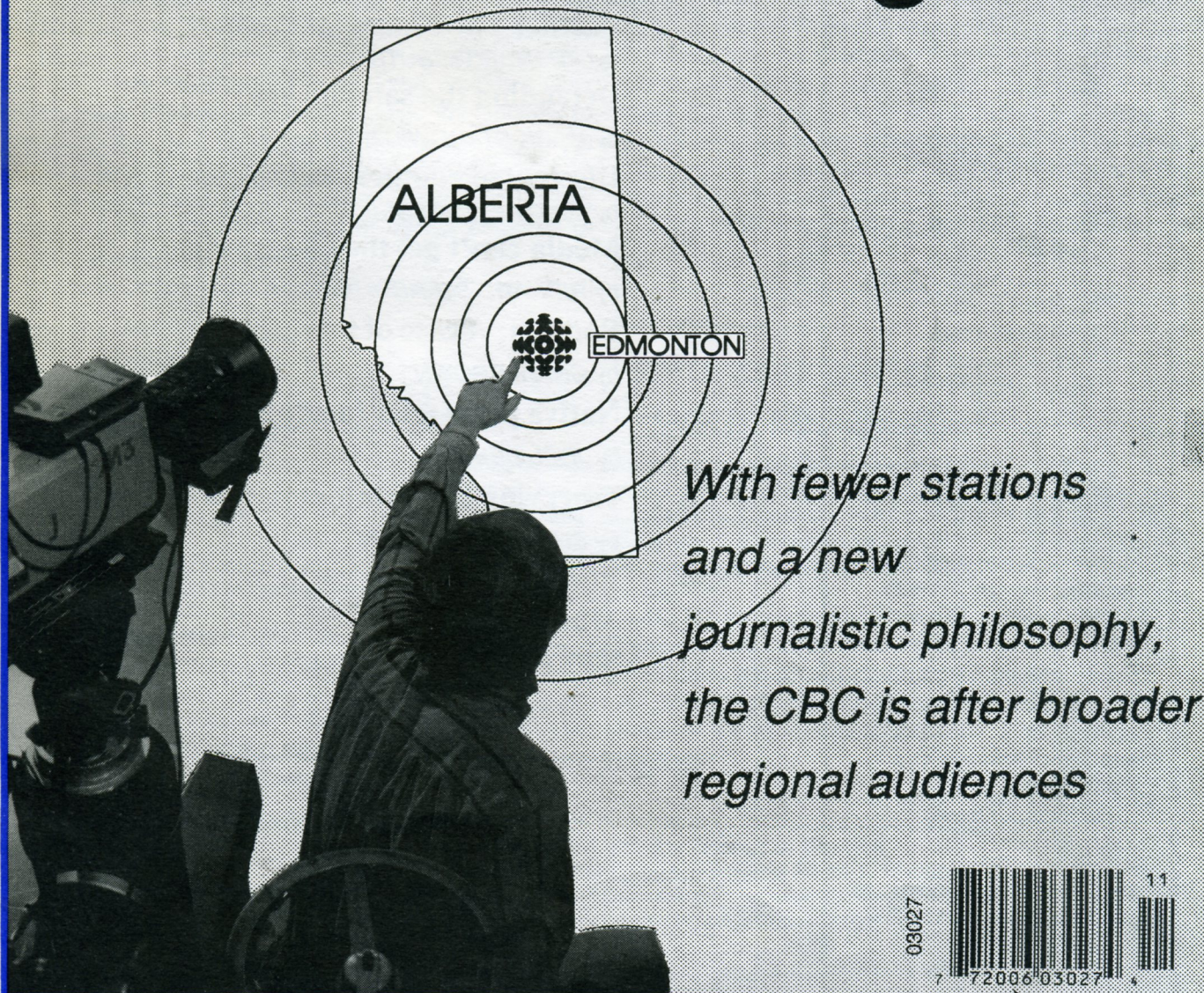
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about Canadian Journalism

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November/December 1991

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about Canadian Journalism

Established 1970
Founding Editor
Dick MacDonald

November/December 1991

content is published
six times a year by
Friends of Content
Rural Route 2,
Mountain, Canada, K0E 1S0
and the School of Journalism,
Carleton University,
Ottawa, Canada, K1S 5B6

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We gratefully acknowledge assistance for publication of this issue from

Maclean's
Canada's Weekly Newsmagazine

Credits

Cover: Claire Stirling/Michael Simpson, Ottawa; Illustrations: Michael Simpson, 7; Carl Martin, Ottawa, 13, 18; Peter Chrisitie, 16/17, 21; Photos: Claire Stirling, 2, 23; Canadian Association of Journalists, 11; *Financial Post*, 14; Jess Wasserman, *Globe and Mail*, 28.

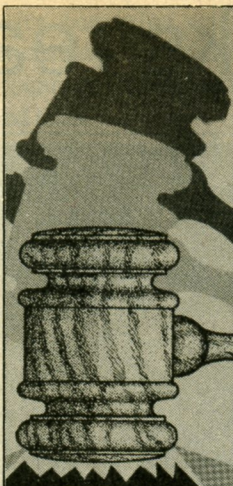
Editor's Notebook

Journalists, as Sue Montgomery reports elsewhere in this issue, are justifiably concerned about the seeming ease with which injunctions restraining publication or broadcasting of stories are being granted by the courts. Although there are rules that govern injunctions, it remains a gray area of the law at best.

The same cannot be said of another area of journalistic endeavor — police, crime and court reporting. Here, the rules are generally straightforward and easy to understand. Some of these are based on the premise that every accused is innocent. As a result we avoid reportage that prejudices that notion.

Unfortunately, however, there has recently been a spate of high-profile cases in which the reporting has been less than careful in avoiding prejudice. The Léger case in New Brunswick springs immediately to mind. The man was convicted by the media long before his trial. That he was found guilty at trial anyway is irrelevant and immaterial. Two cases in Ontario in the last year have resulted in changes of venue because of prejudicial reporting.

A case in Ottawa where a woman was shot to death with



a crossbow on a downtown street, is the latest in this series. Her estranged husband was subsequently charged with murder.

Understandably, the media have been full of stories about the victim, a 31-year-old lawyer whose father is a retired assistant commissioner of the RCMP. But, there also have been a number of profiles of the accused. The innuendo in most of these is inescapable. They may make good human-interest copy, but they do nothing for the time-honored concepts of due process and presumption of innocence.

We are very quick to click our tongues in disgust at the media circus some high-profile American court cases have become. Witness the Kennedy trial, for example. We should not, however, be too pontifical in our disapproval because some of our own coverage is veering close to much the same thing. Perhaps this is due to the influence of American news reporting, particularly on television. We see and hear it there, so we ape it here, forgetting that the law is totally different.

Perhaps its time to hit the Canadian media law books.

ISSN 0045-835X

Publications Mail
Registration No. 6824

Subscriptions:
\$17 per year
\$27 two years
\$37.50 three years

Foreign:
U.S.A. — \$23.50 (Cdn) per year
Overseas — \$27.50 (Cdn) per year

(*Content* is listed in the Canadian Magazine Index of Micromedia Limited and gradually all issues, dating back to No. 1, October, 1970, will be available in microform. Contact: Micromedia Limited, Information Access, 20 Victoria St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5C 2N8)

(*Content* is indexed in the Canadian Periodical Index, c/o 444 Front Street, Toronto, Ont. M5V 2S9.)

Content is a member of the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association.

(This issue released for distribution in December 1991)

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Survey debunks readership myth

Canadians are not abandoning newspapers the way Americans are, according to the Newspaper Marketing Bureau, which has just conducted a study on Canadian newspaper readership.

The Bureau, which monitored 53 French and English papers in 32 markets across the country, determined that Canadian readership has increased almost six per cent in the last seven years.

Kelly Greenwood, a marketing executive with the bureau, said Canadian readership has always been high, though there's the perception that people are turning away from the print medium in favor of television news.

"It's been really dramatic in the States (decline in readership)," said Greenwood. "And people assume it's the same in Canada. It's not."

The study found that 69 per cent of adults, over the age of 18, read newspapers daily. Eighty-two per cent read at least one paper within a five day period. This figure rises to 91 per cent over a seven day period.

Greenwood said except for slight variations, the findings are consistent throughout the markets monitored.

The study also showed that readership increased dramatically in households with annual incomes of \$50,000 or higher, and among people with a post-secondary education.

The report goes on to say that the number of dailies in Canada has been stable over the last 10 years. Circulation, however, has increased 15 per cent in the same time period, while population growth has increased only nine per cent.

According to the study, the introduction of Sunday papers helps account for this increase.

The Southam and Thomson newspaper groups have also monitored increases in their readership, confirming the findings of the study.

Arnold Tester, Research Manager for



Canadians remaining loyal to their newspaper habits

Southam's marketing division, said, "For the most part there have been gains in just about every market."

Using figures from 1988-91, Tester said Southam papers have kept up with population growth. In 1988, Southam papers were serving a population of 4,713,000. While population increased by 8.3 per cent to 5,104,000, readership increased by 8.4 per cent.

Karen Jacobs, national sales manager for Thomson, said the papers in her organization are also gaining readers.

While Jacobs credits part of this growth to population gains, she said changes to the individual papers are also contributing factors.

Jacobs said the individual papers have been conducting market surveys in an attempt to improve their product. She said, "The newspapers and the money they're investing in their products, are paying off."

— Michael Serapio

Aussies worry about media concentration

Concern about the concentration of media ownership in Australia has led to the creation in Sydney of the Australian Centre for Independent Journalism.

As this is written, Australians wait apprehensively to see whether foreigners will control 90 per cent of their print media. Rupert Murdoch (now an American citizen) owns almost all major Australian papers — amounting to about 70 per cent of circulation — aside from the bankrupt and for-sale Fairfax group.

Critics, including most of the country's MPs, fear Fairfax may go to the consortium led by Canadian Conrad Black and television network and magazine-group

owner Kerry Packer, Australia's richest man.

When Australia's federal parliament began an inquiry into print-media ownership in September, the Centre for Independent Journalism made a major submission.

"We suggested, among other things, that self-censorship could be a problem in a dominated market," says Julianne Schultz, an associate professor at the University of Technology, Sydney, the centre's director.

The centre, which began full operations in March, is Schultz's brainchild. She says it was born, also, because of concerns about "the lack of research into journalism (in the broadest sense), the paucity of teaching materials, and the low public and professional self-esteem of Australian journalists."

Originally conceived as a journalism production house like San Francisco's Centre for Investigative Reporting, the concept has broadened into three main activities: research into journalism practice, professional and curriculum development for journalists and journalism educators, and the sponsorship of wide-ranging investigative journalism.

(The fact that investigative journalism has been done mostly by Fairfax papers, especially the prestigious Sydney Morning Herald, The Age [of Melbourne] and the now-defunct Times on Sunday adds to concerns about who will buy the group.)

The busy Centre for Independent Journalism has already run four major seminars, one preceding the parliamentary inquiry, the others on "the crisis in the media industry," on reporting cultural diversity, and on commercial confidentiality and its impact on reporters.

The focus on cultural diversity is repeated in the production of a source book, textbook and video aimed at broadening awareness of the subject among young Australian journalists.

The centre has also run courses: on investigative reporting, editing, photojournalism, and feature and magazine writing, among other things. Sponsored by the centre, Adelaide journalist Julie Duncan is creating teaching

materials for beginning reporters and journalism students, an attempt to fill a need in a country which has relied largely on imported texts.

The centre's first "press fellow," Brian Toohey, former Washington and Canberra correspondent for the Australian Financial Review, will write a major book, but his findings will appear first in a centre-published monograph.

The centre has already published two working papers, on accuracy in reporting, and defamation.

All this costs money, and the centre has attracted significant funding (no small feat in a country whose media owners have traditionally spent little on training). Support has come from state and federal governments, private sponsors and industry groups; the centre has also earned income from courses and seminars.

Schultz says the centre, located at the University of Technology, Sydney, can provide facilities (including office space) to visiting journalists or journalism educators from Australia and overseas. She also hopes to organize exchanges with similar centres world-wide.

"Our ability to provide salaries for visitors," she warns, "is very limited." But she would "welcome approaches" from interested Canadians. □

— Sandy Forbes

Women want less talk, more action

Rosemary Brown slapped women on the wrist at last month's second annual Women in the Media conference in Vancouver.

In the closing dinner speech, the activist and journalist said women had wasted an ideal opportunity to develop a strategy to combat sexism in the newsroom.

Brown's comments were precipitated by an afternoon open forum that featured a panel of five journalists with starkly opposed views on feminism. The call for

less talk and more action was echoed by several participants in the day-long session.

Linda Hossie, from the *Globe and Mail*, argued that feminism would help all journalists meet their own standards of balance in the coverage of all kinds of events.

"In the name of equality, feminism seeks to change society," she said. "But it will cost some people. Those people are men and they see that. And they are alarmed."

She went on to say that is not in the interest of women to "back down at this point." She said the more successful women are in their struggle for equality, the more resistance they will encounter.

Neil Graham was clearly resistant to feminism in the newsroom. The *Vancouver Province* executive editor sparked controversy and outrage by denying the existence of any male backlash against feminism. The 300 women -- and a handful of men in the audience -- couldn't tell whether Graham was goading them or speaking from his heart. While many were visibly shaken by his remarks, some women stood up for Graham.

A petition was circulated suggesting his comments be ignored and that discussion concentrate on other issues. But some women considered the crowd's negative reaction to Graham a curtailment to his freedom of speech. This was just one of the issues where there was no consensus on the existence of sexism and how to deal with it.

But Brown later told women not to get side-tracked by "the little things," and to concentrate on the common goal of equality. "Keep your eyes on the prize," she said.

The prize, it seems, varies from woman to woman. Some reporters felt discrimination was no longer an issue in the newsroom. They felt the prize had, for most part, already been attained.

Others weren't as optimistic. For these women, the whole notion of "women's issues" — like rape, violence, child care — was called into question for further marginalizing women and their struggle for equality on all fronts.

Conferences like Women in the Media have been criticized for preaching to the converted. At the beginning of the conference, Susan Balcom, correspondence editor for the *Vancouver Sun*, said she wasn't convinced sessions like these would be helpful to her. While she believes

women must keep struggling for equality, she felt the conference allowed women to indulge in a

form of navel-gazing. For her, feminism represents more of an individual struggle toward meeting her own goals.

Longtime journalist and women's activist June Callwood disagreed. She said the conference gives women with different experiences and backgrounds a chance to compare notes. She also said that discourse on women's issues often results in establishing a shared thread of commonality.

Nancy Cooper, Ottawa's CBOT Newsday co-anchor, said the conference was a worthwhile experience for her. She says the effects of such gatherings don't necessarily have to manifest themselves in large-scale movements.

"You can't expect that a week after the conference, there will be huge banding together and protest. The effects are much more subtle."

Cooper said that sharing common experiences gives women the confidence to speak up.

Rosemary Brown called on women to organize and plan strategies for the next conference. She also said women have to pass on their experience to younger women coming up behind them. Too often, she said, women tend to "pull up the ladder" once they've reached positions of power, and they haven't been diligent in passing on their histories.

After Brown's inspiring address, Balcom conceded that there was value in hearing other women's stories. She said she was reminded of the roadblocks to her own success.

Judy Rebick, president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, said things have changed for women, but not enough. She urged women in the media to take a closer look at their strategies and challenged them to change the very definition of news.

"I believe it's not only blatant sexism in the media, which we see reflected everyday, it's not only the

glass ceiling and the difficulty of getting women into power, it is that the very definition of news is sexist." She said news marginalizes and trivializes women's issues.

Indeed, columnists such as the *Ottawa Citizen's* Susan Riley criticized the Gulf War coverage for being completely male-oriented.

The fight for women's equality includes a struggle to feminize the media, Rebick said.

John Stevens, executive director of the Canadian Association of Journalists that organized the meeting, is hoping next year's conference will be held in either Montreal or Ottawa. □

— Jean Cruickshank
and Christine Manore

Radio journalists on way out?

Two events this fall have spurred a debate among some news directors concerning the future of radio news bureaus in Canada.

The first is the advent of the Canadian Television Network's expansion into radio with a syndicated news service. The second, the new regulations from the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunication Commission con-

cerning news on FM radio. The two combined signal the beginning of the end for many radio journalists, said Ken Rockburn, news director for Ottawa radio station CHEZ 106 FM.

"The new regulations are going to push a lot of stations towards having to do less," he said. "They may use more syndicated spoken-word programming to fill that spoken-word commitment."

On September 1, the CRTC introduced new regulations regarding spoken-word programming for FM radio stations.

Spoken-word programming, all on-air talk except advertising and promotions, was reduced to a weekly minimum of 15 per cent. The Commission also reduced the weekly minimum for news content to only three hours. And the term "news" was redefined to include all current affairs programming.

And in October, the CTV network announced its plans to launch its own syndicated radio news service next spring. The network, which will provide three and half minute and ten minute broadcasts, read by national news anchor Lloyd Robertson, will beam the five and six p.m. newscasts to stations across Canada for free.

The CRTC proposed the changes last June in response to an evolution within the industry, said acting-director of radio operations, Anne-Marie DesRoches. Reducing the requirement in spoken-word programming eases an unfair burden on FM stations.

"The commission had too much power to regulate. We wanted to make it easier for broadcasters to serve the community without calculating everything."

The redefinition of current affairs programming should also give news directors the freedom to include feature news stories in regular news broadcasts, she said.

"Before, it was a magazine-type thing, launched with (its own) format. Now, we've given them the option to do news with news and magazines."

But the new regulations will only reduce the demand for journalists while the redefinition of news allows a lot of stations to produce fewer current affairs

Women in the media

programs, Rockburn said.

"A station really only has to do two-and-a-half minutes an hour of a newscast. It was getting pretty grim to begin with. Everyone's suffering financially. And when things suffer financially, one of the first things to get cut is news because there's always different ways it can be covered."

The need for thorough, local coverage, however, limits the impact of the commission's regulation changes, said Gary Ennett, vice president-radio for Radio and Television News Directors Association and news director for London's CFPL FM 96.

Forcing radio stations to meet stringent spoken-word standards only results in mediocre news coverage, he said. And the threat from CTV's syndicated news service is marginal.

"There's a strong demand for local news from local stations." A syndicated newscast, read by a media figure like Lloyd Robertson, might actually enhance interest in radio, he said.

CTV will offer the broadcasts, which include national advertising, free to participating stations, said network spokesman Wade Rowland. National advertising, included in the newscast package, would cover production costs. Subscribers could insert local ads leading in to and out of each newscast.

The network has already received several inquiries about the syndicated service, although it is still only in the planning phase, Rowland said.

"We envision a strong presence in radio."

Rockburn, who also lectures at Carleton University's School of Journalism, said the real costs of CTV's move into radio will be in lost jobs.

"I think this is television being ultimately responsible for laying off radio journalists and I think they should keep their noses out. That's why the CTV thing really pisses me off. It just compounds the problems."

The network, however, said the new service ought to create more jobs than it will destroy.

"We'll be hiring, just for this newscast,

three broadcast journalists who wouldn't have had jobs before. If we go to morning and noon, we'll add a second shift, which will mean more people. Our ultimate objective is to put radio reporters in our bureaus."

— D. B. Smith

Plagiarism claim loses final round

Nearly two years after it appeared in print, an *Ottawa Citizen* report on mass murderer Marc Lépine has withstood its last official examination for alleged plagiarism.

The National Newspaper Awards, which originally honored *Citizen* reporters Jack Aubry and Greg Weston with the 1990 enterprise reporting award for the story, upheld that distinction in a close vote at the September NNA board meeting.

At issue was whether the award-winning article was, in fact, "original", after complaints were made by Montreal *Gazette* reporter Alex Norris that portions of the two-part series were lifted from previously-published stories in the *Gazette* and the *Journal de Montréal*.

The same team of judges which originally selected the *Citizen* entry for the NNA reviewed the complaint and concluded that they "found no evidence of anything that could justly be called a theft of someone else's work, nor any evidence that (Aubry and Weston) did anything in bad faith."

A similar judgment had earlier been rendered by the Canadian Association of Journalists in response to the same complaint against the *Citizen* series, which also won the CAJ award for investigative reporting.

The CAJ decision provoked Norris' resignation from the association, and sparked a minor debate among journalists over definitions of plagiarism and whether Aubry and Weston had crossed the line.

Likewise, the decision by the NNA judges, while officially exonerating the *Citizen* journalists, has hardly laid the entire matter to rest. Only by the narrowest of margins, 6-5, was the judges' decision accepted by the NNA Board of Directors, a vote which itself may result in the resignation of board member Stephen Bindman.

Bindman, who voted to accept the judges' decision, felt that throughout the discussion of the *Citizen* articles, too little emphasis was given to the reporters' strong efforts to verify previously published material.

"Ideally reporters should both verify and attribute information. But surely just attributing without verifying isn't great," he said. "The lesson you might take from all this is that all you have to do is attribute. I think you also have to look at efforts taken to verify."

But Bindman's main dispute was with the NNA board's handling of the complaint.

A reporter at the *Citizen*'s national office, Bindman complained that the judges' decision should have been final without ratification by the board, which includes practising journalists like himself and others in the profession who faced clear conflicts of interest by having to vote on the matter.

"I don't know if I can stay," said Bindman, who insists that decisions about the legitimacy of any reporter's award entry must be made by the NNA judges without compromising members of the board.

But a press release issued by the NNA, while noting Bindman's dissent, indicated that all future disputes involving the awards will be dealt with by the board alone.

NNA chair Bill Peterson, an executive editor at the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* who voted against the judges' decision, said the internal dispute about how to properly deal with the complaint is a reflection of the fact that the current board was established only three years ago and needs time to establish procedures for assessing complaints.

As for the larger journalistic issues

which emerged during reconsideration of the *Citizen* stories, Peterson said, "It's healthy to have this kind of discussion."

"Journalistic standards are not chiselled in law like the Constitution. They're constantly evolving and this is part of that process." □

—Randy Boswell

CBC adopts 'strong' code against sexism

Revised CBC guidelines to fight sexual stereotyping on air are the most detailed in Canada, says Micheline Savoie, CBC's director of Equitable Portrayal in Programming.

The guidelines were approved in mid-October by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission. The commission had requested guideline revisions from both the CBC and the Canadian Association of Broadcasters. CAB's revised code was approved a year ago.

The CRTC's Director of TV policy, Mary Wilson, says the CBC's guidelines are the strongest.

The CBC Guidelines on Sex-role Portrayal are far more specific than those

set out in the network's original 1979 policy. The purpose is to ensure that all people, children included, are represented and portrayed equitably in programs and commercials. It says women, as well as men, must be shown as individuals who have professions, expertise, authority and skills.

The guidelines also state that language used must respect the principle of equality between women and men. For example, on-air staff should use generic terms such as fire fighter, mail carrier or homemaker.

"We're not going to put anyone in jail if they forget themselves and they say manpower instead of workforce," says Savoie. "We're just trying to create different habits here. We're trying to change attitudes. We're asking people to follow these guidelines in order that the viewers, the listeners have more respect for women."

A CBC committee reviews complaints. Savoie says only a blatant mistake would prompt her to go to a producer to discuss punitive measures.

As for journalistic programs, the guidelines say the CBC must seek women's opinions as well as men's on a full range of public issues. It must strive to reach a balance in the use of male and female voices in voice-overs.

Savoie says attitudes do not change

overnight but progress is being made.

Still, she offers numbers from a television content analysis study done for CBC in 1989. One out of every three individuals interviewed on air was a female. That's similar to broader statistics found in a December 1990 report commissioned by the CRTC called *The Portrayal of Gender in Canadian Broadcasting*. The report compares, among other things, appearances by announcers, reporters and interviewees in English television news and current affairs in 1984 to 1988. Appearances by female news announcers showed a significant increase from 31 per cent in 1984 to 39 per cent in 1988. The other two categories showed no significant change; from 26 to 28 per cent for reporters, 21 to 22 per cent for interviewees. The figures are even smaller for female announcers and interviewees on English radio.

Both Savoie and Fullerton agree it is an uphill battle.

The guidelines also say that their interpretation must not conflict with the CBC's Journalism Policy and Practices. Savoie offers an example of a news item requiring the use of bad language or the image of a naked woman to tell the story. In news, she stresses, the corporation's journalistic policy must prevail. □

—Barbara Dundass

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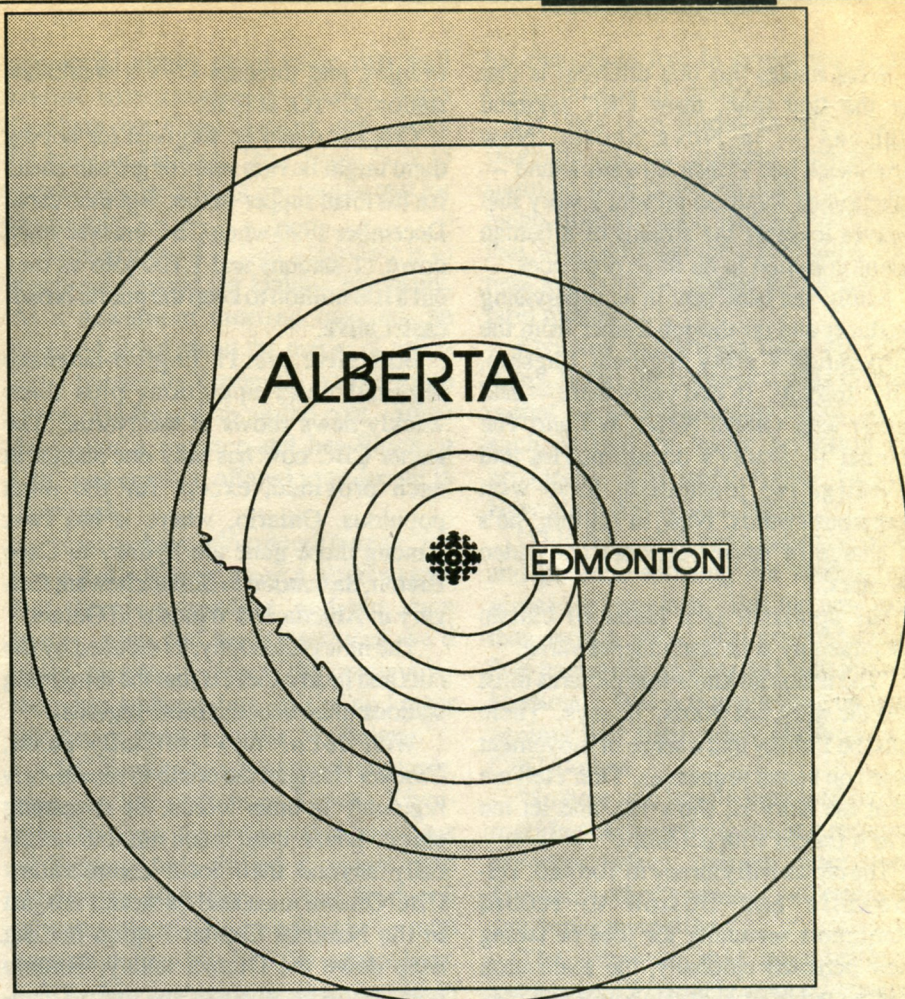
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He seems more at home in a safari suit in Beirut, Nicaragua or Hong Kong, a look of absolute concentration on his face as he guides a blind-sided cameraman past militia or riot police. Later, in an editing suite, he'll call with controlled excitement for images of instant history to be spliced together in another powerful documentary or news report.

John Scully is one of the world's finest television field producers. New Zealand television, the BBC, Global, CTV and now the CBC have used his visual and journalistic talents. So it comes as something of a surprise to discover he's in Halifax, a world-ranging rover dedicated to the power of moving pictures marooned amongst stacks of notepaper.

But Scully is happy. He's going down a new road for the CBC. The

mega project, as it's called in Halifax, is a key part of a new direction for the CBC's regional news operations.

At risk for Scully and other CBC news people is the quality of distinctive, long-form television journalism. At stake for the CBC regions is nothing less than survival.

The Halifax project is an ambitious three-part documentary series, an evocation of what Scully calls the harshest Maritime reality:

"Migration out, migration in, of people torn by allegiance to home, caught between the fantasy of opportunities out there and reality — coming to the end of the rainbow, coming home."

It sounds like a familiar Maritime story.

BY LIONEL LUMB

What makes this one different is that for the first time, three CBC regional stations — in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island — have joined forces to present a story that weaves together the strands of a human drama common to all three provinces.

Scully has been sent in as supervising producer and on-the-job trainer from the corporation's zesty regional flagship, CBC Toronto. In two years there — and earlier with Global News, W5 and The Journal — Scully's documentaries and investigative journalism have won numerous awards. Now, in Halifax, he's in charge of seven reporters and video shooters.

His approach is a blend of classic documentary style and cinema vérité.

"The teams all know that pictures must lead the story, not words," he says. "There must be fluidity and a sense of movement based on visual sequences. Don't tell me what the story is, show me, and let me hear it unfold with actuality."

The crews will journey to Toronto, Yellowknife and Boston to record Maritimers searching for jobs or facing their personal epiphany, the realization that the pot of gold at rainbow's end may be the familiar warmth of home, however impoverished.

Reaching out like that, no matter how compelling the series might be, is normally far beyond a regional news budget. It needs a *Journal*-sized budget of \$40,000. The man who arranged the money for Scully, and who prised him loose from Toronto, is Ron Crocker, CBC's director of regional news and current affairs since 1988.

The credo he imposed on the regional executive producers in 1988 was that their news shows — the supper-hours — must be "obsessively local." In other words, to compete against the often better-rated private stations of the CTV network they must reach deep into their local communities and come up with journalistic riches that would turn the ratings tide.

Obsessively local worked in Toronto at least. There the local team led by Slawko Klymkiw surged past Global and City Television to lead the market at 6:00 each

evening and threaten CTV's wealthiest station, CFTO, at 6:30.

Crocker could be forgiven for hoping there might be rich years of growth ahead for his local supper-hours. But then came December 1990 when CBC brass scythed down 11 stations and 1,100 jobs as they cut \$108 million to keep the public broadcaster alive.

Still alive are 11 English-language regional news operations plus three weekly news shows in the North. The leaner CBC now has only one station in each province, except for the most populous, Ontario, where it has two. Among those gone are Sydney in Cape Breton, Saskatoon in Saskatchewan, Calgary in Alberta and Windsor in Ontario.

The new philosophy, as dictated by the cuts and head office, is that the remaining stations must become more regional.

With *local* now officially passé, Crocker changed the credo to *obsessively regional*. In other words, the remaining supper-hours must reach out journalistically beyond their local communities: CBC Ottawa must find its stories not just in the National Capital Region but dig deep down the Ottawa Valley; Toronto must report on Windsor and Essex County and the populous London-Kitchener area; Edmonton must somehow make the folk of its feisty rival, Calgary, feel at home watching its "provincial" show; Regina must reach out to embrace Saskatoon; and Halifax must make the truly distinct society of Cape Breton feel part of its Nova Scotia program.

In a Canada experiencing a myriad tugs from diverse regional loyalties, this is a challenge, indeed, for the public broadcaster.

But Crocker is sanguine: "The changes visited upon us by the cuts of last December really amount to an acceleration of the direction we were heading in anyway: reaching out deep into our regions, our news shows becoming more like magazines, producing lots more current affairs material — everything from documentaries to satire, with more studio interviews to illuminate the important issues of the day.

"So it's much more than geography, it's

provincialization of our regional news plus expansion of their current affairs component. They'll always have the hard news of the day but current affairs is what will make them more distinctive, and distinguished. And long-form journalism is the key."

Long-form journalism, provincialization, reaching out — these are the new buzz-phrases of the CBC regions, born out of necessity, elevated to virtues by policy and now enshrined as gospel by Crocker.

So far the most apparent change from a year ago is one of scale. An enormous amount of current affairs material is pouring out of the regions.

There are co-productions within regions, but also with network shows. *Midday* has long been a source of extra money to the supper-hours. But now there's a big new appetite: *Newsmagazine*. At 30 minutes long, five nights a week, it depends on the regions for close to half its content.

In addition, programs like *Country Canada* and *Market Place* are also looking for co-production deals. This is how these deals usually work: the network shows save on costly travel and put the extra money toward regional research and shooting, getting second-window play of the stories and often the right to ask for modified versions. In return, supper-hours have more money to produce extra and more sophisticated documentaries or series.

It's a benefit that no one anticipated that black day last December. And there are other sources for funds as the CBC pushes its regional or provincialization message. Crocker found the money for Scully's project, the major training and development initiative for 1991, within regional broadcasting itself.

Crocker can see the benefits of the new philosophy already. He describes, with obvious delight, an example of the ideal new regional show: the Halifax supper-hour last Sept. 24 when the federal government unveiled its constitutional proposals.

"The lead stories detailing the proposals came from the (parliamentary)

Hill bureau. Then the provincial show began with some vox-pops (reaction from ordinary folks) from two communities on the southwest coast, one Anglophone, the other Acadian. We also had reaction from Eskasoni, a MicMac reserve on Cape Breton, via Sydney.

"Then we heard from people and commentators from other parts of the province, plus an interview with Premier Donald Cameron, and added on legitimate regional reaction from Premier Clyde Wells of Newfoundland.

"Another element in the same show was a panel discussion between the host and two non-CBC journalists, one in Tatamagouche, the other in Glace Bay. Commentators like these will become a regular feature, adding a new dimension and a different, non-CBC voice to the reporting of issues and regions they know intimately."

In general, all CBC regional news programs have begun the shift to long-form journalism. Most now have a discrete current affairs unit, says Crocker. "Several shows now have provincial desks, reaching out from their cities to all parts of Alberta, Manitoba and Nova Scotia, for instance, as never before."

That outreach factor is echoed by the regional executive producers. In Halifax, Geoff D'Eon says his challenge has been to make one news program serve both the Nova Scotia mainland and Cape Breton better. Cape Bretonners were proud of their local CBC station in Sydney, and upset when it was closed last December.

"We 'fessed up openly," says D'Eon. "We regretted on-air the closing of Sydney and pledged to do our damndest to make up for their sense of loss by including them in the new show as best we could."

D'Eon has three reporters, one producer and two video shooters to feed Cape Breton stories into the Halifax show and back out to the islanders; or to provide island angles on major pan-provincial issues. After initial resentment, it seems to be working.

"Each Thursday, for instance, we have a segment that's the most popular and talked-about thing we do. It's a political

and social affairs panel using two well known writer/journalists, Parker Barss Donham on Cape Breton and Harry Fleming in Halifax. They know how to speak to the people, of the people and for the people."

Another part of D'Eon's mandate is to reach out beyond the Halifax peninsula. At a newsroom meeting one day he dreamed aloud about the merits of opening a bureau in Yarmouth, on the south shore. He fretted about the cost. Some days later a reporter and her fiancé, a CBC cameraman, offered to re-locate in Yarmouth.

"Now we have a Yarmouth bureau. It's not a Rolls Royce, more a Volkswagen. But there's a landline, and our team shoots, edits and feeds us stories we'd never have had before. The community there has embraced us. We're no longer the distant Halifax media. We *belong*."

CBC Toronto has done much the same, says executive producer Slawko Klymkiw. To cover the industrial sprawl west of Toronto, he's shifted a reporter and shooter to Hamilton. They feed raw videotape pictures to be edited in Toronto and can do live hits into the supper-hour.

Klymkiw is sharing another reporter in London with CBC Radio and shipping reports to Toronto by bus. But again there's a live capability to cover breaking stories, and the hope of a full bureau some day.

He has a sizeable bureau in Windsor, having inherited three reporters and two shooter/editors when the station was closed last December, provoking bitter criticism from the mayor and citizens. The CBC's was the only station they had.

But reaching out, Klymkiw concedes, has its problems. After building success on being "obsessively local," and winning viewers away from three tough competitors in Toronto, he now has to water down his station's local presence with stories from afar.

"We have to be wary of not becoming so spread-out that we ignore our own area. We have to deal responsibly with our provincial mandate but be careful not to derail the gains we've made. So we still fulfill our urban mandate while we look

for chances to fold in stories that fit the bigger provincial picture."

He cites such stories as cross-border shopping and the truckers' protests this summer: both provided stand-alone elements from Windsor, Toronto and Ottawa that wrapped together community, business and political angles into a pan-Ontario treatment.

Klymkiw has always liked big-ticket items. In fact, he believes it's his station's output of award-winning major series, such as two on water pollution and prosperity, that lured rivals' viewers. Now big-ticket is even bigger.

"This fall we've got a series on power and politics, spinning out stories from across the province. But the new mandate means we're also co-producing a five-part series on guns and violence with Montreal. We're into another, on aging parents and their adult children, with CBC Ottawa.

"So here you have a bunch of stations reaching out together, sharing resources as never before, running more stories from each other's areas. It's effective, fun and better journalism."

The pleasure that goes with the knowledge of building something new is contagious.

CBC Ottawa's executive producer Peter McNelly confesses, "I'm getting really excited about it. Everyone in the newsroom is learning more and more about the areas around us, and yet we're not missing any major stories locally."

McNelly has radically altered his newsroom. Instead of seven reporters concentrating on the urban market, he has only three. The other four are assigned to regional news or current affairs documentaries and series.

Apart from the co-production on aging with Toronto, CBC Ottawa is contributing to the Montreal-Toronto series on guns and violence. It has recently run a powerful series on hunger in fat-cat Ottawa. Other series include the economics of divorce, safe houses for battered farm women — a co-production with *Country Canada* — and *Breaking Away*, portraits of people who've escaped city life.

Many of the series have brought in

extra money from *Midday* and *News magazine*. McNelly estimates that every three co-productions with network shows fund another two for Ottawa. He's smiling all the way to the new regional bank.

Uncertain whether to smile or not is Richard Bronstein, the new executive producer of CBC Edmonton. He has one of the most challenging jobs in the regional system. The December cuts killed the Calgary show, which caused a backlash as vocal as that in Windsor. But the CBC added salt to the wound, giving responsibility for covering Calgary stories to its arch-rival, Edmonton.

Talking about the challenge of devising one show to suit two diverse markets, Bronstein says, "Alberta is unique, a province with two major metropolises, completely different cities in terms of culture, lifestyles, ethnic backgrounds.

"Calgary is outward-looking and business-minded, a city of managers, engineers, geologists, with the highest percentage of graduates in Canada. Edmonton is quieter, provincial, with more industry, more blue-collar workers."

Bronstein is a cool-thinking intellectual, a journalist with a track record hard to beat. As senior producer with *As It Happens* and *Sunday Morning*, and then *The Journal* in its early years, he's credited with much of their quality.

But he's less cool when asked about provincialization. "It's a good idea. But if there was a wrong way for the CBC to introduce it — the absolutely wrong way — then the corporation found it.

"You don't close down a station and then decide to have a provincial show. No, you move towards the idea first as a principle. You set your experts to work it out, define it, establish a philosophy, flesh it out in journalistic terms, decide how you're going to convey information. You don't do it for budget-cutting reasons."

But Bronstein is also hopeful about the future. "There are many opportunities for a good provincial show. We may never be number one in either Edmonton or Calgary. But we'll get a good share of viewers in both markets, making us a powerful journalistic voice."

To get to that point means fighting on two fronts. First, there's a rearguard action — to convert "the hostility, fear and loathing" of Calgary folk toward the CBC into an appreciation that the new provincial show really cares about them and their city's affairs.

Then he has to convert internal attitudes. News journalists are born with a deep suspicion of current affairs people, feeling that *they* witness reality while current affairs types hype it and drag it out for unconscionable lengths of time.

Bronstein says of his news team, "Most of them are terrific journalists. But it's as if they're athletes trained for five years for the 100-yard dash, and then the coach says, 'You're entered for the marathon.'"

With his current affairs background, Bronstein has been a marathon runner most of his journalistic life. So despite his criticism of the way it happened, he has wholeheartedly embraced the idea of long-form journalism.

For instance, there's a mega project in the works called Alberta 2000, which will reach out to Calgary for many ingredients. Edmonton also has a three-part series on young offenders, which will include what may be the first pictures from a young offenders' court. *The Journal* is interested in that one. The farm crisis in Alberta is another major series.

Across the country, up until last year, the pattern was for regional stations — both public and private — to blast away with major news projects only in the fall and spring ratings periods. But now, says CBC Ottawa's McNelly, quoting a former colleague, "It's like being in ratings all the time" for the CBC stations.

The harsh reality is that ratings do matter, that the CBC is as market-conscious as any private station, and that the CBC is second to its CTV rivals in all cities except St John's, Charlottetown, Winnipeg and in Toronto at 6:00 p.m. In Montreal, Ottawa and Vancouver the CTV stations are still clear winners. Elsewhere there have been CBC gains: in Calgary, for instance, before the shutdown.

In Halifax Geoff D'Eon points to the fact that ATV used to have twice as many

viewers as the CBC.

"Now we're snapping at their heels," says D'Eon. "We need that. The CBC is not immune to bottom-line policies. The more distinctive we get through outreach and current-affairs programming the better our chances of survival."

So no matter how compelling John Scully's going-down-the-road series, or how worthy the joint efforts of Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa, or how well Edmonton converts to long-form journalism, or how warmly Halifax unites Cape Breton with the mainland, there is still the necessity to gain respectable ratings. They are the best protection against another deadly December.

Last December the regions took the brunt of that cut, and there are many in the remaining news operations who feel that their days are numbered, that if more cuts must be inflicted they will disappear altogether. Employees across the system were, in fact, gearing up for another rotten Christmas.

But this December they are safe, and probably next December as well. Early in November, Minister of Communications Perrin Beatty announced the government was giving the CBC an extra \$46 million to help overcome its deficit. The minister, media observers agree, wanted to avoid a public outcry like the one that greeted last December's cuts.

So the worst that could happen to the CBC regions this Christmas is that the fall ratings, expected on Dec. 19, might show no improvement, that reaching out does not guarantee climbing the charts.

Still, there's a new optimism.

Ottawa's Peter McNelly is typical of the new mood: "It's hard to think creatively when you're wondering how to feed the family. At least for 18 months the days of dial-a-death-sentence are over. We can go after Crocker's Holy Grail of reaching out and distinctive long-form journalism. It's a good grail to go after." □

Lionel Lumb is a television journalist who has worked for the BBC, CTV and CBC. He now teaches journalism at Carleton University.

Protecting the 'family'

By Brent Ledger

Canadian journalists are not likely to be killed, tortured or imprisoned in the course of doing their work. Which is why a stint with the Canadian Committee to Protect Journalists (CCPJ) can be a valuable experience, a chance to gain perspective on the fragile state of a free press in the rest of the world.

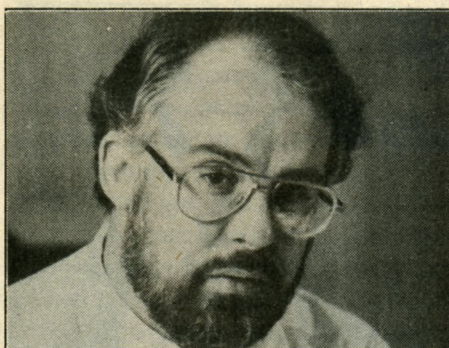
"It certainly has been an education for me," says Nick Fillmore, executive director of the CCPJ, "to phone a journalist who I know is in difficulty and speak with him on the phone for two minutes and he says to me, 'There are people who have guns outside of my house.' And the phone goes dead."

The man in question, Guatemalan columnist Hugo Arce, survived his encounter with the death squads, just as he had survived an earlier stay in jail after he wrote articles critical of the government. He owes his survival, however, to Fillmore and his colleagues at the CCPJ who sent more than 20 faxes to the Guatemalan government demanding his protection.

Other Guatemalan journalists haven't been so lucky. Two prominent journalists were killed last fall. A nascent trade union was abandoned in 1980 when four of its leaders were killed. At least 50 journalists have been killed in the past 10 years.

The CCPJ, which was founded in 1981 as an offshoot of the Centre for Investigative Journalism with a mandate to protect journalists around the world, does not confine its work to Guatemala.

Volunteers monitor several countries of concern, including Burma, Columbia, Mexico and Israel, and when necessary they send faxes, letters and make phone calls exhorting governments to protect endangered journalists. When that doesn't work, the committee will try to provide safe haven. In August, for example, the committee secured Canadian refugee status for Ko Ko Maung, a Bur-



Nick Fillmore

mese cartoonist who has been sharply critical of his country's military government.

But the focus of the committee's efforts remains Guatemala, a country "where murders are an everyday occurrence," says Fillmore, a weekend producer at CBC *Newsweek*. "Every day bodies of people are showing up. This has not stopped because of the new so-called democratic government."

A fact-finding mission commissioned by the CCPJ and headed by journalist Robert Carty discovered a starkly different attitude to human rights when it visited Guatemala last March. "Basically," says Fillmore, "anything associated with human rights is called Communism in a country like Guatemala." Fillmore estimates four fifths of the working journalists in Guatemala City have received death threats.

The CCPJ is trying to provide a safety net by setting up help lines and encouraging journalists to work together for their own protection — no easy task in a country divided by politics and personality. Hugo Arce's problems, for instance, didn't end with government-sponsored terrorism. "His politics were right wing enough that the other journalists in the country were not particularly keen to assist him," says Fillmore, "and he has a macho attitude that to get on the phone and do something like that (ask for help) is a sign of weak-

ness."

The CCPJ will be watching Guatemala closely over the next three to five years to see if its tactics work.

In the past the publicity generated by the CCPJ and its allies — the International Federation of Journalists, Article 19, Amnesty, PEN Canada, etc. — has proved effective in reducing attacks on western journalists operating in the Third World. The murder rate within this privileged group has fallen from at least 10 in 1978-1982 to only three in 1987-1990. But "sadly," says Fillmore, "we still have not found ways to be more effective in stopping attacks on journalists in their own countries." At least 107 Third World journalists were murdered from 1987 to 1990.

Here at home the CCPJ has begun to beef up its human and financial muscle. Two years ago it secured charitable status through an affiliation with the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of Western Ontario. This fall it begins its first ever membership drive and last August it elected a high-powered board of directors, which includes Patrick Watson, Peter Desbarats and John Fraser. The board, along with an advisory committee composed of the likes of Roy Megarry and Lloyd Robertson, is designed to forge more extensive links with the Canadian journalism community.

There is little opposition to Fillmore's work. Some journalists worry about taking a position on any issue, even something as non-controversial as human rights. But most see it as a motherhood issue, too important to be ignored. "If we don't do the work," says Fillmore, "people die and people get put in jail and abused. Conditions can even be worse."

The committee can be contacted at its office: 97 Oakcrest Ave., Toronto, Ontario, M4C 1B4, (416) 690-6445. □

Brent Ledger is a Toronto freelance writer.

Reporting, Mexican style

By Lawrence Kootnikoff

The last time he was seen, television reporter Gabriel Venegas Valencia was dining with friends in the Zona Rosa, a downtown district of Mexico City popular for its night life.

Several hours later Venegas was lying dead by the side of a highway leading out of this capital of 20 million. The 26-year-old reporter had a bullet through his head, and his car and belongings were missing.

Police say the motive was robbery. But the Oct. 11 killing was only the most recent killing involving a Mexican journalist, and a group of American and Canadian writers who visited the country recently say the deaths form a pattern.

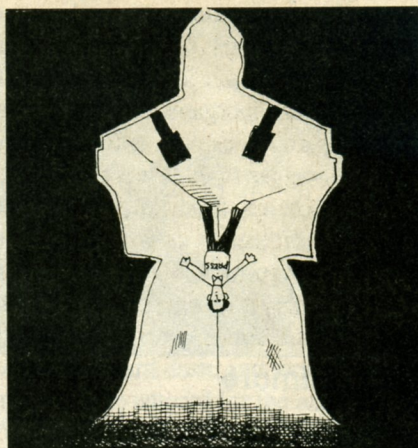
"The Union of Journalists has documented 25 cases of journalists who have been killed since 1988, but we can't say with certainty if these people were killed because they were journalists," says well known Canadian author Alberto Manuel.

Mexican journalists have more freedom today than five or 10 years ago, but murders of reporters duty are still common, says Eduardo Valle of the Union of Journalists.

"A lot of times they call it robbery, drugs, an affair between homosexuals, or whatever bullshit you like," says Valle, producing a stack of papers detailing investigations into the murder of 38 journalists since 1983.

The four-member delegation represented the U.S. and Canadian chapters of PEN: the international writers' organization and the Canadian Committee to Protect Journalists. Both organizations work to defend journalists and writers around the world.

Murder of reporters in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America is not new. But what is new is that in October, for the first time, the government recognized the problem and released the names of nine



reporters it says were killed because of their work. In a meeting with the writers' delegation, Mexico's National Human Rights Commission, a government body, released the names of nine journalists it says were murdered "in the exercise of their functions."

Reporters are killed by police, government officials, drug dealers or local *caciques* and corrupt or labor bosses. The situation is most difficult outside Mexico City, in small towns or in the countryside, though no one is immune.

"I've been attacked five times in five years," says Valle. "Two were kidnap attempts. One had to do with a drug story and two were connected with the Buendia case. It's all been documented."

Manuel Buendia was a respected political columnist who was murdered in 1982. Valle, like many journalists, is armed. "Twice I had to open fire to save myself."

Not all murders of journalists are work-related, he says. "If our colleagues were involved in criminal activities, then let's say so. We don't want things covered up: we just want the truth."

The nine on the human rights commission list were killed between 1982 and 1988, so Venegas' name is not among them. His case is still under investigation, but friends scoff at the idea that he was killed in a robbery.

"Robbers don't shoot people through the head execution-style," says one.

They say that Venegas, a former police reporter recently transferred to the labor beat, may have made enemies in his police work. Another possibility is that he ran afoul of some corrupt union leaders.

While violence against journalists continues, the situation has improved in recent years. "Before, you would go to the interior ministry and they told you, 'Oh, he was a drunk,'" says Valle. Mexico's new human rights commission, established by President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, has made a big difference, he adds.

"There have been some very positive



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changes," says Merle Linda Holin, a member of PEN-U.S.A. and a former Mexico-Central America correspondent for the now defunct *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*.

"The general opinion is that there is a better climate now," says Manguel. "Journalists have been able to be more critical, and have been able to denounce things they couldn't touch 10 years ago."

Salinas took office in 1988, promising to democratize the country's closed, authoritarian political system. But so far, his democratic reforms have lagged behind his more radical economic moves. And decrees issued in Mexico City often take a long time to filter down to outlying areas.

Mexican journalists still do not enjoy the same freedoms as their counterparts in the United States and other countries. Intimidation of reporters by members of the ruling party, police, drug dealers and extreme left-wing organizations is still common, the group found. Many journalists who spoke to the group asked not to be named.

Sixteen journalists have been murdered since Salinas took office. In four cases "the police have nothing, absolutely nothing," says Valle, pounding the table.

"It's not hard to put an end to this," he says. "Find the bastard who kills a journalist and throw him in jail."

But better law enforcement is not enough, he adds. The trade needs to be professionalized through better salaries, working conditions, education and higher standards.

"There are 25,000 media workers in Mexico," he says. "Maybe 100 to 150 earn a good wage." For the rest, especially those working for smaller publications outside Mexico City, the wage is not enough to live on. To survive, reporters must either hold two jobs or be forced to accept *chayote*, bribes and pay-offs.

"If you earn 150,000 pesos (\$60) per week, you have to accept the corruption," Valle says. "How else are you going to feed your children and pay your rent?"

It is common for the ruling party, most government ministries and private businesses to pay the reporters assigned to

cover them. Gifts, free meals and free hotel rooms are so common that they don't really count as corruption, says one foreign correspondent.

Reporters covering presidential trips, especially when Salinas travels abroad, receive thousands of dollars per trip directly from the president's press office. Owners of news organizations use these payoffs as an excuse to continue paying starvation wages to their reporters.

While foreign journalists in Mexico have more protection from the intimidation that regularly affects Mexican reporters, they are not immune. One American freelance journalist recently wrote an article for a well known U.S. publication on corruption and drug trafficking among members of the much feared judicial police.

The *judiciales*, as they are known, are widely rumored to be heavily involved in drug trafficking and have been blamed for much of the documented intimidation and torture of journalists and others.

Shortly after the article appeared, the American journalist was accosted by several judicial police officers who tried to force him into their car. He managed to escape by telling them he was waiting for a friend and by "doing some fast talking."

Another recent case was that of police officer Juvencio Arenas Galvez, found stabbed to death at the wheel of his car Oct. 7 just outside Mexico City.

Arenas's colleagues say that just before his death, Arenas had arranged to meet several judicial police agents. Police are still investigating but say that Arenas appeared to have known his killer and allowed him into his car.

The PEN group plans to publicize the issue in the United States and Canada to pressure the Salinas administration, says John Farrell, a member and past president of PEN-U.S.A. Salinas is known to be very sensitive to criticism in the U.S. media, especially if he thinks it may hurt his ongoing free-trade negotiations among Mexican, Canadian and American officials.

Raising public interest in Mexico may be done more easily from the United

States. The two countries share a border and a long history. In Canada, where interest in Mexico ranks about even with interest in Upper Volta, the task may be more difficult, says Ellen Saenger, a Vancouver journalist and member of the Canadian Committee to Protect Journalists.

"Free trade may help," says Saenger. "Salinas has visited Canada, and Mexico and free trade have been in the news a lot more lately."

The deaths of the journalists just before the group's visit had a chilling effect on Saenger, who worked in Mexico from 1984 to 1986. She has also noticed a change for the better. "But it's a little scary to think that these people were killed almost at the same time we were here," she adds. □

Lawrence Kootnikoff is a correspondent for United Press International in Mexico City.

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Diane Francis

Making sure the voice of business is heard

By Frances Misutka

Toronto *Sun* publishing president Paul Godfrey says he knew what he was doing when he wooed Diane Francis away from her reporting job at the *Toronto Star* years ago to write business columns for the *Financial Post*, *Maclean's* and *Sun* corporation.

"When I hired Diane Francis, I knew very much that Diane would not just be an ordinary columnist, that there was great upward mobility in her future," says Godfrey. In June, Godfrey's golden girl was appointed editor of the *Financial Post*. Readers may be unaware that the *Sun* owns 60 per cent of the *Post*, but Francis' promotion puts an unmistakably *Sun*-colored stamp on the paper. "She's a tough, hard-working, dedicated, right-of-centre, free-enterprise lady," says Godfrey. "Too much of the media portrays a left-of-centre, sort of bleeding left-wing mentality. I think it becomes sort of ridiculous to portray yourselves as a free-enterprise newspaper and then do what some newspapers do — lean to the left."

Francis' promotion to editor follows shortly after former editor John F. Godfrey publicly embarrassed the *Post* and the *Sun* by involving himself in the immigration scam that placed the former Iraqi ambassador to the U.S. in a modest bungalow in suburban Vancouver. John Godfrey, no relation to Paul, was given the newly created title, editor-at-large-Canada, and Diane Francis is now in charge of the *Post's* editorial pages.

Paul Godfrey says Francis' appointment "couldn't have come at a better

time," and perhaps he's right. Canadian businessmen are probably more angry and frustrated over the state of the economy than they ever have been. A high Canadian dollar and a fierce recession have destroyed much of Canada's industrial base. High taxes are sending an already high cost of doing business through the roof. To make matters worse, business says, Ontario now has a "socialist, anti-business" government that's aggravating the perception that Canada is no longer an economically safe place to do business.

Francis has swiftly and adroitly capitalized on this emotion. Her first column as editor, on June 11, grandiosely titled "A new agenda for Canada," mentions everything — from monetary policy to "undue red tape" — that has been eating away at business since the doors of global competition opened wide. "The *Financial Post* has always been the most authoritative voice of business in Canada," writes Francis. "Under my editorship, we're just going to raise the volume slightly to make sure we're heard."

Both in her columns and in conversation, Francis exhibits clever use of the word "we." Listening to her, it's not entirely clear whether "we" means the business community or the *Financial Post* or whether the distinction is meaningless. What is clear is that 44-year-old Francis is a tireless champion of free-enterprise ethics, choosing every opportunity to turn



the most tame topic into an exercise in polemics. Thus, a chat about what it felt like to be at the recent G-7 summit turns into a lecture from Francis on the emerging international economic order and Canada's need to wake up to what's happening: "The world is hurtling towards a single government," says Francis. "The whole public policy debate in Canada shouldn't be fixated at this childish, naive notion that somehow we can create this little free-standing socialist paradise for workers. We can't."

And, true to her word, Francis has turned up the volume on these issues by inviting Conrad Black, outspoken head of Hollinger Inc., to write columns for the *Post*. Black's full-page introductory column thrashes Bob Rae for his "bankrupt and malicious" policies, namely the projected \$9.7 billion-dollar deficit, accusing the premier of being a "millionaire-baiting, anti-corporate agitator."

Some *Post* writers worry about what Francis' tough new line on the editorial pages will do for the overall profile of the *Post*. Speaking of Black's attack on Bob

Rae, one *Post* reporter says, "It perpetuates the myth that the media only serves the interests of its owners." (Hollinger Inc. owns a minority stake in the *Post*.) Francis says she foresaw this criticism and immediately offered Rae a chance to respond on a Saturday, when the *Post*'s circulation is more than double what it is on weekdays.

The *Post* published Rae's rebuttal, but Francis leaves no doubt about which side of the public policy debate she is on. "Yes, [Bob Rae] is anti-business," Francis says. "His labor legislation is a shocker. This is organized labor's agenda. That is anti-business because (the government) perceives itself to be at war with business."

Francis' columns — on everything from Sikh turbans to how welfare is developing "a parasite underclass" — all exhibit the same no-holds-barred love of controversy, an abrupt departure from John Godfrey, who wrote tame pieces about tame subjects.

"Diane's not afraid to call a spade a spade," says *Financial Times* writer Wayne Lilley with a laugh, who worked with Francis at the *Toronto Star*. "She's not afraid to step into a field where land mines have been buried," says Paul Godfrey. "She has the ability to approach every story as if it were her first," says former *Toronto Star* business editor John Bryden. "She never loses her enthusiasm."

Their comments tell how a Mississauga housewife with one year of university and a community-college journalism diploma got to be editor of Canada's "most authoritative voice of business." Born in Chicago, she came to Canada when she was eighteen and helped her husband, Frank Francis, start an art studio and typesetting house. After her two children, Eric and Julie, were born, Francis stayed home to raise them. Then, at 28, she had to undergo a biopsy, and although the results were negative, it forced her to decide what she was going to do with the rest of her life.

She's always been an avid reader and even won a national poetry contest in high

school. She signed up for a newspaper feature-writing course at Sheridan College in Oakville, west of Toronto. During a two-week internship at the *Brampton Times*, a job opened up and Francis took it. She stayed at the *Times* for 15 months, did a short stint at the *Mississauga News* and then turned freelance, writing features for magazines such as *Maclean's*, *Canadian Business* and *Quest*.

When was she moved to the *Toronto Star*, Francis hit her stride. Francis held the energy beat at a time, says Wayne Lilley, "When it was the only game around — during the Dome Petroleum saga — and she just covered it like nobody else did." John Byrden, *Star* business editor at the time, credits Francis' success to her ability never to let people with money intimidate her. "She could see that the people running these big corporations were just people after all."

For her own part, Francis says her success comes from learning how to be political. "You have to say, 'Okay, this is the information I want. In who's interest is it to get this information out?' So you call the enemy or you call the jilted aid or you call the rival." She says she never tires of her work. "As you can probably tell, I'm pretty intense about what I believe," she smiles. "This is like religion to me."

Her energy and drive, combined with the syndicated columnist position Paul Godfrey offered her in 1987, have helped boost Francis' profile to one of Canada's most influential business journalists — she wrote 25 columns a month for *Maclean's*, the *Sun* and the *Financial Post*. In addition, she's written three books: *Controlling Interest—Who Owns Canada* is about corporate concentration in Canada, *Contrepreneurs* looks at stock market scams and *The Diane Francis Inside Guide to Canada's 50 Best Stocks* analyses 50 companies she feels are well-managed.

But her "call-'em-as-I-see-'em" style gets her into trouble from time to time. Readers attack her in the press for getting her numbers wrogn. After a column in *Maclean's* magazine on the fishing in-

dustry, John Crosbie, minister of Fisheries and Oceans, wrote to say Francis had been wrong about how many fishery officers the department has and how much money the department spends on fish management: "Normally a very interesting columnist, Francis has certainly floundered on this one," wrote Crosbie. And a recent column in the *Post* on welfare prompted an even fiercer attack. In the column, last April, Francis had done a little figuring with the numbers on welfare and concluded that, after taxes, in order for a family of four to be doing better financially than a similar-sized family on welfare, they'd have to be making \$45,000 a year. The public was outraged, thinking the numbers were correct. Columnist Nate Laurie lambasted her in the *Toronto Star* and her column prompted a hasty reply from Community and Social Services Minister Zanana Akande: "What is evident from the news coverage is that the writer ... is sadly in need of a research assistant."

But despite the occasional stumble, Francis gives no indication that she's softening her approach. "I didn't gain profile (with this job)," she says. "What I gained was amplification. When you're writing columns, all you are to a lot of people is a pain-in-the-neck columnist. But when you become the editor of a business paper and have input over the editorial policy and the opinions that get published ... that's a whole other leverage that being a columnist just doesn't have."

But right now, a strong personality may be just what the *Financial Post* needs. These are lean days for business journalism, and the *Post*, only three-years-old as a daily, has yet to turn a profit. "The job of Diane Francis," says Paul Godfrey, "is to become the voice in the business community and attract readers. If you attract readers, you'll attract advertisers. We're not going to ask Diane to go out and flog newspapers on the street. Her presence will do that." □

Frances Misutka is a Toronto business writer.

The Gulf War has taught us shatteringly and dramatically how very easy it is to block a technology, regardless of its extraordinary potential.

In fact, it's a lesson we should have learned twice before. In the three principal conflicts of the past decade — the Falklands, the Iran-Iraq War and the Gulf War — the technology was there to bring unprecedented coverage. In all three, the potential of the technology was either betrayed or significantly undermined by the belligerence which denied TV access to the story.

In the Falklands War, although the British ships carried satellite dishes, the reports were censored, but most importantly delayed by about four days. News of the burning of the Sir Galahad took two weeks to get back to London. On the Argentinian front, reporters were so tied down in their hotels in Buenos Aires that the first modern satellite war has been aptly nicknamed "The Room Service War."

The Iran-Iraq War, which lasted eight years and caused one million casualties, might as well have occurred on another planet.

I might point to another failure of the satellite age. One hundred forty thousand people died in Bangladesh last spring. Where were the helicopters bringing in the great satellite dishes so that the world could understand the scale of this great human tragedy? No one was stopping us. Yet we did not see this great human tragedy as being worth the trouble to bring our technology to bear. We survived on a mere minute of footage for days. The death of 140,000 souls compels, I think, more than one minute. Not all the failures of the satellite age are caused by the military.

The ease with which the promise of satellites could be subverted by the control of military has been commented on frequently. But the Gulf War presented another problem. Sixteen hundred correspondents and crews were accredited to the Coalition Command in Saudi Arabia alone — 400 more than Eisenhower had to worry about for the entire liberation of Western Europe. Eighty per cent of the correspondents had to watch General Schwarzkopf's briefings in overflow rooms or on closed circuit in their hotel rooms. Brian Stewart, *The Journal's* correspondent in Saudi Arabia and one of the first into liberated Kuwait, suggests we call the gulf conflict "The School Bus War." Everybody was moved around in the same rickety yellow school buses we find throughout the world, convoys carrying hasty assortments of Finns, Canadians, Brazilians and Kansas City affiliates to Kafji or a shoe factory.

This is an important point that needs to be signalled: the "Gee-Whiz Our Man in the Gulf" syndrome that hit American news and actually began with the Reykjavik summit. Governments have realized in this decade that the local press is likely to be less critical than the national

— David Gergen is credited with using this as a White House strategy in the Reagan years — but it is clearly a military strategy today. The local police reporter or late night anchor is unlikely to be practised in military affairs, and at any rate, has been brought over to do a human interest feature on the home-town reserve unit, which invariably yields a boosterist our-boys-are-ready-to-kick-ass report.

Governments have also learned that it's better to have Secretary Baker interviewed for three minutes by 15 grateful morning shows and six o'clock newscasts in a row than to subject him to a half-hour interrogation by the Middle East correspondents of the *Times* or *Nightline*.

The congestion of the press at the source of the story is playing into the censor's hands. We have to develop acceptable alliances and pools among ourselves, or they will do it for us. We have to set up independent, ad-hoc syndication systems, non-political pool feeds. Otherwise, governments' press strategies, and the sheer numbers of the press will continue reducing many world events to the level of mass-photo opportunities.

We have allowed competition to theatricalize our war. "Our Man at the Berlin Wall" has replaced "Our Man at the Academy Awards." The affirmation of presence has become the standard of veracity. It's a competition for the backdrop — the Berlin Wall, or the blue domes of the Dahran Hotel.

I call it cargo-cult journalism. In the film *Mondo Cane* there was a poignant portrait of a near-Stone Age tribe in the Pacific whose territory abutted a U.S. air force base. Seeing huge transport planes regularly unloaded with food and riches for the troops, they concluded that the control tower was attracting the huge silver birds, and the film portrays the pathetic bamboo control tower built by the villagers to attract the silver bird to their land.

In the same way, a latex map, "Our Man in Amman," and a shirt with epaulettes has become the cargo-cult journalism of the satellite age. If I'm standing here live, and there's a minaret behind me, then I'm a journalist and you should believe me.

I think the Gulf War has seen the cresting of this live ersatz, this three-minute Baker interview, this assumption that immediacy is veracity, and has delivered everyone to the military PR man and the government minder. The *Saturday Night Live* character with the satellite dish on his head is the beginning of society rejecting this bizarre and grotesque journalistic by-product of the competition induced by the people-meter and the zapper.

Why do I think it's dying? First, of course, everyone's going to go broke. More important, the editorial currency itself is devalued. Too many pretend-CNNs. Too



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many news directors who bought the idea that CNN, instead of being a very unique and, I think, honorable niche in television, was the only way to do television information in the zapper age, that this was television itself. This was a misreading of CNN itself, which has considerable prepared programming, a worldwide bureau system and a lot of foreign-produced material.

Instead, the jargon of McLuhan was used to justify the purity of the instant — a convenient philosophy by which we could dismiss the need to have foreign bureaus, learned correspondents, proper archival systems, farm teams that develop experienced and seasoned editors. Out went the documentary units, out went the special reports units, exchanged for a worship of the moment.

But competition requires differentiation. And I believe that for sheer competitive reasons, after the fever of the gulf, you are going to see the special report and documentary units rescued from the trash bin. You are going to see competition that advertises the breadth and depth of a correspondent. There will be a yearning for the Cronkite model rather than the here-I-am-in-Afghanistan anchor, and people will remember that Morrow did speak live from the roof of Broadcasting House, yes, but he spent two hours writing the script.

I believe this shift will occur not for nostalgic reasons, but because this *is*, for goodness sake, the anti-zapper strategy. Differentiation and quality, the wise players will realize, are the correct commercial strategies in the era we face.

Just as a magazine or a publishing house essentially advertises its stable of writers, so the news strategy of the '90s, I think, will become to assemble the most authoritative figures and journalists. This happened before, when the roller-coaster competition of radio stabilized into the great news departments of the late '30s and '40s, and commentators and correspondents became your competitive edge in information.

Differentiation in form will rehabilitate the documentary and the CBS special reports tradition. It will be different in the grammar of today, but it will be high-ratio journalism. One-to-one low-ratio morning show journalism dictated by whoever's doing the book circuit that week ceases to be a valid strategy when the movie star or author has appeared 20 times on 20 channels in the same day, interviewed from the same hotel his agent booked.

I'm not unhappy that the press is opening its veins publicly about the Gulf War. One should never discourage doubt in an industry so resistant to self-examination. The military of both sides certainly made short shift of the hubris of the live living-room war. Half of the footage shot in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, I'm told, still hasn't cleared the Pentagon censors.

But I'm not prepared to be one of the pallbearers of

the satellite age. I'd like to say a word about the real promise of the satellite and one of the great victories of journalism in the Gulf War:

Who said the satellite's virtue lay in its instantcy? In the early promise of the technology, we spoke of defeating distance. We used words like "link" instead of "live." the great promise of the satellite age was pluralism. The monopoly of opinion and comment would be destroyed. We would hear people from the University of Cairo. We would link with Islamabad and Amman. Never again would the Arab point of view have to come from the local university. We would also defeat the inner-distance of our own countries and continents.

The dream was to defeat distance. It was hijacked to defeat time. Brian Stewart makes a very important observation which has not really sunk in: this is the first war in the history of humanity where the representative of the other belligerent appeared almost nightly in the homes of the world.

On our networks, my memories of the war were links to Cairo to Mubarak's advisers, to political scientists, historians and politicians in Amman, in Jerusalem, in Iran; debates between figures in Moscow and Washington; links between Ottawa, Berlin and London debating the morality of a course of action of the moment.

And of that part of the journalistic war, I'm very proud. I think it's of landmark importance that it has become socially and politically acceptable for our teenage children to watch a war debated between Arab, African and European leaders and analysts. Just think of the scale of change between this and the Korean War, or the Pacific War.

The Gulf War represents the defeat of the live-at-any-cost school of journalism, the defeat of the local live-eye fever born out of the frenzy of local eyewitness newsrooms and applied to a global theatre. I'll happily be a pallbearer at that funeral. But in the faces and the debates I saw on the screens from Baghdad, Amman, Jerusalem and Moscow, I think we saw the glimmer of a pluralism, a willingness to hear a different view, a premise that it is not treasonous to debate an action or a policy.

And in that pluralism, in that defeat of distance rather than time, I think we also saw in the war the first vindication of the early promise of the satellite age. □

Mark Starowicz is executive producer for CBC's Midday and the Journal. This essay is taken from a speech he delivered in Ottawa recently at a seminar on The Role of the Media in International Conflict. Starowicz noted in his text that "I'm grateful to Brian Stewart of the Journal whose observations on his experiences in the war helped me with these remarks."

Sex, lies and videotext

By Matthew Fraser

Like so many bizarre and sordid crimes, this one was uncovered by an unwitting cop making a routine check on an automobile.

The car in question had been in a minor accident just outside of Lyons, France. Behind the wheel was an attractive, well-dressed young woman, a high-school teacher with a degree in history.

But not only was the car she was driving stolen, in the trunk there was a briefcase stuffed with credit cards, forged cheques and assorted other pieces of identification — all belonging to men.

Arrested and charged with theft and fraud, the accused promptly revealed the curious nature of her one-woman racket.

Posing as a sadomasochist love artist, for months she had been visiting the homes of masochistic men whose fetish was "dominant" women. She would strip her client naked, tie him to a chair and tape his eyes while spitting the customary insults at him. And then, while the sucker sat there, excited but helpless, she would rummage through his jacket pockets and calmly strut out of the place with his money, his credit cards and, sometimes, the keys to his car.

Before leaving, she would always be sure to take a Polaroid snapshot of her victim, naked and ridiculous and writhing. Understandably, not a single one of these guys had ever gone to the police.

How did this perversely clever woman find her victims? Through Minitel, a network of interactive videotext terminals that is now in more than 6 million homes

throughout France. With Minitel, France is now the world leader in interactive videotext. Launched by the French government in 1985, a Minitel terminal can be used for a whole range of transactions — buying stocks, reserving a plane ticket or hotel room, checking out ads for

Minitel, democracy in France is live-to-air.

Most popular of all, though, is the so-called "Minitel Rose." Through special phone numbers, it connects at any given moment thousands of electronic adventurers living out their sexual fantasies on a keyboard. There is even a hit pop song in France, Goodbye Marie-Lou, about a love affair that never goes beyond the Minitel terminal.

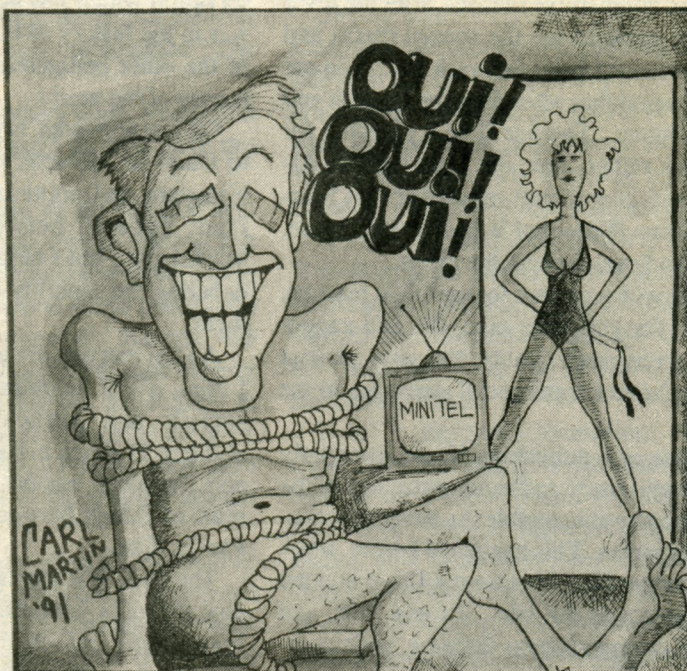
But for many Minitel addicts, it does go further. Discreet encounters are arranged with supposedly anonymous interlocutors. And that is where the problems begin. Stories are beginning to appear in the French press about thefts, rapes and even murders with the Minitel Rose at their origin.

Why, it might be asked, is the French government not putting a stop to this newfangled — and potentially antisocial — form of electronic pornography?

There are three reasons. First, it would constitute a violation of freedom of expression. Second, unlike Protestant peoples, the French are, for the most part sublimely indifferent to moral outrage about the sordid side of sex. And thirdly, the French government is frankly making a fortune on Minitel Rose.

What has happened to our phony female sadist from Lyons?

She was sentenced to two years in jail and fined 10,000 francs, or roughly \$2,000. She was released after two months, though, and has apparently since traded in her whips and ropes for a steady job in marketing. □



used cars or simply finding a phone number. It can also be used to find a sexual partner with similar fetishes.

Canada had been France's chief competitor in the videotext market. Indeed, the Canadian system, called Telidon, was announced with great hoopla by the Liberal government in the early 1980s. But Telidon turned out to be a lemon because of one fatal flaw: it wasn't interactive.

It is precisely the interactivity that has made Minitel a hit with the French. Television viewers are urged to go to their Minitel keyboards and send in questions to talk-show guests. And if the guest is a politician, instant popularity polls are taken to assess his performance. With

Adapted from a column that first appeared in the *Montreal Gazette*. Reprinted with permission.

Matthew Fraser is a Canadian journalist studying in Paris.

Getting the disease right

By Richard Starr

A cardinal rule of journalism is to get the name right. By that criterion alone, we've been doing a pretty lousy job reporting on people with environmental sensitivities.

Over the past 10 years, Canadian reporters — myself included — have covered the illness, sporadically. We've described people with a wide range of chronic, often debilitating symptoms — including severe headaches, fatigue, abdominal pains, respiratory problems and nervous system disorders. We've said those symptoms are caused by exposure to low levels of chemicals and other substances in the environment. We've reported estimates — there are no official figures — that as many as 15,000 Canadians may suffer from the illness.

We've given the condition more names than Fred Demara, the great imposter, has. We've dubbed it the 20th Century Disease, Bio-Ecological Illness, Environmental Illness, Total Allergy Syndrome, Environmental Hypersensitivity, and Multiple Chemical Sensitivity.

Sometimes we hedge our bets. One recent *Globe and Mail* story called it 20th Century Disease in the headline and Multiple Chemical Sensitivity in the body of the story. An earlier piece in the *Globe* had Environmental Illness in the headline and Environmental Hypersensitivity in the story.

This lack of precision can't be blamed on journalists alone. It mirrors the confusion among the experts, who are divided over the cause, diagnosis, treatment and even the existence of the illness.

Even a proposed new name is not much help. Health and Welfare Canada conducted a workshop on environmental sensitivities last year. It recommended that the condition henceforth be called Idiopathic, Poly-system, Symptom Complex which means a condition of un-

known cause whose symptoms span many organs of the body.

But according to Chris Brown, getting the name wrong is the least of the media's sins when it comes to reporting on environmental sensitivities.

Brown is the president of the Ottawa branch of the Allergy and Environmental Health Association. He was diagnosed as environmentally sensitive in 1980. A journalist until 1984, he is now a tenacious advocate for people with environmental sensitivities.

There has been much to advocate. Be-

**Media have stigmatized people
with environmental sensitivities**

cause standard physical examinations and lab tests can't find a cause, many patients have had trouble getting adequate medical care or disability benefits. For the same reasons, they've carried a stigma. Unable to apply a familiar label to their illness, they've had to deal with doctors, family members or employers who say, "It's all in your head."

Brown takes issue with some of the tags journalists have hung on the illness. For example, he says evidence of environmental sensitivities pre-dates the 20th century. But his main criticism is that journalists have helped in stigmatizing people with environmental sensitivities.

I first heard from Brown in late 1989 when I was working for the now defunct CBC radio program, *Media File*. He called to say that his organization was going to give Mock Human Rights Awards to a couple of CBC journalists. The awards, which were never presented, were for covering the story of an environmentally sensitive woman who had been evicted from her home in Smith

Falls, Ontario. She couldn't find another place to live that didn't make her sick.

The story made the news in 1983 when Brown was working as a writer/broadcaster at CBOT in Ottawa. Journalists quoted doctors who disagreed with the diagnosis of environmental sensitivities and suggested that the cause was psychological. At the same time, they ignored information that legitimated the woman's claim — including the fact that she was on a disability pension and that the Ontario Medical Insurance Plan had been paying some of the costs of treat-

ment for environmental sensitivities for years. Brown says the coverage left the impression that the woman's claim was fraudulent.

The Ottawa media were not alone in reporting stories that questioned the mental state of people with environmental sensitivities. During the mid '80s, a *Globe and Mail* headline announced, "Twentieth Century Disease psychosomatic, MD says," and the *Toronto Star* declared, "Twentieth Century Disease may mask mental illness - MD."

Chris Brown says that just because doctors can't find a physical cause for someone's illness doesn't give them licence to jump to the conclusion that the cause is psychological. As he puts it: "People should not be trashed on the basis of an absence of information." Journalists, he says, should demand hard evidence before passing along such "trashing," even if it's coming from professionals.

In making such an assertion, Brown could be accused of that chronic sin of media bashers, shooting the messenger. But it seems to me that reporters can't dodge criticism that easily.

In 1985, the Thomson Report on Environmental Hypersensitivities criticized the way the media have framed the story. The report expressed "unease" at the polarization of attitudes on environmen-

tal sensitivities "often fuelled by media reports that highlight ... extreme positions."

A quick survey turns up several examples of such polarized reporting.

On one pole are doctors who adamantly insist that there is no such thing as environmental sensitivity and that the symptoms have other causes, usually psychological.

On the other side, journalists present a smaller embattled group of doctors, called clinical ecologists, who hold that the environment is making their patients sick. They treat those patients with a technique known as provocation-neutralization and hospitalize them in specially designed ecological units at a cost of up to \$50,000 a month. Their stories are told under headlines like "An allergic reaction to modern life," which topped a *Maclean's* story in 1981.

Sometimes the two positions get presented in the same story. An eight-page spread in *Harrowsmith* in 1982, sympathetic to the claims of the clinical ecologists, bore the headline "The Pariah ... Syndrome: The world they knew rejects them and the world they know can kill them. They are the victims of a poisoned environment, and they may just be the first." The story told the tale of a woman from Port Carling, Ontario who had to wear a gas mask whenever she left her home.

The article also carried the comments of the naysayers. One immunologist said clinical ecologists "rip people off ... they take people whom no one can help because of psychological problems and say it's an allergic thing."

The coverage hasn't evolved much in the 10 years since that *Harrowsmith* piece appeared. A front-page article in the *Globe and Mail* last summer, called "Living in isolation," told the sad story of a woman from Barrie, Ontario. She faced the prospect of paying out of her own pocket part of the cost of treatment at a \$1,000-a-day clinic in Texas.

The obligatory naysayer, an immunologist at St. Michael's Hospital, was quoted as describing environmental

sensitivity as "hocus-pocus medicine" and declaring, "They're making a non-disease into a disease."

Reporting like that upsets Brown, and not just because he takes issue with the views of the medical establishment. He acknowledges that many of the claims of the clinical ecologists are unproven. He says that he and others who are environmentally sensitive don't even subscribe to them. Yet, whenever the plight of people like him is discussed, journalists trot out the dispute over clinical ecology.

He says journalists "continue to focus on a puddle of controversy, ignoring an ocean of acceptance and legitimacy in officialdom."

The acceptance and legitimacy is coming from a group of doctors, health bureaucrats, human rights commissioners, and even some politicians. They don't know what causes the disability or how to treat it. But they do believe that people with the disability are ill and deserve the same rights as anyone else who is sick.

There are a number of examples that have received scant attention:

- In 1986, the Thomson committee told the Ontario government that whatever the cause, people with

environmental sensitivities definitely were sick and "should not be caught in the medical debate about this problem."

- In 1988, Federal Human Rights Commissioner Max Yalden wrote to Health Minister Jake Epp: "We owe it to people to be more public and more vocal in acknowledging that sensitivities are a true medical problem."
- In early 1991, Health and Welfare Canada sent the report from its workshop on environmental sensitivities to doctors across the country urging "respect and support" for people with environmental sensitivities.

If we as journalists want to keep writing about environmental sensitivities, maybe we should be looking for some new angles. Perhaps we should be examining how Health and Welfare is slowly changing attitudes within the medical profession. That may not be as exciting as a story pitting clinical ecologists against mainstream medicine, but at least we would be advancing the story — and not trashing people. □

Richard Starr is a CBC producer in Halifax and former host of Media File.

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Media insensitive to a real problem

By Chris Brown

We have a grandmother in our Ottawa branch who can't understand all the fuss about environmental sensitivities. She's had sensitivities all her life. So did her grandmother.

Environmental sensitivities, as experienced doctors know, have been around for generations.

Nonetheless, as the press has reported, some doctors and health officials have stated the problems are all in the mind.

People with emotional problems who can't cope with a psychiatric diagnosis somatize disabling reactions and latch on to a more socially acceptable diagnosis. Reporters pass this on as expert opinion, and deal with objections as if our feelings have been hurt by what may be the truth.

There's a lot more than hurt feelings at stake. Families have broken up when one spouse decides, on the basis of "expert opinion," that the other is just not trying. Professional reputations and careers have been ruined. Doctors have caused increased disability by ignoring these concerns.

Then there's the fact of the reactions themselves. A 1985 Ontario government study lists symptoms affecting various systems of the body, with effects ranging from mild discomfort to serious disability. One woman I know loses the use of her legs when exposed to Ottawa's relatively mild pollution. Others experience central nervous system reactions including anxiety, depression, hallucina-

tions, learning and behavioral disabilities, emotional changes and so on. Reactions are very individual or idiosyncratic. Sometimes, when I'm having a bad reaction, I can't write more than two words. My brain slows down. Some have called this an *idiotic* reaction!

Fortunately, reactions are relatively easy to avoid with co-operation. However, because of attitudinal pollution, some have had a hard time getting the small amount of co-operation needed to

If you're going to tell your readers that there are bigots out there, tell them the consequences. And give them an idea of the quality of work such comments are based on.

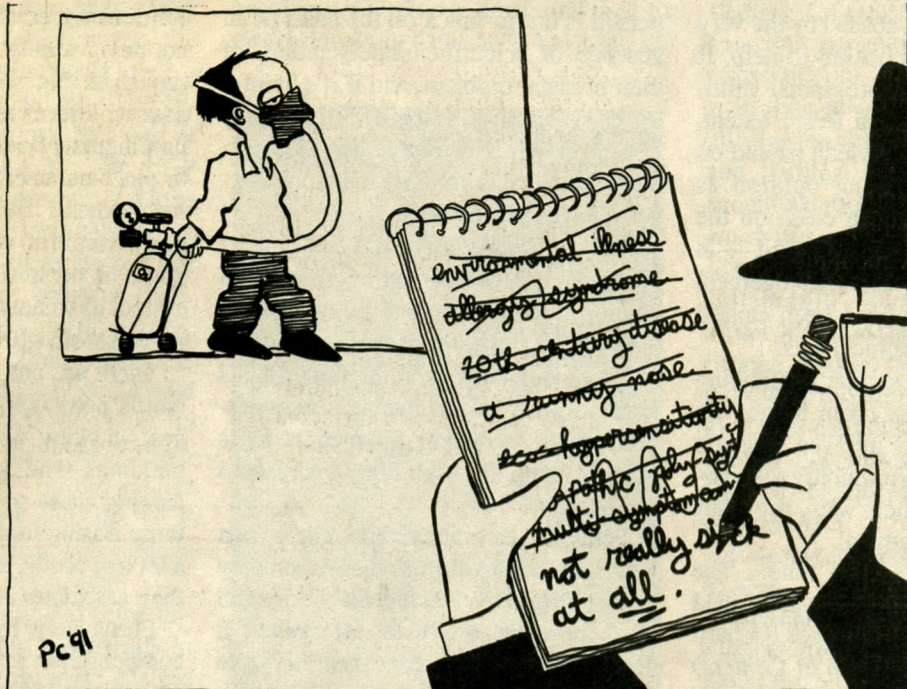
For instance, most of the "critical" studies that have been done have criticized — often legitimately — clinical ecology as a theory explaining our experience, and have not questioned the experience itself. But over and over again, reporters get the two separate sub-

jects confused. It's as if we exist only by virtue of some doctor's theory. Read Sartre. Or Socrates.

Some outrageously illogical studies have proudly surmised that because not all the problems are caused by immune dysfunction, the rest are psychosomatic. One study correctly observed that of two dozen patients, slightly more than half had central nervous system symptoms. Ignoring the fact that sen-

sitivities can affect the central nervous system, the author confidently decided that the tens of thousands of diagnosed cases of environmental sensitivities around the world were all in the mind. Ignoring the obvious problem with her sample size, that's as logical, ethical and scientific as saying there's no such thing as brain tumors because people with brain tumors develop psychiatric symptoms. At least one suicide has been directly linked to abuses based on this one study.

Meanwhile, reporters generally leave out the fact that there were scores of



prevent disabling reactions. There have been several suicides of people overwhelmed by the consequences of unnecessary attitudinal pollution.

I'm not suggesting that it's wrong to report doctors shouting hocus-pocus. It should be exposed. But with these consequences at stake, surely such statements must be backed by evidentiary reason and due process. Surely, wholesale disparaging remarks about diverse members of a disabled group are out of line, unless you're into crip-bashing.

All I ask is that they be put in context.

supportive scientific studies over the past two centuries. Former Judge George Thomson and a panel of doctors appointed by the Ontario Ministry of Health declared in 1985 that it was "clearly untenable" to state that "all the identified patients are emotionally ill." Their work was based on clinical evidence, patient submissions and literature dating back decades. Even if all the scientific and medical evidence that is available were ignored, it would still be unethical to bring people's experiences and reputations into question on the basis of an absence of information. Human rights people call this "arbitrary interference".

The great sin is that the environmentally sensitive have been abused by the very authorities now in a position to help. If medical associations, provincial ministries of health and, to a lesser extent, major media outlets — which passed on unsubstantiated damaging opinion as credible — were to come clean on the issues, it would involve an implicit — in some cases explicit — acknowledgement that serious damages have been caused through a chain of unethical acts.

Our fight has been similar to climbing Mount Cashel. It has taken longer because authorities have allowed abuse to continue, unwilling to implicitly acknowledge that compliance with previous abuse was simply unethical.

But let's end on a high note. The woman in Smiths Falls who was trashed by pack journalism in 1983 (see Richard Starr's article in this edition of *Content*) has a new house, renovated to lessen indoor pollution with disabled program grants from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Health and Welfare recently started to address attitudes in the health community, thanks to Dr. Bruce Halliday, M.P., chair of the Standing Committee on Human Rights, and to Perrin Beatty, former minister of health. Margaret Cately-Carlson, the new deputy minister, has been an important player.

It will be interesting to see which provincial ministries of health lend a hand. A new deputy minister of health in

Ontario recently pledged support for action on attitudinal concerns.

The chief commissioners of both the Canadian and Ontario human rights commissions have denounced the abuse. Members of three federal parties have spoken out in the House of Commons. Government and non-government organizations are helping with accessibility issues and special needs. Many of our more seriously affected members are receiving disability pensions from both government and private plans. We even get tax deductions for medical expenses from Revenue Canada.

If you're writing a story, do us a favor. Ask yourself if it's right to suggest a person is out-to-lunch on the basis of an absence of scientific understanding of their medical problem, and if it's helpful to pass on this suggestion to your audience. If your outlet has the guts, there's a story in the fact that such suggestions have been made.

Ask a medical ethicist if it's ethical for doctors to use their patient's credibility as cannon fodder when defending their theories, whatever those theories may be. Ask a human rights commissioner if it's legal to put forward damaging suggestions about a person or group on the basis of their having a disability. Understand harassment.

Think of the emperor's clothes when you hear doctors dismiss that which they do not understand as hocus-pocus, and look for evidentiary reason. When it comes to this topic, education, a white coat and a prestigious position do not an expert make, for the issue is not one of science, it is how we act while not omniscient.

There are some very serious issues held up by the hocus-pocus debate. For instance, Marion Boyd, when she was minister of education in Ontario, stated that sensitivities should be considered a possible contributing factor to learning and behavioral disabilities in kids in schools. Waterloo-Wellington and Halton school boards are leaders in this field, with many others beginning to follow.

Is the school board in your area abus-

ing kids with this disability? Does it put kids in environments that can cause susceptible kids to develop it? Do some kids face accessibility barriers in "accessible" schools?

Does your municipality co-operate with people who have sensitivities, the way Chemlawn does in Ottawa, by keeping a registry and giving advance notice of paving operations? Has your transit system dealt with access issues? Is your local health unit informed or stalling?

There are recommendations from several authorities, including one from the former federal health minister, that sensitivities should be ruled out before potentially detrimental psychiatric interventions are embarked on. So far, that's not being widely acted on, with the consequence that some patients are being caused increased disability because psychiatrists prescribe neuroleptic drugs, or place patients in hospitals with building sickness. How many of Canada's 10 daily suicides result from psychiatric abuse of persons whose central nervous system dysfunction is caused by undiagnosed sensitivities?

There are untold horror stories in the North, particularly because of diet changes, smoking and extremely unhealthy buildings. The consequences of acknowledging these problems are as great as those arising from denial, but one hell of a lot less costly, not only to victims but to their associates and to society as a whole.

Fortunately, by setting aside issues of compensation and retribution, we're winning the fight. But it's hard to know if this is bringing justice to those who are being abused. Jacob Timmerman writes of this dilemma in Chile. If you press for justice for the abused, the abusers, like doctors, have totalitarian powers, and you will not achieve social change. If the abusers are powerful, you must first achieve change. Justice comes later. Or maybe charity on the part of the survivors.

We'll think about it. □

Chris Brown is president of the Ottawa Branch of the Allergy and Environmental Health Association.

An Uncertain Mirror

Quality of native newspapers reflects budget woes

By Joël Demay

The axe had fallen and in its sweeping blow, it had maimed ... but it would also reveal.

The cabinet decision made Feb. 20, 1990, shook Gordon Big Canoe, native communications program manager at the Native Citizens Directorate of Secretary of State Canada. Three days later, native communications societies across the country received the same news in writing: the \$3.45-million budget of the 16-year-old program would not be a part of the March federal budget. The NCP would die. Native communications societies were suddenly losing their core financial support as well as support for special communications projects, training, community radio maintenance, media workshops and some capital expenses. A six-month grace period would be provided until September, 1990, to allow those affected to make other arrangements, but the truth of the matter remained: by summer's end, the NCP would be no longer. In fact, many things would not be the same in Canada.

The funding cuts revealed some uncertainties, some frailties, specifically in the sector of the NCP mandate dealing native newspapers. Immediately after the cuts, the fate of the newspapers was the subject of much speculation. The uncertainties had been there long before the axe was sharpened, and the NCP had not minded them. Today, however, they should be addressed and solved if the aboriginal print media is to be left standing once the dust of that political exercise in extermination settles.

The first and most obvious uncertainty that the 1990 budget cuts revealed was the financial instability that any person who has ever been involved with a native communications society in Canada

knows well. A systematic overview of recent history shows how the financial base of the native print media of Canada has been kept shaky, preventing those media from finding a firm economic footing in their respective communities.

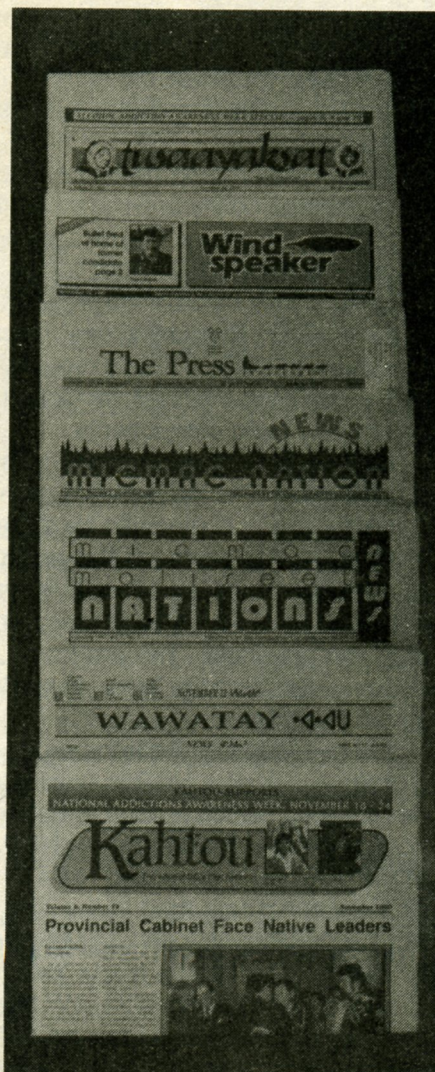
Indeed, if the past 20 years has shown anything to native communications professionals in Canada, it has been the

federal government's lack of determination to commit itself unequivocally vis-à-vis the native communications societies. The fate of the societies was often left teetering in the balance. In 1984, Ben Crowfoot sent a letter on behalf of all the societies, asking the minister of the day, Walter McLean, "Funding is the main concern: are we facing cutbacks or termination?"

In spite of what could be considered a 20-year training in roller-coaster finance and politics, the 1990 total shutdown caught the native media by surprise. *Micmac News* editor Clifford Paul sums it up: "To say it was a shock is an understatement!" Barry Zellen, editor of *Tusaayaksat* in Inuvik, Northwest Territories, reports, "Newspaper employees' lives were profoundly affected ... (we had a) 50-per-cent cut in personnel, no new capital purchases, no ongoing maintenance, therefore frequent breakdown of equipment."

It seems that the once normal attitude of always fearing the worse had relaxed somewhat after the NCP had been made supposedly permanent in 1987. That proved to be unwise. The government's meaning of the word permanent was conditional. In a discussion paper prepared by the Department of the Secretary of State for the 1988 annual consultation meeting between the department and the native communications societies, *permanent* was defined: "Until the federal cabinet wants to make changes it is not necessary for cabinet or Treasury Board to approve funding to the program on a regular basis."

That financial uncertainty was emphasized by the 1990 shutdown of the NCP. *Kahtou's* managing editor, Ron Barbour, described it as "an atrocity ...



ruthless ... reckless" and denounced the absence of preparations made to deal with the severe financial consequences of the program's cancellation. Hank Shade, general manager of *Kainai News*, underlined the shock the organization felt at the NCP's cancellation. He said the organization was used to receiving grants and had not developed a business attitude. On the contrary, it had developed a "dependency on federal funding." The paper was not prepared to become financially self-sufficient.

For Doug Cuthand, former editor of the *Saskatchewan Indian*, the cuts could not have come at a worse time, forcing the Saskatchewan Indian Media Corporation to shut down and the magazine to fold "when it was needed most, the whole country being in the turmoil."

The cuts have had some effects that few could have foreseen, least of all the federal government, which, according to former NCP staff, was surprised to see communication societies survive at all. In Vancouver, Barbour notes that *Kahtou* has become more independent and has improved its marketing skills since the NCP was cancelled. True, the paper was already in the process of improving its marketing skills and was able to use this head start after the cuts; however, it was Ottawa that had pushed the society toward the financial independence it had always sought.

The past year was not an easy one at *Kahtou*, published by the Native Communications Society of British Columbia. The paper was on the brink of death.

"The bank balance was down to zero," says managing editor Ron Barbour. But because of the organization's "financial viability," it has been able to access regular credit from the bank.

There is no turning back for the Vancouver-based *Kahtou* — the future lies in commercial newspaper publishing.

At *Kainai News*, the cuts have forced publishers to face a dilemma: should they remain a non-profit organization or should they become a profit-oriented medium like most other print media in this country? It seems that here too, the

Native newspaper funding

Following is a year-by-year chronology of the funding history of the Native Communications Program:

1970 — The Department of Secretary of State Canada assumes funding responsibilities for a number of native organizations, including the Alberta Native Communications Society. The society was to be used as a model for native communications activity in Canada. It receives \$139,012 in financing.

1971 — The federal government spends \$701,003 in two provinces. Ninety-three per cent of the money goes to Alberta and seven per cent to B.C.

1972 — Through Secretary of State, \$581,000 is spent on native communications, mainly in Alberta, B.C. and in the Northwest Territories. Treasury Board underlines, however, that this does not represent a commitment for future years.

1973 — Secretary of State spends \$691,109 on native communications. More than 50 per cent of the money is spent in Alberta, the rest goes to organizations across the country.

1974 — The so-called experimental phase of native communications funding ends. Cabinet approves a one-year native communications policy, which does not cover the North. The Native Communications Program is granted a five-year mandate and its expenditures are set and approved at \$1,300,000.

A two-year funding agreement is passed with the Alberta Native Communications Society and the Indian News Media, also of Alberta.

1975 — Treasury Board approves 20 grants to societies across the country, totalling \$1,546,000.

1976 — As a result of the program plan approved by Treasury Board, most of the Native Communications Program is decentralized. From then on, the Secretary of State Canada regional offices manage roughly three-quarters of the monies of the NCP: the core funding, training, special projects and the community radio components.

1978 — Ten native communications societies are funded by the NCP.

1979/80 — The NCP operates on a series of short extensions.

1981 — NCP is renewed for three years.

1983 — The Northern Native Broadcast Access Program is established to provide funds to 13 native communications societies undertaking television and radio broadcasting in the territories and the northern portions of seven provinces. The program's budget is set at \$9.3 million. The NCP budget — its financial "poor cousin" — is kept at \$3.4 million until its death seven years later.

1984 — Treasury Board approves extension of the NCP for one year.

1985 — A new NCP is approved for two years. National Native Communications, which is soon to become the National Aboriginal Communications Society, is included in the NCP and approved in principle. The total cost of the program is increased to \$4.2 million, which includes the establishment of a capital assets fund in the amount of \$560,000. But, the mandates of both organizations expire in March of the next year.

1987 — The NCP is made "permanent." It funds 13 societies. One million is added to the \$3.4-million NCP regular budget, mainly for capital expenses.

1990 — The 1990-91 budget in April cancels the NCP. A six-month grace period makes that cancellation effective Oct. 1, 1990. □

emphasis has fallen on profit. General manager Hank Shade hopes the long-term effects of the cuts will foster a more competitive attitude, better marketing and greater self-reliance.

Micmac News did not publish from October, 1990, to February, 1991, and during that time, the paper reorganized its operations. Starting Feb. 22, 1991, a weekly newspaper was published with money from subscriptions, advertising and a bingo project. "We struggled to obtain funding from year to year and our struggle will continue to become self-sufficient," states editor Clifford Paul.

The cancellation of the NCP forced the Wawatay Native Communications Society to delay the expansion of its newspaper *Wawatay*. One year later, however, through sacrifices, genuine marketing efforts, special communication projects from the provincial and the federal governments, translation contracts and some assistance from the

broadcasting arm of the society, the biweekly paper is expanding, having just entered the Thunder Bay market. And it still publishes in both English and Ojibwe syllabics.

As a consequence of the NCP cancellation, the *Native Press* was transferred from the Native Communications Society of the Western Northwest Territories to its corporate arm, DM Communications Ltd., that now fully controls the newspaper. The newspaper became a weekly in June, 1990, and changed its format and its name Nov. 1, 1990.

According to Catherine Macquarrie, executive director of the Western Northwest Territories society, the *Press Independent* wants to be "every northerner's comprehensive quality source for northern issues." The newspaper is trying to strike the right balance between native and non-native stories that will appeal to the Yellowknife market and still reflect the paper's roots.

The 1990 budget cuts gave rise to a second uncertainty of the First Nations' print media, that of their news content and the role they would play in the contemporary society from which they had sprung. Thus, *Kahtou* is supposed to "inform the people of British Columbia's First Nations" — as stated in its policy — who are very diverse and spread through a vast area. This is a challenge for both coverage and distribution. A reorientation toward economic self-reliance and profits will undoubtedly affect the sort of goals the newspaper will be able to set for its content and its role.

Kainai News has adapted by placing more emphasis on the local news and cutting down on the coverage of national issues. This does not mean, however, that *Kainai News* wants to become a southern Alberta-oriented newspaper. General manager Hank Shade acknowledges that the native organization will have to market the paper in non-native com-

Southam Fellowships for Journalists 1992-93 University of Toronto

The objective of these Fellowships is to encourage improvement in journalism by offering qualified men and women an opportunity to broaden their knowledge by study in a university setting. For the academic year at the University of Toronto, from September, 1992, to May, 1993, up to five Canadian journalists will be chosen from the applicants by the selection committee.

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

A parallel, extra-curricular activity is arranged, where Southam Fellows meet regularly in informal seminars to discuss contemporary issues off the record with distinguished figures from journalism, business, education, and other professions, as well as from the arts, public service, and academic disciplines.

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

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

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

Deadline is March 1, 1992, and early application is advised. Selections are announced in late April.

munities and "expand its distribution to Europe and the U.S.A. This may have an effect on the choice of stories published by the organization and read by Indian and native societies."

After a fall and a winter sleep of several months, the *Saskatchewan Indian* was resurrected by the owner of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. Ironically, the publishing of the paper was contracted out to the editor of the Métis paper *New Breed*. This development is very recent and it is not yet known whether or not the new *Saskatchewan Indian* will match its predecessor in original Indian journalism, historical information, syllabics content and personality.

In Inuvik, Northwest Territories, *Tusaayaksat's* very structure was affected by the cancellation of the NCP.

Apart from maintenance problems, editor Barry Zellen says, "The paper is forced to operate on a shoestring budget. Travel to the communities we serve had to be eliminated. (The program cuts) forces the newspaper to operate ... in a state of reaction ... like running a fire department."

Surprisingly, Zellen says that overall, the quality and frequency of the paper have improved. But in who's eyes is the success?

"We had to increase our frequency of publication from monthly to biweekly to attract ads, thereby increasing stress and overworking existing staff to keep the paper afloat."

The bridging role that native communications societies have been playing for 20 years between the native and non-native worlds has also been vividly undermined by the cuts. This bridging function was an unforeseen feature of the NCP. The impact of its removal cannot be ignored. For example, Cuthand says Saskatchewan's ministry of education recommended the *Saskatchewan Indian* for native studies curriculum material, and he says the paper was subscribed to by schools and libraries across the province. The magazine was making a real effort to "bring the barriers down" in

a province where the racial tensions are very real, he says.

The 1990 cuts have also underlined a profound political malaise in native communication circles. Indian politicians did not seem to view the cuts as an attack on a fundamental element of native culture. *Micmac News'* editor Clifford Paul says the moral and financial support received at such a time of crisis came mainly from non-native subscribers. The Assembly of First Nations also took a strong public stand. Paul says, "We were very disappointed and discouraged that native people in Atlantic Canada did not take a stronger stand regarding the elimination of Atlantic Canada's only native newspaper. The only political organization that constantly spoke out about the cancellation of the national program was the Assembly of First Nations."

While focusing on Atlantic Canada's native issues, *Micmac News* has earned a reputation of practising good and honest journalism. In his 1986 evaluation for Secretary of State, Robert Rupert wrote that the *Micmac News* does not hesitate to tackle some difficult issues: "The *Micmac News* does not shy away from controversy, nor is it afraid to criticize. When a chief was arrested by police in a violent confrontation, the *Micmac News* reporter-photographer was there. The outstanding news shots were prominently displayed in the newspaper. When the traditionally important Micmac Summer Games were a disappointment, the *Micmac News* took lethargic organizers to task. When a journalism educator criticized affirmative action journalism programs 'because they set double standards of professionalism,' the *Micmac News* reported — all the way from Vancouver."

It isn't very surprising that the Indian leadership turned their political backs on the financially troubled publication when the same publication had been a thorn in their side for so many years. It is not easy for the politicians to understand a relationship that would keep journalists at a "safe" distance.

Even in areas that were not served for

as long a time and as aggressively by native reporters as Atlantic Canada, the relationship between Indian politicians and journalists has been difficult. In most parts of the country, the chiefs and elders have been instrumental in creating the native communications societies. It took statesmanship and time for them to accept the concept of an independent media. Some have not yet accepted that notion.

Saskatchewan is a case in point. The Saskatchewan Indian Media Corporation was born in the late '80s as a belated recognition by Secretary of State that the treaty Indians of Saskatchewan were not served by the Saskatchewan Native Communications Corporation, itself controlled by the Métis and non-status Indians who were publishing *New Breed*. From the day of its birth, the Saskatchewan corporation defined itself as being at arms-length from the Indian political body of the province, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. Prior to that, in the early '70s, the federation had been the publisher of the magazine. Cuthand says that in the last four years, the politicians have feared the *Saskatchewan Indian* and its relative freedom to criticize them. When the cuts were announced, the media corporation received no tangible support from the Indian politicians in the province. Cuthand wonders if they did not in fact welcome the cuts to the NCP. Support came only from the communities themselves, at the grass roots level.

This thesis seems to be supported by the fact that a few months after its last NCP-funded issue, the *Saskatchewan Indian* was being controlled by Indian politicians, revived by them and under their control. The 1990 falling axe cut deep into the fragile political freedom the Indian press had gained in the province. If there was any uncertainty on that score, it is now clear — the press is under the guidance of the politicians.

The situation is somewhat similar to the conditions affecting the press in some less-developed countries where the political leadership insists it cannot afford criticism. What is needed, on the

contrary, they say, is support, help in mobilizing people and trust.

Native publications have not been endowed with centuries of an adversarial relationship between news media and government. On the contrary, they have inherited a traditionally respectful and obedient attitude vis-a-vis their political leaders, and they have had to do some soul-searching in this debate. Furthermore, conscious of the crucial fact that their political leadership was engaged in a difficult struggle for native self-government, and therefore needed all the support it could get from every element of the native population, the native press has often looked for a middle-of-the-road position in this debate. In effect, the cuts have radicalized that process of redefinition.

A veteran Indian journalist and former politician himself, Cuthand credits less the cuts than the evolution of the native press for such a change. The press and the journalists have matured in their self-

perception, stepping firmly out of the politician's shadow and moving clearly in the direction of independent journalistic professionalism. Both camps have learned to keep their distance. Aware of the danger of too close a relationship, chiefs, elders, and journalists show mutual respect for each other.

To conclude, questions may be asked about the First Nations' efforts to succeed, to develop, or simply to survive. How much of the native print media's new dependence on private enterprise is a reaction to the cuts and how much of it is genuine interest in this mode of operation? How long can the media keep it up? How long will this post-NCP phase last? How native are the native newspapers going to be if the training dollars are no longer available? According to the 1986 *Report on the Native Communications Program and the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program*, 85 per cent of the members of native communication societies were native people. Will the

societies have to resort to non-native people for lack of training dollars and for content reasons? In whose eyes will the natives' papers' success or failure be determined? The native communicators? The federal government's? The communities? The mainstream communications professionals? Others? What role will the native communications societies play in Canadian society tomorrow? Could it be that this country cannot afford *not* to have healthy and solid bridges of communication between mainstream Canada and aboriginal nations?

These are not easy questions, and above all, it will take time to find answers. Let's hope that when we do see the outcome, it will not be to realize that the native print media in this country have taken a certain turn for the worse. □

Joël Demay teaches communications at the University of Ottawa

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Injunction worries journalists

By Sue Montgomery

A court injunction which temporarily prevented the CBC's *Fifth Estate* from airing a controversial documentary about the former Romanian dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu, has left some journalists and their lawyers baffled and worried.

The Romanian megalomaniac, who was executed December, 1989, in a bloody and popular uprising, had let his people starve while he hoarded away as much as \$8 billion. *Fifth Estate* spent months producing an hour-long documentary about the whereabouts of the huge fortune.

On Oct. 7, the day before the show was to go to air, one of its Toronto sources read a review of the show and sought an injunction to block it.

By noon the next day, with a few hours to air time, forensic accountant Robert Lindquist and his former partner, Peat Marwick Thorne in Toronto, were battling it out with the CBC before Ontario Court Judge Abraham Mandel.

Lindquist, who, along with former RCMP assistant commissioner Rod Stamler, had been hired by the current Romanian government to track down the fortune, were alleging *Fifth Estate* was using material obtained off-the-record.

In court the next day, despite the CBC's objections, Mandel ordered *Fifth Estate* to produce a copy of the program. With the clock ticking, the lawyers and judge, some still in their black robes, left Osgoode Hall for the CBC current affairs board room at 790 Bay Street.

At 5:45 p.m. a temporary injunction was granted. *Fifth Estate* was forced to broadcast a rerun that night.

"It is my view it is important to the public that the media should be accountable not only for what it disseminates but also the manner in which it obtains what it disseminates," wrote Mandel. "...it is said that the end (the right of the public to know) justifies the means (the

manner in which the information is obtained viz the alleged breach of agreement). In my view, such a principle is self-defeating and does more harm than good in a democratic society. It dries up sources of information. It breeds cynicism. It erodes confidence."

But on Oct. 30, Ontario Court Judge Karen Weiler refused to extend the injunction on the grounds that nothing in the show breached confidentiality.

The case has caused alarm in some circles about how easy it might be for someone to use the courts to prevent something from being published or broadcast.

The dispute between Lindquist and *Fifth Estate* is over the discussion that took place before an on-camera interview last May 24 at the Peat Marwick office.

At that meeting, court documents show, Lindquist told the *Fifth Estate* crew he did not want to jeopardize the Romanian government's relationship with Peat Marwick, nor did he wish to break client confidentiality.

Producer Susan Tesky assured both Lindquist and Stamler that they had control of what they would say in the interview and could stop at any time.

Host Linden MacIntyre asked questions for 17 minutes and 40 seconds before Lindquist said, "We have to cut."

He felt Stamler was getting into too much detail and MacIntyre agreed that they would not use any part of Stamler's answer which led to the interruption.

The interview then continued on camera for another 22 minutes and 10 seconds.

But according to Lindquist's affidavit, the information he gave was to be used as background only. "It was agreed that no information provided during that interview would be aired or otherwise disclosed in a program without my consent." CBC lawyer Daniel Henry says he can't imagine any journalist making such an

agreement.

"I also found it difficult to accept that a person with his background with dealing with the media would have thought that he would have been able to negotiate the right to edit his own on camera interview," he said.

Globe and Mail columnist Stevie Cameron, who left *Fifth Estate* in April, prematurely ending a one-year contract, filed an affidavit in support of Lindquist. In it she claims she had brought the story to the CBC and had made a prior agreement with Lindquist that any information he gave her would be for background only.

Fifth Estate claims the show was in the works before Cameron was hired.

Cameron claims she was "shocked that (*Fifth Estate*) would breach so clearly the agreement entered into between Robert Lindquist and myself...

"I don't know what agreement Mr. Lindquist and Linden and Susan made after I left," she said in a phone interview. "For all I know, Bob Lindquist could have agreed to open up his deepest secrets to the *Fifth Estate* after I left.

"I was surprised to hear he had agreed to an on-camera interview because when I was first working with him that was definitely out."

Cameron is not sure the incident has harmed her relationship with Lindquist, whom she says has been a good source for many years.

"I have to defend my sources and if my sources get publicly screwed then I publicly defend them," she said. "But I was horrified when an injunction was issued to pull the show off the air because I don't believe in that."

By the time *Fifth Estate* called Lindquist Sept. 9 to ask if it could do more taping, Lindquist had left Peat Marwick Thorne to start his own forensic accounting firm. It boasts, Lindquist told the *Financial Post*, eight partners and

about two dozen employees from Peat Marwick, not to mention "all the clients."

Bryan Finlay, Lindquist's lawyer, would not comment on the case. Lindquist, reached at his new office just a few blocks north of Peat Marwick, confirmed he had taken partners with him but would not comment further.

Although the May 24 interview took place in the Peat Marwick lunchroom after the *Fifth Estate* crew had toured the offices looking for an appropriate place to shoot, the company's affidavit states it was not aware that Lindquist and Stamler were supplying information to the CBC.

Gary Colter, Peat Marwick's vice-chairman of financial advisory services, said he first found out through a review in the TV Guide that the two had spoken to the CBC.

"It's unusual for partners in our firm to go on TV with respect to client matters," he said in an interview. "Clearly we did not know. If I had seen them talking to

the press I would have asked them about it."

Further, when Peat Marwick struck the deal with the Romanian government in March, 1990, the investigation was to be confidential even though the Romanians gave the accountants permission to exchange information with journalists. The newly-installed government was also interested in improving its image in the international media.

Lindquist appears to have forgotten this element of the agreement.

"Since swearing my first affidavit I have been reminded that there was specific authorization given by the client to share information with the media as an investigative technique," he said in an additional affidavit.

This, said Henry, was a major hole in their case.

"The one major thing this case illustrates is how difficult it is to take everything into consideration in a rushed

hearing. In a democracy if you value freedom of speech, there should be a strong presumption in its favor and I don't think the presumption played nearly as large a role that it should have in the original injunction judgment.

"Hopefully this case demonstrates that there's got to be more to (seeking an injunction) than a simple allegation. If it is easy to get these kinds of injunctions, we won't be able to put programs on the air and we won't be able to advertise them in advance because we will be afraid that each time we let people know that a program is coming up, somebody's going to make an allegation that's going to derail us.

"And there are enough people who are potentially unhappy with the programming we put on that that's not a fanciful concern, it's a real one." □

Sue Montgomery is a reporter for the Canadian Press in Montreal.



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Slim thesis rests on anti-media bias

Representing Order

by Richard V. Ericson, Patricia M. Baranek and Janet B. Chan; University of Toronto Press; 383 pages

Reviewed by Warren Kinsella

This is an interesting book — interesting in the way in which one might be enthralled if, as a police or court reporter, one was strapped into a seat facing a trio of sociologists and forced to endure being denounced, over and over, as "an agent of social control" whose reportage is "redundant and simplified," "peculiar" and "bland."

In *Representing Order*, all of these insults to legal affairs journalism are rendered in the dispassionate, measured tone of the sociologist. There is nothing overt about the authors' anti-media bias — in the rarefied air of the sociologists' world, one suspects, nothing is overt or straightforward — but this weighty tone reeks of anti-media bias just the same. It is, in fact, a 383-page rant against modern journalism.

In brief, the authors' thesis is that the modern news media is, as noted, a pernicious agent of social control, whose aim is to "establish the normal, reduce equivocality, and increase predictability." That is, to *represent order* by both recording it and promoting it.

As any working journalist will know, this is the sort of territory most often occupied by conspiracy theorists, Holocaust-doubters and shopping mall patrons who believe that Elvis is still with us. To suggest — as Ericson, Baranek and Chan seemingly do — that the media's coverage of crime and legal issues is consciously directed at legitimizing the police and the state is to promote nonsense. As anyone who has ever spent five or 10 minutes in a newsroom will know, most journalists are as eager to conspire to promote police and government as they are to contract measles.

In fairness, the authors' slender thesis is not advanced without any empirical data to support it. For example, they examined 1,485 news items, all taken from a handful of Toronto print and electronic media outlets. A cynic might suggest that this is rather like reading every news item in the *Globe and Mail* for 17 successive days, then writing a lengthy book about what one learned about the world along the way. But this, in a sense, is what the authors of *Representing Order* have done.

To validate their thesis, the authors undertook a quantitative and qualitative analysis of print, radio and television stories concerned with only two news events: the murder of a 22-year-old convenience store clerk; and Ontario legislation to ban the use of lie detectors by employers.

The coverage of the first event — the beating death of a Georgian College student working part-time at a Becker's store in Alliston, Ont. — "illustrates and substantiates" the authors' core thesis, they claim: namely, that "the news media are as much an agency of policing as the law-enforcement agencies whose activities and classifications are reported on." As evidence, the authors note that the victim in the story was being *made* to appear popular, respectable, successful and innocent. The accused, meanwhile, was being *made* to appear potentially violent and deserving of condemnation.

What is obvious to everyone but the authors is that perhaps the victim *was* a popular and respected person. Perhaps the accused *did* have a propensity for violence. (After all, when led into court to face charges in the case, the accused assaulted the Alliston Police Chief and kicked a TV cameraman; to the authors, however, this was simply an understandable response to the presence of "loathsome reporters-as-vultures (sic) who prey upon those they denounce.")

With undisguised contempt, the authors go on to note that the news media seemed eager to assist the authorities in

apprehending the killer. While it is certainly true that a reporter should never actively promote a particular cause or institution, it is also true that it is permissible for a reporter to subscribe to certain popular notions, e.g., murder is bad, justice is good, etc.

But in the case of *Representing Order*, to subscribe to such conventional notions is to somehow become a lackey in the services of Big Brother. In fact, so intent are the authors in pursuing this theme that they become grossly and gratuitously offensive along the way.

In the second case-study, news coverage of the anti-lie detector law, the authors elevate what is essentially a boring news event into an overblown ideological morality play.

In particular, Ericson, Baranek and Chan take a number of runs at the *Toronto Sun*, which they identify only as "a popular newspaper," whose approach is to "play on the heart and on lower regions of the anatomy."

When the *Sun* editorializes that the government should resist the impulse to legislate private business practices, the authors eagerly seize upon the opportunity to slam the *Sun's* management for its "anti-union bias." What the pros and cons trade unionism have to do with the authors' thesis is not completely clear — but clarity, of course, is not an on-going preoccupation with this trio.

Which brings us to the final point. *Representing Order* is filled with page after page of dense, unreadable, coma-inducing prose. If this book had anything to recommend it — and it doesn't — it would be more properly read by a gaggle of sociologists, not a general audience.

If you want to get an understanding of this important subject, read Richard M. Clurman's *Beyond Malice: The Media's Year of Reckoning*.

Now that is an interesting book. □

Warren Kinsella is an Ottawa lawyer and journalist.

Political columnists strange breed

Political columnists are in their heyday. Material for columns is bountiful. There's the continuing constitutional crisis. There's the fierce debate over the state of the economy. The Mulroney government appears to be eroding. The prime minister himself is the target of darts and derision.

Political columnists represent a strange egocentric breed. They are the darling of TV panel shows. They get prime space in their own newspapers — and in an age of chain journalism, their words are often widely syndicated. They frequently have more clout than editorial writers.

Political columnists operate at a time when columnists have sprouted in a broad range of fields — sports, entertainment, business, medicine, science. On some tabloid papers, political reporters take on the trappings of columnists.

What makes an effective political columnist? First, by definition, a political columnist should be a good reporter — someone who digs for the facts as the basis of informed comment.

Second, he or she should be able to explain and interpret events for the reader.

Third, the political columnist should be an analyst capable of providing considered opinions.

Finally, a columnist should be a good writer and something of an entertainer.

Murdoch Davis, managing editor of the *Edmonton Journal*, put it another way. The columnist, he says, should be able "to get people thinking."

There are several brands of political columnists: the cerebral kind, the general purpose columnist, the economic specialist, the satirical variety and the conspiratorial columnist.

Perhaps the most quoted political columnist in Canada today is Jeffrey Simpson, who occupies the choice spot as national columnist for the *Globe and Mail*. As James Fleming says in his new book *Circle of Power*, Simpson is an intellectual who "specializes in sober analysis of weighty issues."

Simpson is strong on constitutional commentary, on an appreciation of Quebec's role in Canadian society, on what he calls the "real story of considerable agreement and groping toward honorable compromise among partisans." Simpson sometimes seems a little pompous, a little too all-knowing. And once in a while he admits he is not perfect. He did so in a column on the recent nation-wide postal dispute and proceeded to demonstrate his imperfection in that column. But overall, Simpson must be rated as among the most influential of Canadian political columnists.

In a British Columbia context, Vaughn Palmer, chief political columnist for the *Vancouver Sun*, stands out as a perceptive commentator. He has schooled himself in B.C. electoral lore and writes from this backdrop. His indictment of the much

troubled Vander Zalm administration of Social Credit was persistent and, in the end, devastating. Palmer can be expected to give the same kind of careful scrutiny to the new NDP government.

Don Macpherson of the *Montreal Gazette* delivers consistently sound assessments of the complex Quebec political scene. Macpherson has been particularly impressive in recent months following the twists and turns of Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa's thinking. Through the blur of conflicting statements by Quebec politicians on the federal constitutional proposals, Macpherson sums up Premier Bourassa's stance: "In public, at least, he is in effect asking the rest of Canada to guess what Quebec wants without committing Quebec to anything. He may be preserving precious manoeuvring room. But he's hardly bargaining in good faith."

Don McGillivray, Southam News national political affairs columnist, with an audience in 17 Southam dailies, is an experienced reporter and editor with a solid background in economics reporting. In the last couple of years, McGillivray has become increasingly critical of the Mulroney administration — its record, its procrastinations, its tendency for economic flim-flam (witness the latest "agenda for prosperity"). But those who indict McGillivray for seemingly obsessive scorn for Brian Mulroney and his colleagues forget that he was just as condemnatory of the Trudeau administration. McGillivray is an important figure among political columnists because of that wide circulation in the Southam family of newspapers.

McGillivray repeatedly accuses Mulroney and company of playing tricks with the statistics. "Lying with statistics is ridiculously easy; the hard thing is telling the truth with statistics." McGillivray asserts that Mulroney "is hanging a bum rap on the media of this country when he tells his Tory party faithful that news of the recovery is being concealed and downplayed. He gets a cheap cheer from the battered Tories, but the truth is otherwise..."

Allan Fotheringham is almost as ubiquitous as McGillivray and even more caustic. He appears in the *Toronto Sun*, *Maclean's*, magazine and the *Financial Post*. Fotheringham, writing as he did in his earlier days from B.C., engages in scarcely veiled ridicule. The prime minister is "Myron Baloney;" provincial premiers duck the issues at their annual sessions; the Vander Zalm administration was hopeless and "Premier Mom" and her short-lived reign was a disaster.

Although given to excess, Fotheringham strikes home pinpoint criticism, particularly in terms of B.C. politics.

John Dafoe, editorial page editor and columnist for the *Winnipeg Free Press*, possesses political savvy and a kind of earthy common sense. He was one of the first to delineate the ebbing

of Tory power at the federal level.

Thomas Walkom, a rising figure at the *Toronto Star*, has given the NDP government of Ontario passing grades for achievement, but this has not prevented him from chiding the Bob Rae administration for hesitancy in key areas and missteps in others.

Walkom has also given the back of his hand to the Michael Porter analysis of the Canadian economy. To Walkom, Porter is "the latest American management guru to be seated upon by desperate Canadians," to regurgitate the obvious.

Carol Goar, Ottawa-based national affairs columnist for the *Toronto Star*, is a good example of a generalist. She tackles all aspects of the political game and approaches her task from a moderately liberal stand. She is thorough, well-informed and well-motivated. But her work has a kind of schoolmasterish look. She is fond of citing three reasons for every event, three components of a program, three elements in a strategy. There could be three reasons why the Tories missed the boat, three elements in Jean Chrétien's makeup that are damaging, three weaknesses in NDP leader Audrey McLaughlin's approach. In other words, there is close-knit reasoning, but not enough passion or panache.

Two political columnists who have been labelled as con-

spiratorial journalists at times during their careers are Douglas Fisher of the *Toronto Sun* and Frank Howard, author of the Bureaucrats column in the *Ottawa Citizen*.

Fisher rumbles into print three times a week, displaying firm knowledge of the Commons and of relationships within caucus and cabinet. Fisher often explores an angle that others miss.

The *Citizen's* Frank Howard, whose career embraces work as a political correspondent in Quebec City and a stint as a senior public servant, delves into the sins and alleged sins of upper-bracket politicians and officials. He has unveiled fat-cat salaries, fancy expense accounts, special perks, payoffs and patronage over more than a decade of valuable work. Howard has done more of this kind of digging than any other columnist on the Ottawa beat.

The political columnists cited and others in the French press such as Lysianne Gagnon, Jean-Claude Leclerc and Lise Bissonnette are moving into their pre-election mode — a period when the public wants answers. Political columnists cannot fully satisfy this yearning, but they keep trying. □

Murray Goldblatt is a former journalist, broadcaster and teacher.

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Michael Harris has received double honors in the 15th annual Authors Awards for two books exposing the failings of justice and church administration in Canada.

Harris's *Unholy Orders*, dealing with the abuse of boys at Mount Cashel in Newfoundland and was named Book of the Year. *Justice Denied*, about Donald Marshall, received an award in the paperback non-fiction category.

The Authors Awards are presented annually for English-language writing in Canadian newsstand magazines and mass market paperback books. The awards are sponsored by Periodical Marketers of Canada.

Mordechai Richler was named Author of the Year for achievements in Canadian writing, while **Pierre Berton's** *The Great Depression* took first place in the paperback non-fiction category.

In the magazine field, *Maclean's* took an award for journalistic enterprise for its

special reports on the environment and the constitution.

Philip Marchand won in the personality feature category for his profile of Mordechai Richler, *Oy Mordechai*, published in *Chatelaine*. The late **Robert Allen** placed second for his article *The Swimmer* on George Young, published in *Saturday Night*.

Christian Allard's article *La Raison Economique* on the attitudes of Quebec business people toward sovereignty, published in *Canadian Business*, won the business-writing award. **Charlotte Gray** placed second for her article on the Canadian Mint, *Making a Mint*, in *Saturday Night*.

Don Gillmor won in the arts category for his article on architect Phyllis Lambert, *Concrete Errors*, in *Saturday Night*. **Gerald Hannon** placed second for a *Toronto Life* article on playwright Tomson Highway, *Tomson and the Trickster*.

The Authors Award for public affairs

writing went to **Richard Gwyn** for an article on Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells, *That Was Your Fifteen Minutes*, *Clyde Wells*, published in *Saturday Night*. Runner-up was **Lindalee Tracey** for her *Toronto Life* article *Rethinking Abortion*.

Meanwhile, there are some new faces on the board of governors of the National Newspaper Awards. Rounding out the 17-member board are three new public members: **Catherine McKercher**, professor at Carleton University's School of Journalism; **Sandra Oxner**, a provincial court judge from Halifax; Toronto lawyer **Stuart Robertson**; and **Peggy Wente**, editor of *Report on Business*, Toronto.

In other news, **Hendrik Overduin**, former news editor of the *Montreal Star* and now a research associate at the Centre for Mass Media Studies at the University of Western Ontario, received his PhD at Western this fall. His thesis was called *Assertoric Validity in Journalistic News Judgement*. □

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CALL FOR ENTRIES

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- . radio and television stations;
- . radio and television networks.

Entries are judged keeping in mind the resources available to each entrant. Submissions for 1991 must feature news stories published or broadcast within calendar year 1991.

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