

content

Canada's media magazine

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A
vanishing
breed?

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EARL MARTIN '92

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Canada's media magazine

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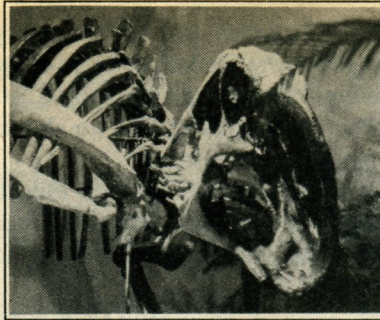
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Are newspapers rapidly becoming the dinosaurs of the technological age? These days, that is a question being posed at innumerable conferences and symposia on the subject without much of an answer emerging. Mostly that's because too many press barons are still too consumed by the profit motive to make the sort of meaningful decisions — decisions that would ensure the survival of the newspaper.

The answer to the above question depends on your perception of journalism. If you think journalism is mostly electronic gadgetry and technological wizardry, then the answer is probably yes. But surely there is more to journalism than that, as Robert Fisk points out in a perceptive article elsewhere in this issue. Unfortunately, it is a point that had been lost for the most part on many of those who pay the bills. In their panic to compete with television, technology became the icon for many a media baron, resulting in newspapers that looked more like comic books than newspapers. It hasn't worked and some media owners are now re-examining their priorities, including — is nothing sacred — Thomson.



Quality content is now the buzz phrase. Buzz words they may be, but content is where the emphasis should be, should always have been.

Newspaper should not — indeed, cannot — compete with the technological marvel that is television and radio. In a sense, newspapers need not *compete* with television at all. It is a competition only because newspapers have made it one. It was a competition they could not possibly win because they were reacting to a medium driven by forces which are largely irrelevant to print. Television and radio are the media of the instantaneous news bite. The pictures, the sound, the color of an event as it happens. Newspapers should be the medium of reflection, analysis, the larger contextual picture. In other words, instead of competing with broadcast on its own ground, newspapers should identify what they do best and then do it.

That may mean a radically different kind of newspaper, one perhaps more specialized and with less mass appeal. That has serious implications, but the other way hasn't worked.

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Case not made

To the Editor: That was a curious piece by Todd Phillips in your January/February 1992 issue ("Warring French, English media fuel Canadian intolerance"). Phillips said in his lead paragraph that "the daily distortions of French and English media not only exaggerate linguistic, cultural and political tensions, they feed them." From the French media, he gave us no examples whatsoever. As for the English, he quoted Michel Vastel saying that there have been "all kinds of articles" designed to stir up anti-Québec feelings. But the only examples were a column by Diane Francis and another by William Johnson. Oh, yes. Phillips also referred to the famous Mordecai Richler article. But that appeared in an *American* publication.

The other "fireworks" cited by Phillips — Eric Lindros's refusal to join the

Québec Nordiques and inflammatory remarks by Pierre Trudeau and Don Getty — did not originate with journalists.

Is Phillips suggesting that we should have ignored these stories?

"It's a war of words between French and English media," said your cover line. I don't think you came even close to making your case.

Ian Urquhart,
Managing Editor, the *Toronto Star*.

Term offensive

To the Editor: Lionel Lumb's reference to CBC news photographers as "shooters" (Reaching out, Nov./Dec. 1991) is extremely offensive to me.

Sure, I know there is a problem of industry nomenclature.

And perhaps film or video cameraper-

sons do not want to be called photographers. It is, however, a noble title and they can be proud to be addressed thus.

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They aren't shooters. And neither are TV news camera people. They deserve much more respect.

Most television news executives have high esteem for the people who man their cameras. And the reporter who doesn't respect the camera staff is a foolish reporter indeed.

When TV photographers are killed in action, they are not described as shooters — but as photo-journalists. And that is what they are, on par with the term reporter.

By the way, I rather like your paper.

Ron Laidlaw, London, Ontario.

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Do as we say, not as we do

Journalists are supposed to eschew clichés, but there has been much talk of late about a can of worms and the Parliamentary Press Gallery.

The House of Commons was poring over its books last year and noticed just how expensive the gallery had become. Free services, including parking, telephones, faxes, copiers and office space and staff were costing the taxpayer about \$750,000 a year.

The press gallery executive immediately rejected the figure as inflated and meaningless, because it lumped in use of the press conference rooms, which all agreed were necessary to the functioning of the press corps, along with more contentious costs, like the free long-distance telephone calls for reporters.

The figures were made public by, among others, the *Ottawa Citizen*. Some organizations publicly questioned whether to stop accepting subsidies.

The issue finally came to a head at the gallery's annual meeting. After electing a new executive, members voted on a series of resolutions to eliminate most free use of telephones, faxes and photocopiers, and to consider paying for parking.

The proposals were defeated with a vehemence that seemed to intimidate their backers. Most vociferous in their support for continuing the services were users of the so-called "hot room," an office on the third floor of Centre Block of Parliament where the free phones and fax are located. These reporters pointed out

that large organizations with separate offices would lose very little if the services were cut. Freelancers and smaller publications, on the other hand, rely on the perks to be able to report effectively, they claimed.

One of the most vocal campaigners to end the perks was Canadian Press Ottawa bureau chief Kirk LaPointe. He says journalists are suffering from an image prob-

lem. "We shouldn't therefore tax-deductible. "We shouldn't qualify for more than ordinary Canadians," says LaPointe.

LaPointe's most visible adversary is freelancer Claire Hoy. He is much more personal in his assessment of the situation. Hoy calls his opponents "sanctimonious zealots" who ignore other subsidies like free government publications, use of the parliamentary restaurants, and "a sweetheart deal" that allows CP staffers to use the senate gym.

Free services are being provided by the Speaker of the House, ostensibly a non-partisan office; so intimations of government influence over subsidized reporters are insulting to Parliament itself, says Hoy.

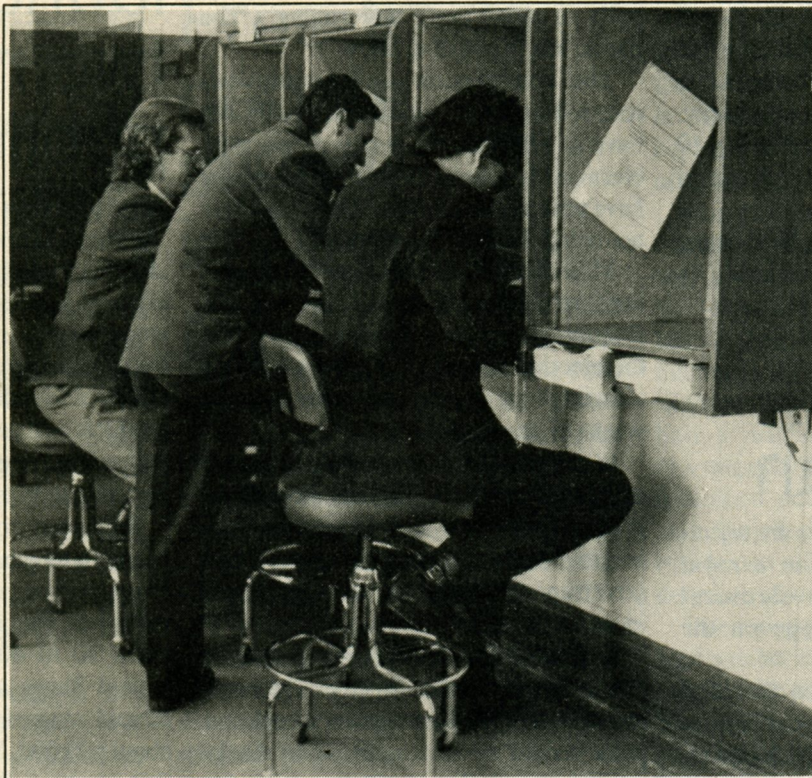
If the gallery was swayed by Hoy's arguments, the *Ottawa Citizen* was not. Two days after the gallery decision, *Citizen* editor James Travers ordered all *Citizen* reporters to stop using the free parking and telephone services. A similar edict banned Southam News employees from using the services.

Citizen columnist Roy MacGregor says he has no problem with management's motivations.

"Ethically we don't have a leg to stand on," says MacGregor. "Certain minimum standards have to be set by the employer."

But MacGregor says a reporter would have to earn up to \$3,000 more to pay for parking fees. "I'm out of pocket. That's the only argument I can make."

Citizen publisher Clark Davey rejected any notion that free parliamentary park-



Pigging out at the public trough

lem.

"The public's opinion of our profession is down somewhere between labor leaders and politicians," says LaPointe. It is important that reporters take steps to improve that image, and independence from subsidies is the best place to start, he says. Freelancers' problems are no more than "accounting exercises" since costs like long-distance calls would become legitimate business expenses, and

ing was a condition of employment for any of his reporters.

"How a reporter gets back and forth to work has nothing to do with us," says Davey.

Southam News legal affairs correspondent Stephen Bindman says he doesn't feel that parking is an ethical problem, but he is more angry at how the decision was made.

"This came out of the blue. I read about it in the *Citizen*," says Bindman.

In contrast, when CP staff decided to give up their parliamentary parking privileges, LaPointe says he held a meeting where all agreed to a transition period until September. Until then, staff will contribute money equal to what they feel the parking is worth to an office fund that will eventually be turned over to a charity.

"We're looking here at rectifying 30 years of this practice. You don't do that in 30 seconds," says LaPointe. □

—Steve Rheault Kihara

Media reject polling ban

Media representatives are rejecting proposals from a royal commission on electoral reform, saying they infringe on the freedom of the press.

The Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing has recommended restrictions on publishing opinion poll results and limits on third-party advertising during election campaigns. It says the changes are needed to uphold public confidence in the integrity of elections and to make them fairer.

The commission recommends that political parties and polling groups be permitted to conduct polls throughout election campaigns, but not be allowed to publish results on the day before an election or on election day.

Advertising by individuals and interest groups concerned about a particular campaign issue would be limited to \$1,000, to

restrict their ability to shape public opinion. The report says "wealth must be restrained to promote fairness" in the electoral process.

This would curtail the work of groups like the National Citizens' Coalition, which was part of a multi-million dollar advertising campaign in support of free trade in the 1988 election.

John Foy, president of the Canadian Daily Newspaper Association, says the proposals are dangerous because they restrict news content.

"The government should not have any legislation that restricts the right to publish information, whether it's opinion polls or third party advertising. The public has the right to know."

The commission says soon-to-be-released research proves that polls did have an effect on the results of the 1988 election. It concludes that voters should have time to contemplate their vote while not being influenced by polls.

Mike Neals, vice-president of the polling firm Gallup Canada, says all national election surveys so far have shown that the election campaign is the only factor affecting how people vote in the last two weeks of an election.

In any case, Foy says, it is up to people to form their own views on information in the media. He would not rule out challenging the restrictions in court if the government adopts the commission's ideas.

Several other commission proposals also affect the media directly. The commission says the first reports of opinion polls should be accompanied by background information, such as sample size and margin of error.

Another recommendation would give smaller parties a greater share of free-time political radio and television broadcasts than they have received in the past. The commission also suggested that the parliamentary channel rebroadcast leadership debates, and that advertisers, political parties and media should develop standards for election broadcasting.

Television and radio networks would have to revamp their coverage of federal

elections if another commission proposal to coordinate voting hours across the country is adopted.

The recommendations within the report, which took over two years and \$20 million to complete, will now go to a parliamentary committee for further study. It's not clear whether any of the proposals will be voted on before the next federal election. □

—Mark Brender

Thomson launches two new publications

In the midst of a recession, Thomson Newspapers is turning to innovation. The chain has started two new kinds of publications — an international entertainment magazine and a regional Sunday newspaper that will combine the efforts of four different newspapers. Both products will provide local editorial content and advertising, tailor-made to suit a carefully targeted market.

Still in the production stages, the weekly entertainment magazine, called *Cover Story*, will be out "very soon" says its publisher, Ray Mason. She says she expects 30 to 40 newspapers across the United States and Canada to carry the tabloid magazine, with a readership of about 600,000. But Mason says she hopes that number will grow to about two million because of the magazine's "potential for customization."

A weekly package of 12 to 16 pages will be distributed by satellite to all Associated Press satellite subscribers in North America, though others can have the pages delivered, too. The format will highlight celebrities, television, movies, home video and other subjects aimed at a broad North American readership. Publishers who buy the package can then add local material and advertising. The magazine can then run as an insert in a

local newspaper, or even as a separate publication.

The magazine should cost local publishers about \$300 a week, says Mason. Newspapers that can't afford a magazine focused on entertainment can adapt this magazine to include local restaurant reviews, for example. Mason says this should help attract local advertisers.

Local material will also boost the amount of Canadian content. As a Canadian, Mason says she is sensitive to the problem of overemphasizing an American slant, especially because the magazine will probably be publishing out of offices near New York.

Mason says all three of the production copies that have been made had Canadian stories featured on the cover, including Bryan Adams, David Cronenberg and William Shatner.

"It's not hard to include Canadians," Mason says. "We find we do it without really trying."

Thomson Newspapers' second project, the *Huronian Sunday*, was the brainchild of publisher Peter Hinton. It's a joint venture between four Thomson newspapers in central Ontario.

The new regional weekly is distributed to all subscribers of two dailies, the *Orillia Packet and Times*, and the *Barrie Examiner*, and two community newspapers, the *Midland Free Press* and the *Collingwood Enterprise Bulletin*. The *Sunday newspaper* employs a staff of 25, with offices in all four areas.

Hinton describes the newspaper as a mix of regional and local production. Regionally produced sections include the latest national and international news, up-to-date sports scores, local issues from a regional perspective and a section featuring comics and "nightlife."

A local "zone" section is produced by each of the four participating newspapers to deal with local affairs.

Collective advertising is featured in the regional sections and local advertising in the zone section.

Some 40,000 subscribers will receive the *Huronian Sunday*, says Hinton. But he has his sights set on the newsstand. "We will be expanding single-copy sales," he

says.

Mac Dundas, the Ontario manager of Thomson Newspapers says the *Huronian Sunday* is going exceptionally well.

"It fits a market niche that's needed in *Huronian*," he says. Dundas says the strategy for a regional newspaper was thought up "in the field" and was not the result of any corporate strategy. He says there may be more markets for this type of newspaper, but it would be up to individual publishers to approach Thomson with a proposal. □

—Steve Rheault Kihara

Free-trade debate stifled in Mexico

Government control over journalists in Mexico has silenced debate on the proposed free trade agreement with Canada and the United States, says a report from the Canadian Committee to Protect Journalists.

Vancouver journalist and CCPJ Board member Ellen Saenger wrote the 16-page report entitled "The Press and the Perfect Dictatorship." In it Saenger says, "The lack of information Mexicans receive on such a crucial issue as free trade can be traced directly to the subtle control that the Salinas government has over the media in the country."

During an 8-day fact-gathering mission in Mexico City last October, four members of the CCPJ interviewed Mexico's leading print and broadcast journalists. The report says that most journalists in Mexico are forced to supplement their meagre salaries with payoffs from government in order to support their families. In return for this money, journalists tacitly agree to write only favorable articles on government policies. The CCPJ says this system prevents free and objective reporting in Mexico and ensures the government's

policies remain unchallenged.

The free trade deal is central to the Salinas government's plans for economic reform. As a result, the Mexican government has been extremely cautious about the kind of coverage the deal gets, both in Mexico and abroad. The trilateral free trade negotiations have exposed Canadian and American concerns about Mexico's shaky history of human rights abuses including allegations of torture, assassination and death threats.

In order to assuage these fears, the CCPJ report says the Mexican government is especially watchful of any coverage dealing with human rights, electoral reform and environmental matters. Many journalists interviewed said they were "under more pressure now than in the past to toe the government line because of President Salinas' desire to maintain that positive image abroad."

The CCPJ report says open debate is virtually impossible in Mexico because only about two per cent of Mexico City residents read newspapers on a regular basis. But Mexican journalists were quoted as saying government control has silenced discussion even among those half a million people who do read newspapers, with "a campaign of disinformation and propaganda." Saenger says, "any decision reached on free trade by Mexico will be an elite decision, and therefore an undemocratic one."

The report goes further to examine the high number of journalists who have been killed in the past two decades in Mexico. Since 1982 there have been 54 victims and during the first half of President Salinas's six-year term, 19 journalists have been killed. The CCPJ report says "the size of the list is chilling and makes it appear that there's an all-out attack on journalists in Mexico."

While it is unclear who is doing the killing, the report suggests that persecution is most likely being carried out by lower level government officials or police officers trying to curry favor with the president by removing journalists who defy government policy.

The report recommends the Canadian government insist upon significant chan-

ges in Mexico's treatment of human rights issues, especially freedom of the press and freedom of information, as a condition for entering into a free trade agreement. Unless a standard of human rights can be maintained between the three countries, members of the CCPJ "do not believe that the Canadian government should enter into a free trade agreement at a time when the highly regarded international human rights organization Amnesty International says without hesitation that 'torture remains endemic' in Mexico." □

—Robb Cribb

Globe to play ball with Speedy

At every newspaper it's an accepted fact that news shares space with advertisements. No ads, no news. But any editor worth his salt is going to fight to make sure that the objectives of his newspaper's advertising department never sully the integrity of the news. Little wonder, then, that the Toronto-based *Globe and Mail* takes exception to a recent story in the *Ottawa Citizen* that suggests a deal is in the works with a potential *Globe* advertiser which could be perceived as sponsorship of the news.

The *Citizen* story, published February 12 and written by media reporter Chris Cobb, says the *Globe* is ready to sign a deal with Toronto-based Speedy Muffler for a strip ad to run across the bottom of a regular page of baseball news. The story says the *Globe* plans to use money generated from the ad to send a reporter to travel with the Toronto Blue Jays baseball team for out-of-town games — something the paper had not initially budgeted for in plans for an expanded sports section.

Globe managing editor John Cruickshank takes strong exception to any implication that the editorial and advertising departments are in cahoots. "I work in

editorial," he sniffs. "I don't know what's going on in the advertising department."

He also says he's baffled by the suggestion in Cobb's story — in a quote from Bob Steel at the Poynter Institute — that the deal being worked out with Speedy could be construed as sponsorship. "The story doesn't make any sense to me," says Cruickshank. "People buy a strip ad for the front of the cuisine section or the front of the fashion section, and the fact is, that money from ads may end up paying for part of the reporters' salaries."

Cobb says he thinks this situation with Speedy is different because his source told him it's a case of one particular advertiser whose ad will pay for one reporter's costs. "It's the first time I've ever come across anything like this, and I thought there was an interesting discussion as to whether this is sponsorship or not." He also says he took comments from *Globe* sports editor David Langford as confirmation that news and advertising concerns are melding in this case. "Ten years ago," Langford says in the *Citizen* article, "news departments never dealt directly with advertising departments. But now, we're asking how we can work together so the newspaper can become more viable."

Langford won't explain what he meant by this statement, nor will he speak about proposed advertising for the sports section, saying only, "I don't want to talk about that anymore." As for the *Globe*'s Grant Crosby, vice-president of advertising, he says he would never discuss the specifics of any deal being negotiated with a potential advertiser.

Don Gibb, an instructor in print journalism at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, says he can't glean anything specific from Langford's remarks and adds, "I would find it odd if an advertising director went to an advertiser and said 'if you take out this ad, we can afford to send a kid to camp.'" Gibb says advertisers generally don't care what the money they spend on ads is used for.

And that's exactly what Speedy is saying about all this. "From the company's point of view, when they buy an ad, they're just concerned about which

page the advertisement appears on, and what kind of placement it gets," says Speedy's public affairs counsel Jack Fleischmann. "Whether the *Globe* sends a reporter out of town with the money is their business."

Whether coverage was ever discussed is something only the *Globe* and Speedy Muffler know. But Gibb thinks what is more important is the space the *Globe* is selling. "More and more, the people who work on the editorial side are being asked to give up some prime space to advertisers. What I would suggest is that the advertiser is probably buying some prime space here, along with the coverage it will mean."

But for all Cruickshank's insistence that he doesn't know what's going on in the *Globe*'s advertising department, Gibb says that statement doesn't reflect the real world. He says these days, when newspapers put out special sections, or expand coverage, "editors know that these new sections are expected to make money. It used to be a newspaper could decide to add a section because readers would enjoy it. Now, it's an advertiser's ball game." □

—Frances Misutka

Sir John A. put the 'u' in honour

Canadian Press blames Sir John A. Macdonald for some of the confusion over our hybrid language.

While a chunk of the population stubbornly adds the letter "u" to the likes of labour, vapour, and honour, the nation's newspapers do as Americans do and leave it out.

But look for centre and theatre in the Canada's printed media and you'll find "proper" English — from England.

The apparent contradiction is dealt with in the revised, 75th anniversary edition of the *Canadian Press Stylebook* — the bible of Canadian journalism now

weighing in at 471 pages, including photographs, maps and graphics.

About Sir John A.:

Our first prime minister, rarely without a strong drink or a strong opinion, wrestled with the problem of the "u" and decreed in 1890 that all government documents should keep *our* endings.

"...the system should obtain in all portions of the British Empire," he said.

Alas, Sir John A.'s decree was up against the barbaric U.S. linguistic juggernaut and, despite some gallant pockets of resistance that last to this day, the *ors* have it. We in the media have gone American.

Instead of saying manmade, the books suggests artificially — constructed or manufactured. But it does draw the line at person-eating tiger.

The style book cautions against defining people by disorders such as blind, deaf or retarded and suggests instead "people with disabilities" to emphasize the human aspect.

There are also notes on journalistic ethics, legalities and an individual's right to privacy against the public's right to be given information.

And, all the *ors* or *ours* aside, there are 19 pages on words we sometimes use thinking they mean something else. Such as *allusion* and *illusion*, *among* or *between*, *each other* or *one another*, *liable* or *likely*, *flounder* or *founder*. What's the

difference? Well, if your dictionary doesn't tell you, CP will be happy to sell you a book.

It makes mistakes a little less likely and spotting them a little less of a labor. □

—Chris Cobb

Committee wants more access

A legislative committee has recommended major changes to Ontario's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

The committee's 141-page report recommends the act's coverage be extended to all organizations which receive more than \$50,000 in provincial funds and all organizations with at least one member appointed by the province.

As well, it suggests the government tighten the exemptions for Cabinet documents, and review why access requests are not dealt with promptly.

The report follows public hearings last year by an all-party committee chaired by NDP MPP Noel Duignan. It heard from more than 40 witnesses — including representatives of the Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association, the

Radio and Television News Directors Association and the CBC.

While media observers agree that Ontario's first access act — which came into force in 1988 — was overdue for reform, their reaction to this report is mixed.

"It unfortunately doesn't convey the spirit of absolute improvement needed to make the access and privacy act wholesome and workable," says Ken Rubin of Ottawa, a researcher who has used provincial and federal access legislation extensively for media clients.

While he welcomes any expansion of the act's coverage, Rubin says the report fails to challenge many of the broad exemptions in the act.

He also objects to the report's suggestion that officials be permitted to ignore "frivolous [or] vexatious" requests -- an action that the committee said was necessary to discourage nuisance requests.

But Bryan Cantley of the CDNPA calls the report "favourable."

The recommendation on Cabinet documents "is a step in the right direction," he says.

"they seemed to be keen to clean up vague language that people can hide behind."

The committee decided that user fees should continue but called the level of fees "a political issue." □

—Tom Onyshko

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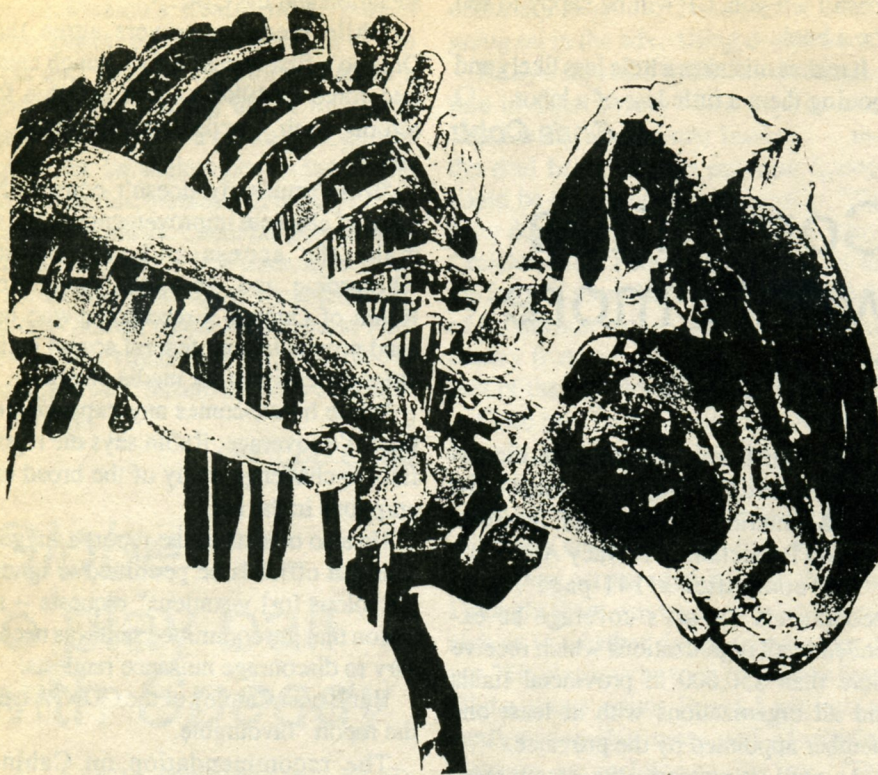


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Press barons lumber toward extinction

By
Randy Boswell

Under the weight of a recession that is crippling their industry, Canada's press barons lumbered to the Regional Council Chambers in Ottawa last month as if to a tar pit.

The occasion was Roundtable '92, a conference on the future of daily newspapers, organized by Carleton University's School of Journalism and attended March 6-8 by about 40 publishers, editors, reporters and journalism professors from across the country. The intent was to begin working out a strategy for the survival of the dailies, dubbed "the dinosaurs of the media" by a 1981 royal commission.

There were some indications that oblivion might be forestalled. The rise of Sunday newspapers, for example, was hailed as a successful response by newspapers to shifts in Canadian lifestyles and the media market. Also promising were reports from the country's two largest newspaper chains — Southam and Thomson — which portend a significant rethinking of the nature of news and its relationship to communities.

But the Ottawa gathering was marked by a sense of doom, an eerie feeling that the current pall over the daily paper is the prelude to an ice age — certain to kill off the industry and perhaps to finally end the long reign of the newspaper as lord of a literate culture. The issue that kept media critics, J-school profs and royal commissioners busy in the 1980s — concentration of newspaper ownership — had slipped down the agenda in favor of new "monsters in the hills," as one participant put it: economic woe, technological upheaval and the decline of print journalism.

Falling advertising revenues, increasing production costs and

stalled circulation growth are the immediate threats to Canada's 108 daily newspapers. In a state-of-the-industry report which set the tone for the conference, Bryan Cantley of the Canadian Daily Newspaper Association spoke of a "grim" outlook and declared, "The beast as I know it may be bloody and dazed, but there's still a lot of fight left in it."

A steady drop in advertising lineage is most worrisome, said Cantley. Competition from direct-mail distributors, as well as from broadcasting, continues to threaten the financial base of newspapers. "You just don't find supermarket ads in the paper because they've gone to direct mail," he said. "It's dreadful."

Circulation trends are more difficult to gauge. A recent *Content* article cites a study from the Newspaper Marketing Bureau that lays bare the "myth" of declining newspaper readership, based on statistics showing circulation growth in the 1980s higher than population growth. But as the study indicates, the emergence of Sunday papers helps account for the increase.

Pollster Michael Adams, president of Environics Ltd., supplied a batch of bad news — and more extinction metaphors — with results from the company's 1991 media survey.

"The paper boy will go the way of the dodo," said Adams, who urged newspapers to exploit new communication technologies for distribution or resign themselves to obsolescence in a global village. He also confirmed the worst fears of everyone in the newspaper business, that "the gentle addiction" of television is still luring away readers.

Adams said the firm's surveys show that "the young feel far less guilty about watching television ... and the baby boomers also feel less guilty than they used to."

Traditional strongholds for print news, such as local coverage, are being eroded by TV newscasts. The Environics survey indicates that 43 per cent of Canadians now tune in to the tube for local news, compared with 35 per cent for newspapers. Radio attracts 21 per cent of the local news market.

About three-quarters of those surveyed get their national and international news from television, compared with just 16 per cent for newspapers.

"Selling newspapers is difficult with people growing up in this age of stimulation," said Adams. "More and more, it looks like people are going to be saying 'I just don't have time to read the bloody paper anymore.'"

Worse yet for print journalists are results that show Canadians feel television provides more accurate and more in-depth reporting than newspapers. If the writing is on the wall for dailies, it might take a TV report on the subject for people to believe it.

Not everyone, of course, subscribes to Adams' prospectus. "Michael overstates the obvious," says Charles Dunbar, researcher for the Canadian Daily Newspaper Association. "Of course baby boomers grew up with television, but the question is to what degree will they also make use of their literacy — which is far greater than the older set. There's no reason to be alarmist."

And the conference's keynote speaker, Andreas Whittam Smith, editor of the international publishing phenomenon *the Independent* of London, was at least symbolic of a strong pulse in some members of the daily newspaper family.

Still, concern about the future of their industry has sent newspaper owners scrambling to get in on new information technologies that threaten to supplant traditional means of distributing news, and perhaps even to undermine the primacy of television.

If all this sounds like cause for celebration among readers and workers of the alternative press, it is, partly. Adams indicated that part of the problem facing daily newspapers has been the burgeoning of specialty magazines and alternative

weeklies — he used the example of *Now* in the Toronto market — which has eroded the support for dailies among key segments of the reading population.

But the demise of daily newspapers would not mean an end to gluttonous monopolies in Canada's media industry. Those best positioned to get a foothold in and eventually a stranglehold on the new technologies of communication are, in fact, companies like Southam, TorStar and Thomson — the ailing fat cats of the newspaper business.

The likely role of these companies in a restructured communications environment is already foreshadowed by services such as InfoGlobe and InfoMart, faxed summaries of *the Globe and Mail*, and telephone information schemes such as the *Ottawa Citizen's* Touchline. As *Citizen* editor Jim Travers said at the conference, "We're in the same position as the carriage makers were at the turn of the century. We have to realize we're not in the carriage business, that we're in the transportation business. We have to remain flexible."

So the organs of alternative journalism, which have grown more influential during this era of desktop publishing, will be far less equipped than the mainstream press to compete in a reconstituted, higher-tech communications environment.

Concern over concentration of ownership dominated discussions about the newspaper industry in the 1980s, beginning with the release in 1981 of a report from the Royal Commission on Newspapers. But one of the authors of that report, Peter Desbarats, director of the journalism program at the University of Western Ontario and a former *Global News* reporter, symbolized a profound shift in the scholarly gaze. Analysts of the media in the 1990s are now examining whether newspapers can survive under any form of ownership.

"I find it hard to get interested in concentration of ownership," said Desbarats. "It's not going to change, we can't roll back the clock. I find myself agreeing more with the business managers who have identified the real problem as one of

profitability."

As a measure of the panic produced by these economic forces, some participants at the conference were already endorsing ideas that would create a newspaper of tomorrow containing no news in the traditional sense, and distributed without paper. The prospect of the press functioning as an "information utility" — an electronic conveyor of data to be tapped at the discretion of individual readers through their home computers — has enormous financial promise.

Said Sharon Burnside, the *Citizen's* managing editor, "I hope I'm still around to see it when everyone has their own personal newspaper, a reversion back to the one-on-one oral society."

But there are also profound implications for such personalized news delivery in a society with already too few common meeting places — the true measure of an oral society. Also embedded in the "individual newspaper" notion is an illusion of unlimited consumer choice, a myth exposed when you carefully consider the barriers to participating in this futuristic conception of the news production-consumption game.

The kind of giddy assent to technological "progress" that fails to consider the basic needs of a participatory democracy -- the need to be heard, as well as to hear -- was evident at the newspaper conference. Little attention was paid to the effects of embarking on the path to a computerized newspaper, either for readers, journalists or society.

Burnside was part of a Southam task force on readership that examined ways for newspapers to deal with their "reduced relevance" in a rapidly changing society.

"Newspapers are one of most conservative institutions in the country," said Burnside. "We were looking at how to encourage some risk taking."

She reported that the task force came up with a list of objectives to guide the company's newspapers through an era of change:

- experiment
- anticipate change
- provide an interactive forum
- make design accessible

- empower people
- write well, edit well
- serve the community

Burnside also pointed to a need for surveys and focus-group testing to keep newspapers in constant touch with the readership's needs and demands.

Reaction to Southam's plan has ranged from what Cantley called "rave reviews" to the grumbling scepticism of several conference participants. During the discussion that followed her report, the future of print journalism looked both bleakest and brightest. On one hand, there was implied consensus that the traditional newspaper is now a short-lived species. But the comfort afforded by such certainty seemed to unleash energy for a reflowering of journalistic ideals in the midst of the newspaper's descent into obsolescence.

"Journalists aren't in this business because of some need to serve customers," protested Tony Westell, a professor and former director of Carleton University's School of Journalism. "Journalists are people who have views they want to express and power they want to gain."

Said Gail Lem, president of the Southern Ontario Newspaper Guild, "We're here today because of the ascendancy of marketing and advertising philosophy in the newspaper. The newsroom is less often the arbiter of decision making at a newspaper. What's lost is the power of journalists to decide to give the public what they need to know."

Southam News columnist Don McGillivray lamented the detachment of daily newspapers from their readers, a fact not easily overcome by conducting focus groups and surveys: "What people used to do was know what the community wanted by living in the community. Now, we don't feel ourselves to be part of it."

"People feel a newspaper is happening to them, rather than capturing and reproducing their own voices," added Stuart Adam, a journalism professor at Carleton University, who insisted it doesn't have to be that way.

Adam recalled an award-winning seven-part series on Florida's education

system by a reporter who "entered the lives of people and offered back to them an authentic reproduction of their lives. Here there was a reciprocity between journalists and newspapers on one hand, and the community on the other."

Burnside pointed out that the Southam plan is meant to empower journalists, but also to re-assess the needs of subscribers.

"The reconfiguration of our sense of community led to one suggestion that it may no longer be a priority for journalists to cover city hall," said Burnside. "We need to be more relevant to people's lives, going into schools instead of covering board meetings."

The general drift of companies like Southam and Thomson conforms well to Michael Adams' call for newspapers to seek out and position themselves at "the juxtaposition of technology and consumer demand."

But the economic opportunities in embracing new technologies or new approaches to news gathering haven't fully allayed fears and regrets about the fate of daily newspapers and about those readers — and advertisers — increasingly expected to retreat into the evolving teleculture of narrowcast TV, video and electronic information networks.

Editors and journalists at Canada's dailies are asking old questions with a grim new preamble: *during the inevitable decline*, should their newspapers try to stem the flow of readers to TV by matching that medium's visual attractiveness and penchant for entertainment — possibly a recipe for cheesecake journalism? or should they determine to uphold the best traditions of the craft — analysis, criticism, depth — and risk the production of unmarketable erudition?

The answers seem to lie somewhere in between.

"If it happens that people don't care about the depth offered by newspapers, then we have a lot more to be worried about than the decline of daily newspapers," said Westell.

"We always seem to be dancing around the core issue by talking about economic formulas, and marketing surveys," said Michael Cobden, director of the School

of Journalism at King's College in Halifax. "Newspapers are a literary medium. If papers aren't a pleasure to read, people aren't going to read them."

Michael Cooke, co-managing editor at the *Montreal Gazette*, shrugged off the traditionalists who preach the resurrection of newspapers through artful and analytical journalism: "We have to become more mercenary in our judgments. *The New York Times* is a popular newspaper, and *the Toronto Sun* is a popular newspaper. I'm appalled at our journalists who trash their colleagues who are trying to change. I think change has to be imposed from the top down, and if you wait for change to come from the newsrooms, you'll be waiting in your grave."

Typical of the incongruities that emerged from the conference was, on one hand, a repeated claim that newspapers should do more to understand the needs of our communities, and on the other, a general consensus that newspapers should escape the clutches of special interest groups and determine their own agenda.

Such thinking, a close kin of W5 host Eric Malling's tirades against political correctness, suggests a profound misunderstanding of the source of new social movements and a slim chance of their issues ever being fully reflected in the mainstream media.

Newspapers it seems, aware of the contempt held by most Canadians for institutions, may merely strive to give their institution a folksy face without ever fully challenging the structures that ensure its remoteness from readers: bureaucratic newsrooms, old conceptions of news values and ethics and an uneasy amalgam of citizenry, community and market.

Amid the Ottawa conference's talk of the need for newspapers to embrace change and connect with our communities, the spectre of extinction for an outmoded species loomed larger and larger. □

Randy Boswell is an Ottawa-based freelance writer and observer of the media.

Recasting Thomson's image

There are moments in this world when you are forced to adjust the frames you've constructed to perceive reality. One of those moments seemed to occur for Michael Cobden, director of the School of Journalism at Halifax's King's College, during the Roundtable '92 conference on the future of daily newspapers.

It happened following a report by Paul Willcocks, publisher of the *Peterborough Examiner*, on what seems to be, well, a *momentous* change in attitude towards editorial quality among the notoriously awful Thomson newspapers.

Willcocks had spoken of last summer's unprecedented continental brainstorming session for Thomson editors in Nashville, of bold plans to redesign newspapers and rethink news values of genuinely heady times in a company better known for penny-pinched journalism.

When the talk was over and Cobden had hauled up his lower jaw from the floor, the esteemed editor and scholar tried to respond:

"I, I, I can hardly believe I'm saying it," he stammered in his distinguished overseas English. "But what can the rest of us learn from Thomson's experience?"

It's the kind of reaction that fledgling CEO Michael Johnston must have banked on when he proposed to "re-launch Thomson newspapers" in the 1990s, with their fate tied to editorial quality.

"The way we had been managing our newspapers for 40 years was dooming them to a very bleak future in the next five or 10 years," said Willcocks, who became publisher of the *Examiner* about a year after Johnston took over the Thomson chain in 1989. "We were not adding to readership, and were not adding to advertising."

Thomson seems to have come to its own moment of realization. Gobbling up independent newspapers without allocating resources to strengthen each conquest was creating a lifeless, over-stretched empire. Only growth by internal market development, said Willcocks, rather than growth by acquisition, could create an enduring organization in an era of social, economic and technological flux.

"It didn't take an enormous amount of imagination to look 10 years ahead and see that one by one our newspapers were going to be picked off," said Willcocks. "Our way of doing things became wrong because the kinds of newspapers we were producing were no longer effective in their marketplace."

That philosophy, it seems, is also being applied — at least in theory — to fortify the key asset of each newspaper: it's readers. "If you can establish a relationship based not just on informa-

tion, but on real feelings and emotions — putting a human face on information — then it's going to be a more lasting relationship," said Willcocks.

How that approach will translate onto the news pages is still unclear. In an initiative called *Project 20-20*, Thomson's Thunder Bay, Ont., newspapers, the *Chronicle-Journal* and the *Times-News*, will be the site of experiments in the Canadian market.

Willcocks gives a hint about the kind of changes to editorial content that might occur: "Is the city hall beat as the centre of activity really viable, or do we have to rethink beats to better reflect the way people live?"

In January 1991, Thomson Newspapers hired Hunter George, former *Miami Herald* reporter and for 15 years an editor with a Raleigh, N.C. daily, as director of editorial development and company vice-president. He organized the Nashville conference with publishers and editors from 163 Thomson newspapers across North America (40 in Canada), launched *the Editor*, a stylish monthly newsletter for the exchange of information among those newspapers and their 2,000-odd journalists, and is co-ordinating workshops to improve writing, editing, design, graphics and photography.

"Once you make a decision to grow internally, you have to figure out how to get the paper into more peoples' hands," says George, who did not attend the conference.

"How do you sell more? You gotta give them something.

"We think quality sells."

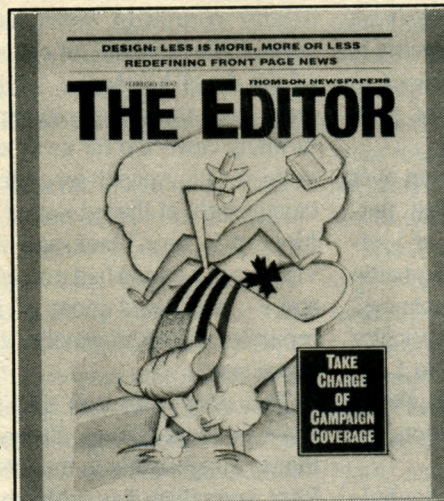
At this point, the goal of a revitalized Thomson newspaper group is more dreamed about than realized, a fact which kept most of the conference participants in a sceptical frame of mind.

Would there be enough money spent to ensure editorial quality? Are newsrooms embracing the changes? Is their autonomy threatened? Would any papers be shut down in the restructuring?

Willcocks' and presumably Thomson's bottom line was that "the company still has very aggressive revenue and profit goals" but that the "real underpinning of the company's strategy over the next 10 years is to produce really excellent newspapers, and to be in a position to attract advertisers," not merely to inherit them.

For some, even the idea of a revamped Thomson was enough for now: "The fact that they've stopped counting pencils and toilet paper rolls is big news in the journalism community," said Michael Cooke, co-managing editor at the *Montreal Gazette*. □

—Randy Boswell



At about 3:30 on the morning of Jan. 17 last year, I was woken by the bedside telephone in my hotel in Dhahran, the dull, modern Saudi city containing the United States largest Gulf air base. It was *the Independent* in London, calling to tell me that CNN (the American Cable News Network) had just reported from Baghdad that bombs were falling on the city, that the sky was lit up by anti-aircraft fire, that the Gulf War had begun.

I had been forewarned. Australian radio had tipped me off the previous day that cabinet members in Canberra had all asked for early calls which would have them in their government offices by 3 a.m. Saudi time. A friend at the U.S. air base had told me to expect "something" early that day. But when the call came through from *the Independent*, I was confronted with a vacuum. What could I report from Saudi Arabia in the first minutes of the war when the outbreak of hostilities was already being broadcast live from Baghdad on CNN? I recall experiencing in those moments an almost physical sense of shock as the realization sank in that the old days of print journalism had vanished forever.

How many hours, weeks, months had I spent over the past decade and a half in the Middle East, perpetuating the "hold-the-front-page" school of journalism? In Beirut and Kabul, on the Iran-Iraq battle fronts, in Egypt and Syria, I had repaired telephones, cajoled operators and sometimes, I fear, physically attacked telex machines to connect myself to London, to pour forth from notebooks by torchlight or generator-powered lamps dramatic prose on riots, air raids and invasions. I was reporting news.

No more. That telephone call last January symbolized for me what writing journalists have long understood but often refused to accept: the urgent, imperative need to redefine our role, to break free of the almost exclusive task we inherited from the newspapers of the 20s and 30s of recording news events, to embark on a new tradition of journalism. For live television coverage has not only supplanted our old job, it has made news reporting ever more susceptible to manipulation. Governments can control cameras and television crews far more easily than they can newspaper reporters. They can therefore "manage" news events just as they almost succeeded in managing the Gulf War.

For a foreign correspondent, there is no way of escaping this conclusion. In Madrid, many reporters watched the Middle East peace conference last autumn in their hotel rooms or on a television screen

at a press centre. I could have done the same in my home in Beirut. Only when I obtained a seat in the Madrid conference chamber for the final day of the Arab-Israeli talks did I appreciate how cleverly the authorities had positioned the cameras — repeatedly showing the chamber in the Palacio Real dominated by a statue of justice, sword in hand.

Israeli delegates off-camera expressed just as much mutual animosity and suspicion as the rhetoric of their speeches. Television showed only the rhetoric and allowed James Baker, the U.S. secretary of state, to suggest that the hatred was mere posturing.

Even when Terry Anderson, the longest-held American hostage, was released in Damascus on Dec. 4, the lessons were the same. The Syrians positioned CNN and other television networks nearest to Mr. Anderson and immediately in front of a large portrait of President Hafez al-Assad — a picture which would, of course, appear in every shot of the freed hostage — while behind the cameras were lined the still photographers. Behind them — in many cases too far away to see Mr. Anderson — were the newspaper reporters. Some of them only caught sight of the subject of their story by watching him on a tiny black-and-white monitor. CNN viewers in London had a clearer vision of Mr. Anderson — and heard more of his words — than the reporters whose dispatches they would be reading hours later.

This does not mean that the day of the foreign correspondent is over, although governments might like to suggest this is the case. Quite the contrary. Print journalism has probably never been so important to the functioning of democracy as it is in the age of satellite television. For however powerful and all-seeing a camera may appear to be, however "live" a press conference, it is effectively superintended — piloted — by government authorities.

The import of satellite dishes, the operation of camera crews, the travel of television reporters is invariably restricted, especially in times of crisis. The need for pictures means that television will always submit to the demands of government. Was it any wonder that CNN proved itself the most spineless of the television channels in accepting the notorious "pool" system of covering the conflict in the gulf? With the shining example of some Independent Television News teams and a few French crews, almost all the free and uncensored reporting of the war was undertaken by print journalists.

Nor is it just submission to authority that flaws the new era of television news coverage. American television news demands immediacy, brevity and,

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It is time
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to reassert
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By Robert

This article first appeared in the *Independent* newspaper of London. Reprinted with permission.

most pathetic of all, sound bites — words that are both tasty and meaningless, a five-second substitute for human thought, the journalistic equivalent of junk food.

The issue should not be simplified. In several cases, television crews in the gulf offered invaluable personal help to their print colleagues. I owe two dangerous, uncensored, unofficial trips to the battlefield in Kuwait to Chris Morris of Sky TV. Both Sky and ITN allowed *the Independent* to use their satellite communications system at cost price beyond the American lines in southern Iraq.

The problem is rarely a personal one between print and television journalists. It is about the *system* of satellite television news and what it represents. Having broadcast a "clean" Gulf War to their viewers, television executives at last realised that they had been conned. Their speeches at the European Broadcasting Union's conference in Berlin last April were filled with lamentation at their lack of freedom to report the "reality" of the war, the pain as well as the victory. Only print journalists had described the horrors of the road to Basra.

In the hours after the ceasefire north of the Iraqi border, it was almost impossible to drive on the highway without running over parts of human bodies. I watched wild dogs feasting on Iraqi flesh, and camera crews filmed all this. But scarcely a frame reached television viewers. Faced with the reality they supposedly craved, nearly all television editors decided that "good taste" would restrict their reports now that government officials were no longer there to censor them. Having therefore offered viewers war without responsibility, television ended the gulf conflict by giving them war without death.

There are obvious exceptions. Videotape of the Kurdish catastrophe helped to shame George Bush and John Major into humanitarian involvement in northern Iraq. It was BBC Television's shocking film of the Ethiopian famine that first awoke the world's conscience to the human disaster in east Africa in the mid-'80s. One had to read the dispatches of print journalists — of *the Independent*'s Harvey Morris, *the Guardian*'s Martin Woollacott, or Jonathan Randal of *the Washington Post* -- to appreciate the dimensions of the tragedy and political betrayal involved. But the satellite television pictures of babies and children actually dying on screen could not fail to be more powerful than the written word.

Nor is the written word so pure. Newspaper reports from Ethiopia are still clogged with the anonymous quotations of diplomats, "Western sources" and American "analysts" — U.S. news magazines often read like state department briefing papers — and

dominated by what might be called "television judgment," the idea that if satellite television news promotes a story then print journalists should adopt the same priorities.

Just as newspaper reporters are always tempted to cluster round the news agency wire machines, so newspaper editors can spend too much time watching CNN and Ceefax. A real sense of judgment is far more likely to come from journalistic investigation — something satellite television news is incapable of performing — and independent analysis.

It is not through coincidence that, with a few honorable exceptions, television prefers to follow up newspaper investigations rather than initiate inquiries of its own. And *that*, one suspects, is one of print journalism's most important tasks in the future. Television rarely holds politicians to the record. Despite all their archive material, for example, not a single television channel reminded its viewers last January that President Bush had promised the previous autumn that no offensive military action would be launched from Saudi territory. Television reporters were interested in the present, not the past. *Writing* about a political crisis or a war means that the reporter has to take history books into battle.

Investigation and analysis — and descriptive writing — have become the primary role of newspapers in the age of satellite television. Certainly this applies to foreign reporting. No amount of television coverage of the siege of Dubrovnik could match the clarity and vividness of Phil Davison's reports for *the Independent* from the surrounded city. If, on the other hand, newspapers choose to regard themselves as appendages of television, their readers are likely to respond accordingly. Is it any wonder that the American press -- criticized so harshly by Seymour Hersh because of its reporters' obsession with television news — is in decline?

In the Middle East alone, there is ample evidence that satellite television news responds to events with the judgment of a robot. Governments like it that way. The American journalist John Hersey — the reporter who first wrote of the horrors of Hiroshima — commented: "Tube-reporting of the Gulf War gave us a war of flags, yellow ribbons, parades and great pride in our power. I'm not sure, however, that we were ever given the deep look into the real texture and meaning of the storm in the desert." Newspapers ignore such warnings at their peril. So do foreign correspondents. □

Robert Fisk is the Middle Eastern correspondent for the Independent.

Libel chill fever misguided

By Lynne Cohen and Klaus Pohle

Libel chill is a misleading term. It is closer to an advertising phrase than a description of the mind-set of journalists and publishers in Canada.

Proponents hope the public conceives an unjust and unacceptable situation in which corruption-fighting, investigative journalists in white capes — paupers, but freedom-fighters all — cower at printing the truth.

Terrified of fiscally prohibitive yet vexatious and frivolous lawsuits by the rich and powerful, these defenders of the public good hold back their crucial words.

Their most profound hope is that the public won't stand for it; that libel law will be changed and a sad period in the history of journalistic restraint will be over; all for the benefit of an under-informed public.

Some of Canada's best known and award-winning writers — who recently symbolized their protest by carrying blank placards in a march on Queen's Park — are part of this supposed "good fight."

But what really are they fighting?

The debate usually centres on two complaints: that a rich plaintiff has a financial advantage over most media defendants, and the so-called reverse onus.

What escapes most critics is that the super rich will never be deterred from suing, no matter how much the law is changed in favor of the defendant. What's another million or two in costs for these people if, as is claimed, they are only out to harass anyway? It may, however, deter the less well-off potential plaintiff who has to face a mega-media organization. Where is the justice in that?

As for the reverse onus, there is none, except in the fevered brains of some journalists and publishers. The defendant —

journalist or publisher — doesn't have to prove innocence. What he or she must show is that the defamatory accusation is true or based on facts. What is wrong with the media having to take responsibility for what it publishes about others? The "reformers" would change the law to force the plaintiff to prove the allegation false.

But in our system of justice, the burden to prove an accusation is always on those who make it, be it be the Crown in a criminal prosecution or the media in a defamation action. The media makes an accusation, therefore it should have to prove it true. Anything else, would be a reverse onus. It must be remembered, too, that any additional protection for responsible journalists also protects the irresponsible. Do we really want to broaden legal protection for those who thrive on sensationalism and innuendo? To those to whom truth is not a sacred obligation? Changes that would force the plaintiff to prove actual harm, reformers say, would bring libel law more in line with other damage suits.

However, it is important to note that most damage suits are not like libel actions at all; they are negligence suits which almost always involve the unintentional infliction of harm.

In such actions — for example, most car accident cases — the plaintiff must prove actual harm before he or she can recover for losses.

Defamation much more closely resembles the intentional torts of assault and battery. If someone waves a gun in your face — an assault — the courts will happily award damages, whether or not any physical or psychological harm resulted.

This is because the courts recognize harm done to one's dignitary interest. Is it conceivable to think of a greater affront

to one one's dignitary interest than being denounced, through incorrect information, in a book or a newspaper? Scathing words cut deep, even when they are true.

When they are untrue, they should be compensable with as little bother to the already-harmed individual as possible, not matter how rich they might be.

Some reform advocates want Canada's libel laws to mirror those of the United States, where the plaintiff has the enormous burden of proving that defamatory material about "public" persons was published with malice.

It is true, that as a result, plaintiffs are much less often successful in the United States. But, journalistic accountability is lost. Says David Scott, an Ottawa lawyer who regularly handles libel cases, about the American model: "Reporters say what they want to say and they really aren't accountable. It's very hard to prove malice at a large newspaper."

This considerable protection for the media hasn't for one moment cooled libel chill fever in the U.S where journalists continue to complain as loudly as ever about the injustices of defamation law.

Scott was a member of the Ontario Attorney-General's libel committee which analyzed the competing theories in the libel chill debate and which tabled its report last year. In the end, the government decided not to go the U.S. route, that our laws are adequate.

"I think the libel laws as they stand are fine," says Scott. "They work. I don't follow this libel chill theory at all."

The most recent case that brought about the latest round of libel chill debate involved Macmillan Canada's refusal to publish a book on the mighty Bronfman-owned company, Hees International Bancorp. Inc. The collective sigh of relief when Macmillan reversed its decision was palpable throughout Canada's writ-

ing community.

The issue is not that Macmillan hesitated, then made the right decision, but the preposterous spectacle of journalists from coast to coast stamping their feet in protest over Hees' threatening letter to the publisher.

In effect, the company was saying, "If you defame us, we will sue. We will ask you to prove what you said is true." It is Hees' right to protect its dignitary interest to the full extent of the law. It's hard to imagine any Canadian denying anyone this right.

To the idea that the public is not being served well because journalists are intimidated by current libel laws, we say this: it is hard to imagine too many members of the public getting up in arms about reporters and powerful media publishers being required to back up their facts. It is utterly ridiculous to think of the press being upset about having to do its homework and being accountable for

what it publishes. But that is what this fight looks like.

Prof. Bert Hubbard, who has been teaching tort law at the University of Ottawa for more than 10 years, says, "I really get the impression that as a class, (these reformers sound like) sanctimonious whiners.

"They don't want the bother of checking the facts meticulously. ... If they do their job properly, they don't have anything to fear."

But that's not the point the reformers argue. It's the chill, the intangible fear of pursuing and publishing the hard truth because of the costly, vexatious lawsuits that will result if the work is published.

But that hasn't stopped the best and the brightest, among them John Sawatsky, Stevie Cameron and Rick Salutin. It is almost impossible to think of them being silenced by the threat of a libel suit; that is, if what they are writing they know is provably true.

Jessica Mitford, a pioneer of modern investigative journalism, once lamented that she had ever been sued for libel. She added that this was so because her subjects were powerless in the face of truth.

Truth, which every journalist, virtually by definition, is interested in pursuing, is a complete defence. Fair comment is also a defence, which gives writers wide latitude to form their opinions as long as they are based on fact.

Canadian journalists are free to publish anything about anybody. But when they do, they must be prepared to take responsibility, in law if necessary, for what they publish. It cannot and should not be otherwise. □

Lynne Cohen is an Ottawa-based freelance writer who is studying law at the University of Ottawa. Klaus Pohle teaches media law at the Carleton University School of Journalism and is editor of Content.

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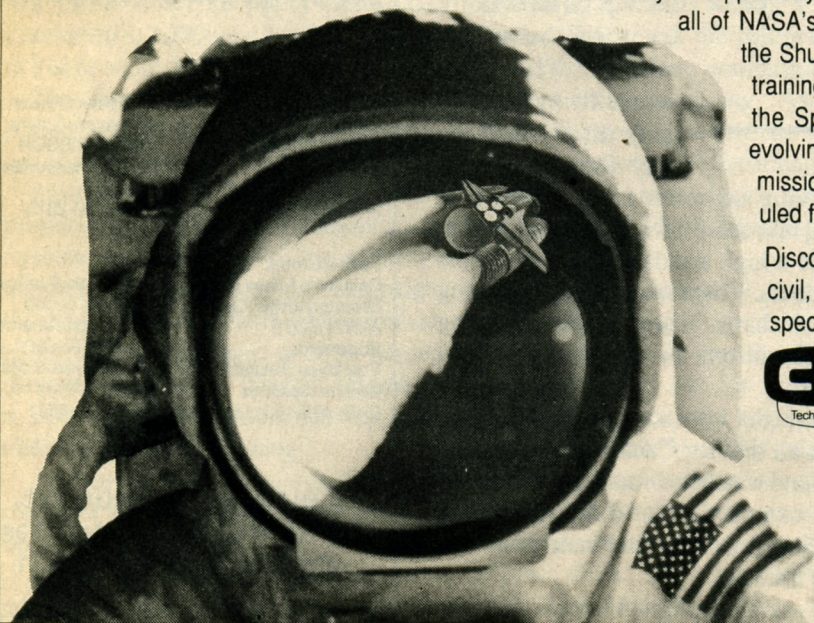
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Covering natives issues

Traditional reporting just won't do

by Henry F. Heald

Native delegates at the recent Ottawa conference on First Peoples and the Constitution lambasted the news media for highlighting women's issues in their coverage of the event.

They were right and they were wrong.

They were wrong because violence against aboriginal women is a serious problem and plenty of women delegates at the conference were not backward for saying so. The very way that native leaders talk about "our women" in their efforts to prove equality of the sexes proves just the opposite.

The delegates were right in that there were other issues of equal importance on the table that deserved coverage. Which raises an issue that serious journalists wrestle with all the time: how to present balanced news and still appeal to the public appetite for the novel and interesting.

It is an issue that has become much more serious with the advent of television news coverage and the paramount importance of the "15-second clip." A protest march of native women on Parliament Hill demanding women's rights and freedoms makes a better visual story for TV than a group of people sitting around a table talking about aboriginal self-government.

An analysis of the media coverage of the three-day conference and the aftermath will no doubt turn up dozens of articles and radio and TV commentaries about the meaning of the inherent right to self-government, the role of aboriginal people in the constitutional process, the

meaning of treaties, land claims, the Indian Act and all the other things that were dealt with at the conference. But they were not lead items on TV and radio news, and they were not headlined on page one of the papers.

The emergence of the aboriginal issue in the constitutional debate has challenged the media. It is too complex to be dealt with in the single-issue context that reporters customarily work in. With Meech Lake there were people for it and people against it. In the Quebec issue there are separatists and federalists.

With aboriginal people, however, there are more than 50 nations comprising some 600 bands or groups. There are Inuit, Indians and Métis. There are sophisticated people holding down good jobs and living comfortable lives in the urban milieu. There are people living comfortably off the land the way their ancestors

did, living on reservations where rich natural resources have been developed to provide a high standard of living for the inhabitants. There are also people rotting in urban slums. There are people living on reservations in poverty, vice and squalor.

The media have a responsibility to interpret all that for Canadian readers, listeners and watchers in such a way that the public can play a useful role in helping aboriginal people to find their place in a united Canada.

Just asking aboriginal leaders to define

"what the natives want" won't do it. Nor will appeals to the aboriginal people "to get their act together." And it can't be done with the kind of pack journalism the media indulges in for election campaigns.

Somehow the media are going to have to tell Canadians what is happening among the aboriginal people in a way that is so compelling it rates headlines. That is a challenge that should appeal to any good investigative reporter. □

Henry F. Heald is an Ottawa-based freelance journalist.

"Somehow the media are going to have to tell Canadians what is happening ... in a way that is so compelling that it rates headlines."



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Advertising the competition

by Sheila MacVoy

A London, Ont., radio station launched an all out war against American advertisers in mid-November, refusing to run any American ads and encouraging Londoners to spend their money at home. As part of the station's campaign, FM96 tried to place a "Declare You Care—Shop London" ad in the *London Free Press*, London's only newspaper. That's where the controversy started. The *Free Press* refused to run the ad, as well as a subsequent rewrite, eliciting a flurry of letters to the editor.

"For years we've had a situation where we've taken ads (from U.S. advertisers) and I don't think it really caused anybody anxiety," says Jim Armitage, associate publisher of the *Free Press*.

Cross-border shopping became an explosive issue in London last Christmas. London retailers were feeling the squeeze of the recession and the repercussions of free trade, not to mention consumer response to the G.S.T.

Michael Smolders, sales manager at FM96, was instrumental in organizing the campaign. The station cited figures from a recent government survey, indicating that cross-border shopping could cost London up to 2,700 jobs and \$135 million in lost revenue, in 1991 alone.

The message spread via buttons, posters hanging in local stores and a number of radio spots.

Says Armitage, "Bill Brady (vice-president of Blackburn Communication Systems that owns FM96) has acknowledged to me that this was not a campaign that had its origins in some philosophical concern about the impact of cross-border shopping on London. It had its origins as a sales promotion campaign to help FM96 sell more advertising."

Are not the majority of ads placed in the *Free Press* ultimately designed to boost sales also?

Armitage claims the FM96 ad is more editorial comment than advertisement.

"We sometimes take ads from a competitor and sometimes we do not. If we believe those ads are directly targeted at us then we won't take them. We would be foolish to do that."

Smolders admits that if the *Free Press* had run the station's ads, it "would have made them look silly, quite frankly," though this was not his intent. "We were not criticizing the paper, or anyone," Smolders explains.

The *London Free Press* continued to run two- and three- page advertisements for Michigan retailers while FM96 sought ways to inform consumers of the possible ramifications of shopping in the United States — an honorable and responsible position, yes, but unlike the *Free Press*, FM96 had no American clients and stood to lose no revenue.

On the day the FM96 ad was supposed to run, a shop-U.S.A. advertisement, complete with a 1-800-number and an article by *Free Press* reporter Mike Mulhern, ran instead on the same page. Smolders concedes that this was strictly coincidental.

The *London Free Press* addressed the issue in an article by Reader's Advocate Gordon Sanderson, the following week. Sanderson draws no conclusion, though quotes Armitage as saying, "As London's only newspaper ... we feel the right thing to do is to provide fair information to our readers and let them decide for themselves." Was the FM96 advertisement not fair?

So began a deluge of letters to the editor, expressing disappointment and sometimes disgust, that the *Free Press* continues to run ads for U.S. retailers. None addressed the refusal of the newspaper to run the FM96 ad.

Though letters to the editor often make the paper look silly, they appear because Canadians still have the inherent right to express their own opinions. Should FM96 be denied this right?

Most intriguing of all is the fact that both the *London Free Press* and FM96 are owned and operated by the Blackburn Group, and that the *Free Press* was quick to begin its own campaign to encourage shoppers to spend their money locally.

Armitage explains that this campaign was in the works at the time of the FM96's announcements. But Tony Da Silva, head of the London local of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, doesn't believe that the *Free Press* is doing enough.

In early December, Da Silva urged the 25,000 members of the London and district labor council to cancel subscriptions to the *London Free Press*, pending an end to all cross-border advertisements. In early January, the council agreed to hold off on the resolution until a meeting with *Free Press* representatives could be arranged.

As for the results of the FM96 campaign, Smolders states that "it gained a lot of attention, not just for the radio station, but for the cause itself." And while Smolders calls the campaign successful, he adds that increased revenues as a direct result of the campaign, "may have just covered expenses." But the goodwill that was nurtured in local business will likely pay off for some time to come.

According to Fred Empey, owner and operator of The Power Station, an electronics store in London, the campaign did help. Says Empey, "When you educate people, you ultimately help them." Empey was so supportive of the FM96 stand that he began a campaign of his own, whereby a copy of the Detroit yellow pages sat on his store counter at all times. Shoppers were encouraged to compare prices of the store's electronic and stereo equipment via telephone, at The Power Station's expense. "By the way," says Empey, "we had no one take us up on that offer."

Empey believes that FM96 "took their responsibility (to their listeners) some-

what seriously. Their campaign played upon people's nationalism." And there's nothing wrong with that.

The cross-border shopping issue is much more than a dispute between competitive media outlets, owned by the same company. Recently, Matsushita, the Canadian distributor of Panasonic, Technics and Quasar equipment, made a media stand of its own.

Robert Donnelly, assistant manager-advisor of the company's consumer/merchant division, says that this is "a regional sales issue," and that no corporate policy has been set. But he did admit that the "Ontario regional manager (AlLove) will not support media who solicit cross-border advertising," nor those who accept these ads unsolicited.

Donnelly says that in Ontario, Matsushita will not place its own ads with the *London Free Press* as a direct result of the paper's stand regarding cross-border shopping. The company will continue to provide money for Matsushita dealers

who advertise in the paper, though the company strongly recommends that dealers support its stand.

Finally, Donnelly wants to make it clear that this is much more than a stand against spending Canadian dollars in the United States. Legally, his company cannot service electronics that have not been C.S.A. approved. He points out the significant engineering differences between Canadian and U.S. products as only one more of the many problems involved.

Says Empey, "The paper is caught between a rock and a hard place ... they need to pay their staff, raise revenue," and let's face it, the *London Free Press* is struggling along with everybody else in this recession.

To ease the financial burden on local retailers this past Christmas season, the *Free Press* offered local business advertising space at volume discount. Armitage explains, "We're concerned about cross-border shopping. We're concerned about the fact that a lot of our retail cus-

tomers are hurting. We're trying to do something to help that situation. But we won't go so far as to arbitrarily close off access to the pages of the newspaper to an advertiser who happens to be based in Michigan."

Regarding the local shopping advertisements run by the *Free Press*, Armitage says they appeared "not at the expense of our advertisers, but at our own expense."

In the end, running both a local shopping campaign and U.S. shopping ads at the same time borders on hypocrisy. Armitage denies that this is a question of money, and believes that he did what he had to.

But this stand may ultimately have cost the *Free Press* more in terms of advertising revenue, credibility and community support than it earned. FM96, on the other hand, regardless of its motivation, stands only to gain. □

Sheila MacVoy is a freelance journalist based in London, Ont.

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Berlin as media metropolis

Fourteen dailies saturate market of 5 million

by Nomi Morris

In its heyday in the 1920s Berlin boasted 147 newspapers on the streets — 60 of them dailies. Now, as the city gears up to be the capital of a united Germany, it is again emerging as a media metropolis.

There is a spirited fight for the 16 million readers of the former East Germany, and in particular the five million East and West Germans in and around the capital. At subway stations, teenaged barkers holler their sales pitches for several of the 14 different newspapers published daily in Berlin.

The city has also become site of the latest round in the tabloid battles of various international media conglomerates.

Both have recently launched punchy papers to compete with western Germany's mass appeal *Bild Zeitung*, dumping them on the market at 30 pfennings (17 cents) — one fifth of the cost of a daily paper in Munich or Frankfurt.

Last June the newspaper war saw its first casualty with the closing of *Der Morgen*, a 46-year-old eastern German paper that was among the first to criticize the former Communist regime in the fall of 1989. *Der Morgen*, which was bought last year by western German publishing house Alex Springer, dropped from a circulation of 100,000 before German unification one year ago, to 20,000 at the time of its death.

Its demise was a reminder that infusions of western money and know-how into eastern newsrooms cannot indefinitely prop up the array of publications formerly controlled by the East German Communist party.

Success is coming only to those who employ a new formula — short, snappy and sexy — to snare eastern German readers whose habits and tastes differ greatly from their counterparts in the

west.

"The people of East and West Germany are still very different," said Christian Glass, deputy editor of *Neue Zeit*. "It will take four or five years to get the different levels equalized."

Neue Zeit, one of five former East German papers bought by the respected *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, is among many newly remodelled papers which attempt to "talk east" in content and tone.

"The language is different. There is different terminology," explained Glass. "Even the word peace means something different to an eastern German than to a western German. Here it was a government policy, not an opposition movement."

Despite investment of \$11.7 million in the past year, *Neue Zeit's* readership has levelled off at 53,000 and its future is still uncertain. Small by western German standards, the paper may still be too heavy and highbrow for its target group: the educated middle-class in the five eastern states.

"An East German is still not used to reading such a voluminous paper. You could slay a man with the Saturday FAZ," Glass said.

Likewise in the weekly magazine market, illustrated glossies sprang up when it was clear the stalwart West German news weeklies *Der Stern* and *Der Spiegel*, as well as the intellectual weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*, were making few inroads in the east. "They are too thick," said Volker Burman, news editor at *Extra*, a supermarket-style eastern German magazine put out by the *Berliner Verlag*, a joint venture of Maxwell and Stern's publisher Gruner and Jahr.

Der Spiegel, which puts out 200 to 300 pages a week, has only 50,000 of its 1.2 million readers in the east. "People here

start at page one and stop at the back page. In the west, you flip, scrolling through and stopping when something grabs you. Here they really read, and if they can't read it all, they think, 'Why buy it? It's too expensive.'"

Burman, like Glass, is one of a host of western German journalists who were brought over to top managerial posts in the east. "We see ourselves as advocates of the east German states," he said of the magazine's editorial approach.

Still, *Extra's* reluctance to go all the way with the sex-and-crime and anti-Wessi stance kept its readership at less than 125,000, while its rival, the magazine *Super Illu* had one million. In mid-October, the last issue of *Extra* made it onto the newsstands as its publisher Berliner Verlag announced the magazine was folding, unable to tough out the competition.

Playing up the rift between East and West Germans has been a much-criticized element of the down market boulevard tabloids that have recently appeared.

Super!, from Murdoch and western German partner Hubert Burda, has picked up 350,000 readers since it was launched in February, with \$117 million and a distinctive blend of topless girls, Wessi-blaming news, and useful tips on jobs, rents and health-care in the east. Right on its heels is *Berliner Kurier*, (*Berliner Verlag*) with a similar mix.

"I read *Berliner Kurier* because it's short, and has good sports," said machinist Juergen Werner, who lives in Hennigsdorf, just north of Berlin.

At home, Werner also has a subscription to the *Berliner Zeitung*, another former East German daily now owned by the Maxwell Gruner-Jahr concern. *Berliner Zeitung*, which is penetrating both East and West Berlin, is already being

touted as the odds-on-favorite to emerge as the capital's pre-eminent responsible newspaper.

"It's in solidarity with us," Werner said.

Meanwhile in West Berlin, the liberal independent *Tagesspiegel* and Springer's conservative *Berliner Morgenpost* are spending millions on re-design and marketing schemes to push themselves to national-status newspapers. Even the prestigious *Frankfurter Rundschau* is offering one-month free subscriptions to Berliners.

"I was getting so many papers I couldn't read them all and had to cancel," said Canadian-born East Berlin folk musician Barry Morley. Springer was the first publisher to announce its flagship daily *Die Welt* will move its head offices to Berlin.

And with last summer's Bundestag decision to move the government here over the next decade, other papers are expected to follow suit. For those publications already slugging it out in Berlin, the capital decision came as a welcomed

boost.

"When the government comes, we'll already be here," said Burman, who plans to sign on with another revamped eastern publication. "We'll have the Ossi readers and we'll be at the source. The newspapers will come to us, not to magazines based in Hamburg." □

Nomi Morris is a former Toronto Star reporter now working as a freelance correspondent based in Berlin.

She was simply Barbara...

The following tribute to Barbara Frum by Journal producer Mark Starowicz aired on *The Journal* on March 26, the day of her death in Toronto at the age of 54.

"...Eminent people from across the nation have paid tribute to Barbara Frum today. Tonight, we who worked with her in this newsroom every day — producers, cameramen, editors — we want to share the stories of a woman we loved.

She was a very warm person, just as likely to push a sandwich at you if you hadn't had supper... close to everyone's personal lives... always knowing when anyone's kid was sick.

This gracious lady was no "star," she was "Barbara" — Barbara, hurry up, we have an interview. Barbara, read that again, you sound flat. Barbara, here's a stack of research for tomorrow.

Together, all of us here lived through incredible pressures and long, long nights. We are her other family. And we'd like to share some of those warm moments with you. Turbulent times, but times that brought stories of laughter, too.

If we had to isolate a virtue, then it's an ancient one. Loyalty.

Barbara gave it generously, and earned it back from all who worked with her. And as a journalist, her virtue is another ancient one. Honor.



You might think, because she could be tough on the air, that she was always totally poised and certain about what to do.

But really, that's not the nature of a great journalist. She anguished about every word. We sat around this desk, measured the impact of a headline, debated the direction of an interview, the weight of an adjective. Is it right? Is it fair?

She was terrified of getting it wrong, consumed with absolute precision, always asking advice from everyone here.

She knew television can be dangerous in its power — it can destroy a reputation, shake a financial market, stir a tide of emotion.

I think she is the most moral and honorable journalist I have ever met. There are lots of very talented, dedicated and hard-working people here, and in our bureaux and documentary units scattered across the country.

And we will honor Barbara Frum by carrying forward tomorrow, and in the years to come, *The Journal*, this institution she was so central in building. We'll do it by trying to live up to her standard, her dedication... and to her conviction that to sit in that studio, and to sit at these desks, is a national trust — accountable only to the people of the country which she loved so much.

Goodnight, dear friend. Well done." □

Sour grapes from newspaper Mr. Fix-it

Preserving the Press: How Daily Newspapers Mobilized to Keep their Readers

by Leo Bogart

Columbia University Press,
327 pages

Reviewed by John Miller

This is a story about Turf, and how Leo Bogart Jr. is smarter than just about anyone in the newspaper business.

Egos like his go a long way toward explaining why North American newspapers are still fumbling for solutions to a problem they woke up to in 1976 — fewer and fewer people out there are reading them every day.

Preserving the Press is Bogart's account of the Newspaper Readership Project he helped direct between 1977 and 1983. It was the North American newspaper industry's first co-ordinated effort to find out how to arrest the decline of readership caused, in large part, by the competition of television.

As any publisher knows, if you want a fight over Turf, you invite circulation, production, advertising, marketing and editorial to a meeting and ask who's letting the side down. That's more or less what happened here. Bogart is an advertising man who built his career finding out what shades of lipstick women preferred and then served for 20 years as general manager of the Newspaper Advertising Bureau. Just look what happened when he met Lester Markel.

Markel had retired from *The New York Times* after building the Sunday edition into the most formidable newspaper on the continent. He volunteered his services just as Bogart was drawing up plans for the readership project. Instead, Bogart reacted by sending an emissary "to keep him at bay." Markel and Bogart then ex-

changed a series of letters, even though they lived in the same apartment building in New York. Finally, the venerable Markel, tired of repeated rejections, asked: "Are you human?"

Bogart also clashed with Al Neuharth, the chairman of Gannett whose 1981 launch of *USA Today* probably had a greater impact on newspapers than the six-year, \$4.8-million readership project that is the subject of this 327-page book. "You, Leo, are a huckster," Neuharth once told him, prophetically. "No one who represents the advertising side can ever get the confidence of the editors. They spend their days fighting to keep clear of the advertising department."

The drumbeat of the adman, in fact, is the music this story marches to. Even the title is exaggerated. Far from "keeping" their readers — a prime objective of the project — U.S. newspapers slipped from household penetration of 69 per cent in 1977 to 62 per cent in 1990.

While this was going on, Bogart was fighting with the editors over control of the research. He emerged a sore loser, and scarcely endeared himself by circulating a memo saying that "the crux of the problem (of declining readership) may not be young readers, but old editors: One solution: Fire all over thirty!"

Such pettiness, together with tedious sections entitled "Trucks and the Delivery Mechanism" and "How the Committee Worked," obscure some valid insights Bogart offers.

His fight with editors 10 years ago mirrors the current lack of co-ordination between university research and the questions newspapers need to answer. Indeed, Bogart reveals that, in the 1960s, the American Newspaper Publishers Association actually hired someone to translate *Journalism Quarterly*, the main publication of academic research put out by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (AEJMC). It's an idea that might be repeated today.

Although Bogart criticized editors for their utilitarianism — always insisting that research should point the way towards solutions — he is at his most effective when he does just that. Declining readership, he says, is caused by things that editors can do little about: the lost sense of identification with the central city, the growth of the underclass, more mobile, smaller households, the time pressures that followed the entry of women into the workforce, television's dominance as a source of news.

Trouble is, I don't agree with him. Editors can do nothing about social trends, but they can do something about how to write for a changing readership. Perhaps newspapers can increase readership by covering less of the public agenda (which is often on TV first) and using more initiative in preparing people for change; perhaps there is more interest in how events are connected than in what makes them unique; perhaps we want to read fewer reports and more stories; maybe the news should be distilled instead of just presented.

Bogart is brutal in assessing the Readership Project's failures. Most of the good it did — getting newspaper people in different departments to talk to each other, identifying areas of research that are still topical a decade later, getting circulation records computerized, better marketing campaigns — probably would have occurred without the Readership Project, he says.

Even so, Bogart criticizes newspaper publishers for their "counting-house" mentality that refused to continue the project's funding. "In publicly owned companies the exigent demands of the quarterly financial statement easily outweighed any reasoned understanding of what was really in the long-range interest," Bogart says.

This comes across sounding like sour grapes from a man who admits he was "driven by a missionary zeal to improve the American press." A better explanation

may be contained in a poll of rank-and-file newsroom people conducted in 1983 by the University of Michigan. It found that only 8 per cent had read any Readership Project reports, and fewer than one-third even knew it existed.

There was just too much bickering and too little communication. The same might be said of Leo Bogart's book. □

John Miller is chairman of the School of Journalism at Ryerson and a former deputy managing editor of The Toronto Star.

Fluff as history

Now the news; The Story of Broadcast Journalism

by Edward Bliss Jr.

Columbia University Press, 470 pages

Reviewed by Janice Neil

Telling stories through the eyes of "real people," peppered with colorful "clips," personal anecdotes and loads of emotion has become the preferred formula for many television and radio stations over the last couple of decades. While its frequency became annoying and cliched, it worked: real people and their passions make for good pictures and sound.

In his book, Edward Bliss Jr. mines the same name vein. Delightfully so. This weighty tome (470 pages of text) is filled with living history, lived by Bliss himself. For 25 years he toiled in the footlights as a writer, producer and editor for CBS giants such as Edward R. Murrow, Walter Cronkite and Don Hewitt (currently executive producer of 60 Minutes). Bliss has been squirreling away his observations for years and spent hours interviewing broadcast greats.

His is a history of broadcasting told through its stars. He gives us a glimpse into the lives of his friends and colleagues who are integral to American broadcast

history (with a not-surprising slant towards CBS). He knows and loves these people well which gives him insight but rarely detachment. He may not love everyone, mind you; Cronkite, arguably the most influential broadcast personality of the last generation, merits less than one page.

But Bliss shows no such restraint in his fawning treatment of Don Hewitt. Bliss describes this pioneer of current affairs as talented, creative, demanding and with an infinite capacity to learn the secrets of the young medium. For instance, in the days before TelePrompTer, Hewitt "suggested to Douglas Edwards (anchor of the evening news) that he learn Braille so he could deliver the news without looking down at his script." He quotes Edwards describing one of Hewitt's imaginative attempts to make the news relevant to audiences. During a summer heatwave, they bought a 75-pound block of ice and, with considerable expenses and effort, moved it onto the set. Throughout the news, Edwards referred to the steam and big melt in an effort to 'cool down' viewers. After the show, Hewitt looked at Edwards with a laugh and realized "what idiots we are. We could have taken an ice cube, gotten a tight close-up of it and had the same effect."

The book catalogues the turning points and breakthroughs of American radio and television. At times, his insatiable appetite for bare fact — or perhaps, name-dropping — thickens the otherwise easygoing narrative. A chapter on the entrance of visible minorities and women into the newsroom reads like the TV listings: the "first woman to head radio news operations at a major network" (Jo Moring at ABC); the "first woman promoted to executive producer of hard news at a television network" (Joan Richman); the "first black news director at a major television station" (Lem Tucker at WOR-TV).

While providing fodder for trivia buffs, this points up the greatest weakness of this book: too much detail on EVERY event on EVERY news and current affairs program on the Big Three networks. (Bliss says he wrote the book because all

the others on broadcast journalism were "piecemeal.")

The book also suffers from the same shortcomings as the media it strives to wallpaper. Analysis and interpretation are as foreign on these pages as they are on the waves that carry Bryant and Gumbel and Geraldo Rivera into our homes. For instance, never mind all those names of minority pioneers — what impact have their greater numbers had on television and society? And why are they still under-represented? He exhaustively recounts the shuffle of hosts over the 40-year run of NBC's *Today Show*. His examination of its fall in the ratings concludes with "Still the show floundered. And it had done it to itself." But he never delves into the underlying problems.

Likewise, Bliss merely breezes over the technological developments that have so revolutionized broadcast news. This is a medium in which content has always been driven by technology. He pays scant attention to the growing reliance on technological toys and the ways in which they change the way stories are reported. For instance, at a time when news departments are cutting their editorial budgets, gadgets are king.

Where Bliss succeeds is in telling anecdotes often culled from his historical chronicles. In a day and age where viewers are agog over the love exploits on Cable News Network (CNN), Bliss provides a sense of perspective. During the hot summer of 1925, he recalls, WGN radio in Chicago interrupted its regular programming to cover, live, the Scopes monkey trial in Tennessee, an astounding 500 miles away. A telephone line cost one thousand dollars a day. Today a satellite link can cost CNN one thousand dollars a minute. Unfortunately, again, Bliss fails to tie his anecdotes to any analysis. We learn nothing about how he sees CNN, which today drives forward the technological developments in news, fitting into the big picture. □

Janice Neil is a Toronto-based broadcast journalist.

Three names have been added to the Canadian News Hall of Fame. *Ottawa Citizen* publisher **Clark Davey**, **Anthony Westell**, former director of Carleton University's School of Journalism, and *Ottawa Sun* columnist **Trent Frayne** received the honor from a panel of senior journalists.

The hall of fame was founded by the Toronto Press Club in 1965 to honor Canadian journalists.

Davey joined the *Globe and Mail* in 1951 as a reporter and moved to the Ottawa bureau in 1956. He rose to managing editor before moving to the *Vancouver Sun* as publisher and later becoming vice-president of Pacific Press. He became publisher of the *Montreal Gazette* in 1983 and publisher of the

Citizen in 1989.

Westell is the winner of three National Newspaper Awards and began as an apprentice in England at age 16. He joined the *Globe and Mail* in London in 1956 and continued his newspaper career in Canada before joining Carleton's School of Journalism. Westell, currently on sabbatical, is retiring this year.

Frayne began his career with Canadian Press in 1938, working at several media outlets including the *Winnipeg Tribune*, *Toronto Star*, *Toronto Telegram*, *Toronto Sun*, and *Maclean's* magazine. He is the winner of a National Newspaper Award for sportswriting.

In other developments, veteran CBC sportscaster **Hub Beaudry** has retired after 23 years with Ottawa television station CBOT, ending a 33-year career in sports broadcasting.

Beaudry took early retirement in the face of CBC cutbacks. Earlier this year, CBC management decided to eliminate sportscasts from local news programs, including CBOT's *Newsday*, leaving the station's only sportscasts to *Newsday Final*.

Ottawa Citizen columnist **Roy MacGregor** has won Southam's President's Prize for his "Commissioner 13" role as the fictional member of last year's Citizens' Forum on National Unity, the so-called Spicer commission.

Two other *Citizen* writers, **Ian MacLeod** and **Mark Kennedy**, won runner-up awards.

The awards are given annually to honor excellence in four journalism categories: news coverage, investigative reporting, commentary and specialty writing and projects.

Southam Newspaper Group president **Russell Mills** said MacGregor won the \$3,000 commentary award because his column played an influential role in shaping the Citizens' Forum agenda.

Other award-winning Southam newspapers include:

The *Edmonton Journal*, in the news category, for its coverage of the Canadian Forces Hercules crash in the high Arctic in October;

The *Vancouver Sun*, in the investiga-

tive reporting category, for revealing former British Columbia premier Bill Vander Zalm's continued majority interest in a business he claimed belonged to his wife; the *Windsor Star*, in the specialty writing category, for its comprehensive look at the Ontario education system.

Calgary Herald reporter **Terry Gilbert** has won the 1990-91 science writing award sponsored by The Arthritis Society. The Hugh A. Smythe Science Writing Award, which comes with a commemorative medal and \$1,000 prize, recognizes excellence in the writing of articles about arthritis, its treatment and current research. Gilbert's article "Arthritis Regain Control" offers a positive message.

NNA awards

Newspapers owned by Southam Inc. have won nine of 15 National Newspaper Awards. Southam winners included the *Ottawa Citizen*, the *Edmonton Journal*, the *Montreal Gazette* and the *Windsor Star*.

The 1991 NNA winners are:

Enterprise Reporting: Mark Kennedy, the *Citizen*, for his examination of the March 1989 crash of an airliner at Dryden, Ont., which killed 24 people;

Special Projects: Southam News team, for a series on the plight of the world's children;

Editorial Writing: Joan Fraser, the *Gazette*;

Spot News Photo: Nick Brancaccio, the *Windsor Star*;

Feature Photo: John Lucas, the *Edmonton Journal*;

Spot News Reporting: Mike Trickey, Southam News, for coverage of the Gulf War;

International Reporting: Peter Cheny, the *Toronto Star*;

Sports Writing: Red Fisher, the *Gazette*;

Sports Photography: Barry Gray, the *Hamilton Spectator*; Fred Thornhill, the *Toronto Sun*;

Feature Writing: John Gray, the *Globe and Mail*;

Column Writing: Linda Goyette, the *Edmonton Journal*;

Critical Writing: Rick Groen, the *Globe and Mail*;

Editorial Cartoon: Guy Badeaux, *Le Droit*, Ottawa;

Business Reporting: Kimberly Noble, *Globe and Mail*;

Layout/design: Roger B. White, the *Victoria Times-Colonist*.

Submissions to Short Takes may be sent to Content, Rural Route 2, Mountain, Ontario, K0E 1S0, or faxed to (613) 989-3389.

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Market will judge *Financial Post's* success

Four years after the *Financial Post* expanded into the daily field, the newspaper can preen itself on its accomplishments. But troubling questions remain.

The *Post*, once the emblem of broadsheet establishment business journalism, blossomed as a daily tabloid in February, 1988. The transformation was completed in early January of this year when the weekend edition went tabloid as well.

The *Post* has challenged the *Globe and Mail's* much-touted *Report on Business* as well as the business sections of other major Canadian dailies.

The *Post's* makeup is brighter. There is more color and graphics. Writing is crisper. Content is marshalled better.

In the weekend edition, a special pull-out section labelled *Spectrum* groups such categories as Comment and Opinion, Arts and Leisure, Travel, Point Counterpoint, Books, Theatre and Restaurants. In terms of general content throughout the week, there are more in-depth pieces such as *The Rise and Fall of the Belzbergs* and the story behind CTV's restructuring.

There are more columnists, including such breezy entries as Allan Fotheringham and such reliables as Rod McQueen (Washington), Alan Toulon (Ottawa), Neville Nankivell and Andrew Cohen (Europe) and Ted Byfield (the West).

What about ownership, circulation, publishing, philosophy and editorial bent?

Circulation is hovering around 101,000 during the week and 190,000 for the beefed-up weekend edition. Ownership continues to be split among the Toronto Sun Corp., the *Financial Times of London* and Conrad Black's Hollinger Inc. The Sun Corp. controls 60 per cent, while the *Financial Times of London* and Hollinger control 20 per cent each.

The net product is a business-oriented daily with an enlarged weekend edition including *Inside Sport*, a four-page segment.

Despite the bow to the arts and sport, the *Post* remains essentially "a daily business paper with added value for weekend readers," as executive editor David Bailey puts it.

But what does this do for the *Financial Post* in its day-to-day struggle with the long-established and more comprehensive *Report on Business* turned out by the *Globe and Mail*? Setting aside its own shortcomings in Metro Toronto coverage and its cavalier treatment of sports, the *Globe* is still much more than a business paper. The *Globe's* national and international coverage, spearheaded by staff bureaus at home and abroad, goes well beyond the *Post's* current scope.

The *Post* retains strong sections such as *Money and Markets* and it has an opportunity to expand a little in its new guise, but no spectacular changes in circulation or advertising revenue can be expected.

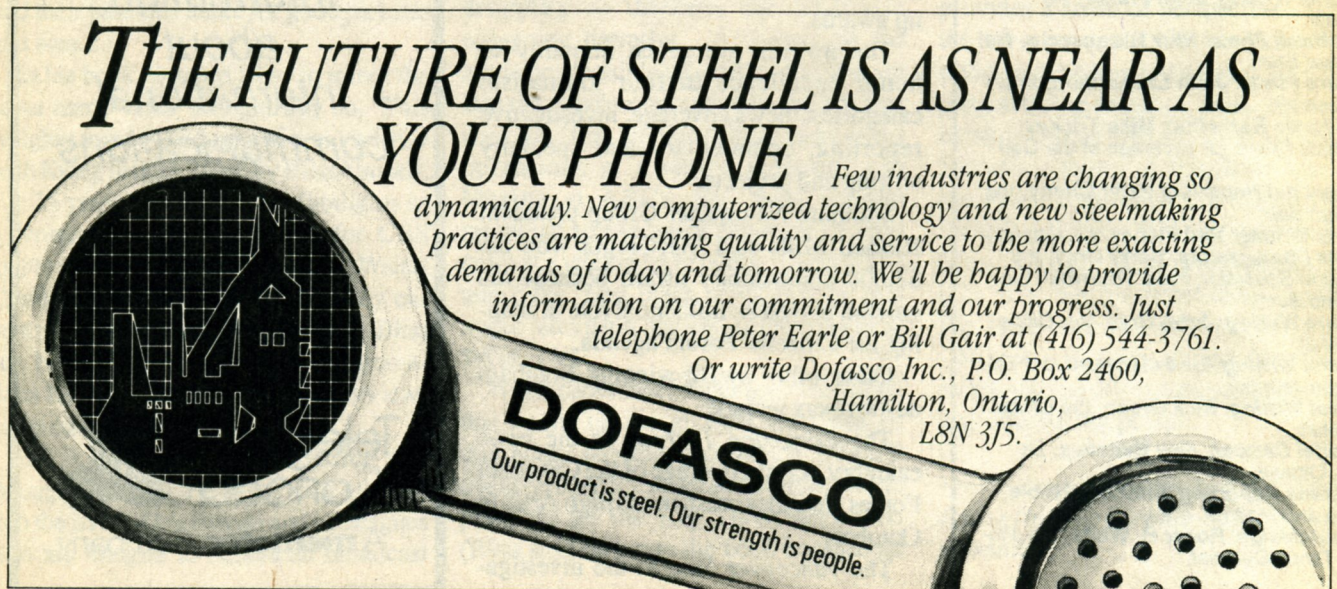
In terms of the broader news scene, the *Post* falls well short of the *Wall Street Journal* or the *Financial Times of London* or, for that matter, the *Globe and Mail*. For example, the agreement on the final report of the parliamentary committee on national unity was covered in a short story on page three.

The *Post's* editorial stance, taken up by editor Diane Francis, can best be described as fiercely conservative. It may well alienate as many people as it attracts.

When the financial balance sheet is considered, the *Post* is reportedly continuing to lose money. The paper's executives won't spell that out, but it appears to be operating at a large loss.

The *Financial Post's* experiment in daily business journalism represents a bold initiative. Whether it will be crowned a success in the long run is an open question. Only the marketplace can determine that. □

Murray Goldblatt is a journalist, broadcaster and educator.



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*Dad,
when are you coming home?*



The Caterpillar occupation.
Workers fight for justice.

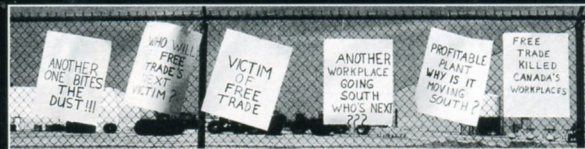
Kate's dad joined his co-workers in a plant occupation that lasted six days.

Trying to force Caterpillar back to the table.
Trying to achieve a decent plant closure agreement and severance package.

The Cat came back. But it said the cupboard was bare.

Kate's dad is home now. Not much to show for 15 years hard work and dedication.

Legislation is needed to force employers like Caterpillar to justify their decision and to provide workers with what they deserve when their plant closes.



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