

content

Canada's media magazine



WESTRAY:

The story the media missed

- Page 10

The birth of CBC's Prime Time News - Page 14

The death of CBC's Newsmagazine - Page 15

The case against advocacy journalism - Page 18

SOURCES
9 ST. NICHOLAS ST., #402
TORONTO ON M4Y 1W5

DEC 07 1992

The Michener Award 1992

AND FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM

THE MICHENER AWARD

Now in its 23rd year, the Michener Award is bestowed annually, when merited, in the name of the Right Honourable Roland Michener, P.C., C.C., to the Canadian media organization judged to have contributed the outstanding example of meritorious public service through journalism in the preceding year.

Media organizations eligible for entry include:

- . newspapers (regardless of publishing frequency);
- . news agencies and services;
- . magazines;
- . radio and television stations;
- . radio and television networks.

Entries are judged keeping in mind the resources available to each entrant. Submissions for 1992 must feature news stories published or broadcast within calendar year 1992.

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF SUBMISSIONS: JANUARY 31, 1993

c/o C.W.E. MacPherson
Ottawa Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Ottawa, Ontario K2C 3M4

THE MICHENER FELLOWSHIPS - FOUR MONTHS \$20,000

In late 1982, the Michener Awards Foundation was established to ensure the perpetuation of the Michener Award, to advance education in the field of journalism and to foster journalism that serves the public interest. To that end, two Michener Fellowships of \$20,000 a piece, are granted annually (when warranted) to journalists for four months of out-of-office study time aimed at enhancing their competence as journalists. Mature applicants with an interest in public service through journalism are invited to apply for the 1993 fellowships.

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS: February 28, 1993

Entries for 1993 Michener Fellowships should be sent to:
Michener Awards Foundation Secretariat
24 Terrace Drive, Nepean, Ontario K2H 9N2

uspects
a fondation des prix Michener
monce le vingtième concours
nuel pour le Prix de
journalisme Michener dédié à
encourager le journalisme
sout à l'intérêt public. On
voit des soumissions pour
année 1989.
Le prix est accordé chaque
année. S'il est touché, au nom du
des honnorable Roland Michener,
P.C., C.C., à l'article de journal
ou à l'émission radiodiffusée ou
télévisive pour l'année
précédente. Par exemple le pre
mier de l'exemple le p
tient de l'exemple
sur l'île
ont adm
urnaux
deloradan, s, m
ances de nouvelles
magazines: stations de r
télévisi: réseaux de
de télé
es juges
unite de
spositio
oumission
attend à ce qu'une gran
gence de nouvelles ou un
seau de radio ou de télé
e exam
mais in
tional.
attendre
urnal ou que p
de
de de télévisio
ne soumission plus m
a l'importance au niveau
de l'année, pour révé
qu'une lora
n avant au cor
être par ser
on complète de ce
pour la question d'in
de l'année, pour révé
seul faire va
m
obu
agné
urnaux
ment au
ources indépendantes et
s'intéressées, des témoign
faits à la nature du service
de rendu.
y documentation doit être
umise en huit exemplaires
our les émissions de radio et
télévision, un seul ruban sera
illissant, mais la documentation
prie devra être soumise en huit
exemplaires.
ate limite pour s'inscrire au
concours: le 28 février, 1990.
scolaires des années
écédentes.
1970 The Financial Post La
cleté Radio-Canada
cription conjointe) 1971 La
cleté Radio-Canada 1972
routier Globe and Mail Halifax
adian Journalist (égales) 1973
TV Television Network Ltd.
1974 Montreal Gazette 1975
ontreal Gazette London Free
ress (égales) 1976 Vancouver
in 1977 Toronto Globe and
all 1978 Kitchener-Waterloo
word 1979 Kingston
ile-Standard 1980 Edmonton
urnal 1981 CTV-TV
316-Metropole Montreal
Renness-Waterloo Record
causi 1982 Montréal

FOR ENTRIES

content

Canada's Media Magazine

Established 1970
Founding Editor/Dick MacDonald

DECEMBER 1992

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

Editor

Klaus Pohle

Assistant Editor

Steven Rheault Kihara

Editorial Assistants

Katera Zappacosta
Shawn Ohler

Editorial Board

Christopher Dornan
Peter Johansen
Mary McGuire
Catherine McKercher
Klaus Pohle

Friends of Content

Tim Lougheed, Ottawa (Chair)
June Callwood, Toronto
Michael Cobden, Halifax
Katie FitzRandolph, Toronto
Murray Goldblatt, Ottawa
Peter Johansen, Ottawa
Daniel Johnson, Calgary
Gordon McIntosh, Ottawa
Frances Russell, Winnipeg
Diane Sims, Mountain, Ont.
David Waters, Montreal
Ron Verzuh, Ottawa

Business/Advertising/Circulation

Diane Sims and Robert Roth
(613) 989-3388
Fax: (613) 989-3389

Editorial Office

(613) 788-2600, Ext. 7434
Fax: (613) 788-5604

2 Editor's Notebook

3 Letters

4 Briefings

YNN will supply news to school
Asian coverage comes under gun
Protecting journalists
Developing world coverage criticized
Talking back to your TV set
Newspapers advertise their subjectivity
Toronto Star slimmer and trimmer

10 The Westray story the media ignored by RICHARD STARR

14 Prime Time News guarded and conservative by TONY ATHERTON

15 Assessing the demise of Newsmagazine by HUGH FRASER

19 Podium JOEL-DENIS BELLAVANCE laments advocacy journalism

19 The pain of writing by LISA KELLER AND DAVID HICKEY

22 Books RON VERZUH on union bashing in the media

24 ShortTakes

25 Murray Goldblatt... ...takes new book on Globe to task

We gratefully acknowledge assistance for publication of this issue from



Credits

Cover: *Design* — Robert Roth, Mountain, Ont. *Photo* — Len Wagg, The Chronicle-Herald, The Mail-Star, Halifax; **Illustrations:** Eric Tamm, Ottawa, 4, 10, 15, 20; Aislan, Montreal Gazette, 14.

Editor's Notebook

It's not who owns the media, but what the owners do with their properties. That's really the central issue in the debate and controversy over Conrad Black's purchase of 23 per cent of Southam.

From that perspective, there is cause to worry about the future of Southam newspapers as purveyors of quality journalism. Of course, no one yet knows what Mr. Black may have in mind for Southam. Perhaps even Mr. Black does not yet know. But his track record should give us pause to reflect. Witness, for example, the *Jerusalem Post* and *Le Soleil* in Quebec City. In both these papers, there was massive interference in the editorial product by the publisher to make them more soft and less critical (and, by the way, more profitable) after Mr. Black acquired the newspapers. In the case of the *Post*, 30 journalists resigned as a result while journalists at *Le Soleil* are on strike. Then, of course, there is the case of Sterling Newspapers, a string of thoroughly undistinguished small papers in Western Canada.

It is, of course, true that Mr. Black also owns quality newspapers such as the *Daily Telegraph* in England and the *Age* in Australia. There is no question about the quality



of these. However, they also seem to be the exception in Mr. Black's stable of newspapers and are not the standard by which Mr. Black's newspapers should be measured. After all, the other penny-pinching Canadian newspaper mogul — Kenneth Thomson — also owns the *Globe and Mail*. There is no doubt Mr. Black that will try to make the chain more profitable. What other reason is there for investing? That will inevitably mean a decline in journalistic quality. After all, that is where the big bucks are saved. For example, we should fear for Southam News Services, which must represent an enormous drain on Southam resources. (One of the first things that went by the boards when Thomson acquired FP Newspapers in 1980 was the well-regarded FP News Service).

There is a chance the doom-and-gloom prognosticators are all wet. That Mr. Black will turn out to be a benign shareholder and, perhaps, eventual owner. One can only hope. But his newspaper history provided little comfort.

ISSN 0045-835X

Publications Mail
Registration No. 6824

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

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

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

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

Content is a member of the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association.

(This issue released for distribution in November 1992)

Please send in your renewals!

We have been sending out subscription renewals recently. For those who have replied, we thank you. However, we have yet to hear from many of you. We need our subscription revenues in order to survive and we do not have the funds to keep sending out reminder notices. If you care about the quality of journalism in this country, please keep *Content* alive by sending in your subscription fee.

One year, \$17, (base \$15.89 plus \$1.11 GST)

Two years, \$27, (base \$25.23 plus \$1.77 GST)

Three years, \$37.50 (base \$35.05 plus \$2.45 GST)

A contribution of \$67 (\$17 to *Content's* subscription fund plus an additional \$50) allows you to become a sustaining contributor.

GST No.: 101 894 301



Make cheque payable to **Friends of Content**

Send to: **Content magazine, Rural Route 2, Mountain, Ontario, K0E 1S0**

Enclosed is my payment for ____ year(s)

Enclosed is my sustaining contribution of \$67 ____

NAME _____

ADDRESS (Home address preferred) _____

We should welcome Black

To the editor: So, Conrad Black has purchased a substantial block of beleaguered Southam Inc. I'm sure all the media pundits (especially those who feed out of the Southam trough) are going to be up in arms over this in the coming weeks, as they attack Mr. Black as the sort of businessman who buys newspapers like average shoppers buy so many cans of soup. (I choose this comparison carefully, hoping Mr. Black doesn't own any soup companies at the present time.)

Well, as much as I'd like to slash and belittle his insatiable appetite for media organizations, I'm afraid I can't. The reason for this is quite simple. I think Mr. Black may be the best thing that's happened to Southam in years. The company has been sitting on its laurels for the past decade, throwing good money after bad at useless projects, columnists, and corporate manoeuvrings as its profits slowly, but inevitably, went down the drain.

In fact, it seems to have been fat city there for so long, I question whether even Mr. Black himself will be able to set the entrenched Southam ship on the right course again. But the message is nevertheless clear: the cruise is over, and the time for some serious belt-tightening is now at hand. The arrival of none other than Captain Blackbeard himself is clear evidence of this.

Derek H.W. Zeisman,
Ottawa, Ont.

Gazette among first

To the editor: Congratulations to *Content* for the story about the growing use of audiotex or voice information services by newspapers in your May/June issue.

Your readers may be interested to know that, in addition to the three Ontario dailies mentioned as operating these services, a fourth is active in Quebec.

In fact, the *Montreal Gazette's* Info-Line, which started in November 1989, was the second such service to be operated by a Canadian newspaper. It was the first to provide voice information in more than one language — French as well as English. Info-Line recently logged its seven millionth call.

Clair Balfour,
Manager,
Electronic Secondary Products,
The *Montreal Gazette*

OPSEU

ONTARIO
PUBLIC
SERVICE
EMPLOYEES
UNION



SYNDICAT DES
EMPLOYÉ-E-S DE
LA FONCTION
PUBLIQUE DE
L'ONTARIO

SEFPO

Just the facts

Sometimes, spin doctors can make everyone dizzy.

What's the real story?

OPSEU members work in government services, ambulances, hospitals, schools, jails, parks, offices and roads. They know the inside story. They can help.

For help with questions about government actions, call the Ontario Public Service Employees Union.

100 Lesmill Road, North York, Ontario M3B 3P8
Telephone: 416-443-8888

More Pablum for the vid kids

Coming soon to a school near you — television news. Students will soon be watching news programs in class as school boards across the country take advantage of a broadcast package from Youth News Network Inc.

The contract requires the company to provide broadcast equipment worth up to \$50,000 to the participating schools. In return, these schools must use the 12-minute daily newcast produced by the network. Schools can tailor the package to their particular needs by incorporating self-produced segments.

Reaction from school boards has been enthusiastic.

In Montreal, the director general of the Laurentval School Board, Scott Conrod, says his board became interested because the pilot project was a success.

"It places a whole new emphasis on learning," he said. "Instead of having teachers talk and kids listen, the way education has been taught for the past 200 years, this

technology is helping get kids turned onto learning about current events and what's happening around them."

In Ottawa, the superintendent of educational services for the Ottawa Roman Catholic School Board, Michael Moher, says his board approved the package because the economic benefits outweighed concerns about the advertising.

"There's only a limited amount of money in our budget so we have to look at partners who will help us provide quality education realizing that it requires us to stretch our points of view," he said.

The concept of trading advertising time to students in return for broadcasting equipment is a controversial one.

"The advertising aspect is very restrictive," said Moher. "The suggestiveness, the values and overtones of the commercials will be very conservative."

Conrod agreed.

"Some people have the impression that slippery barbie doll kind of messages are going to be shown, but that's not the truth at all," said Conrod. "They're going to be positive messages like stay in school, don't do drugs, that sort of thing."

The agreement states that commercials

visory council which can ban inappropriate messages.

Still, not everyone is excited about the project.

Ottawa trustee Pat Bowie who chaired the advisory committee on the issue, said that despite these measures, she still has reservations about the project.

"I have to say, strictly as a trustee, that I still have a lot of concerns about having commercially sponsored programs going into our classrooms," she said. "The schools are being paid for by taxpayers and they're supposed to be providing our students with an education in a commercial-free environment."

Despite her concerns, Bowie voted to approve the project.

"It does have a lot of positive aspects," she said. "If it encourages students to get involved in their studies, to be interested in the things that go on around them, then it should be given a chance."

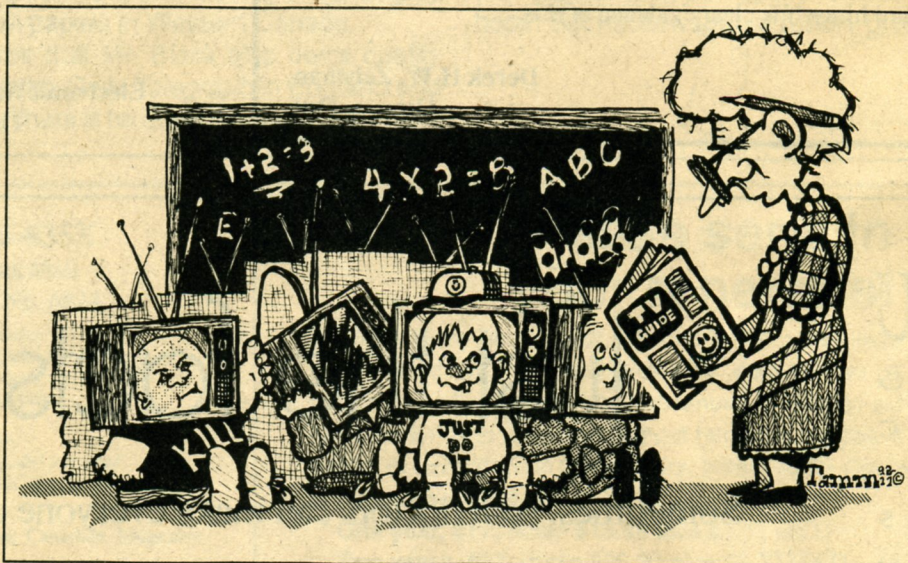
Students agreed. "I think it's a good idea," said Megan Jerome, an Ontario Academic Credit student at Im-

maculata high school in Ottawa. "It's something different that might keep students involved and interested."

Grade 12 student Elie Saikaly said, "I think students will like it. I know most of them don't watch the news so this might help them know what's going on day to day."

These students say they're not concerned about the advertisements.

"To think that you can shelter us from advertising is insane," Jerome said. "You can't do it. Everywhere you go there's advertising. You can't avoid it."



will run for a maximum period of two and a half minutes and be chosen from a list of acceptable advertisers -- companies such as Proctor and Gamble and the federal government. No commercials advertising alcohol, lotteries, or condoms will be shown.

"The commercials will present positive messages," said Drury.

The agreement also stipulates the news package, which is broadcast by satellite transmission early in the morning, be received by the schools in time for the staff to screen them. The commercials will also be approved by a national ad-

Parents, while more cautious, also support the project.

"I have no problem with it," said Fred McLennan, president of Immaculata's Parent Teacher Association. "You'll probably get a range of opinions from other parents but I'm sure most of them will be prepared to look at it and reserve judgement until it's had an opportunity to be used in the school."

Youth News Network expects to sign contracts with over 100 school boards across the country and have their network installed in the schools sometime next year. □

—Steven Vesely

Perceptions of Asia criticized

Canadian editors and journalists are near-sighted when they look at the Far East, according to a recent survey that calls their coverage of Asia scant and often "controlled" by American interests.

Researchers at PRIN International Inc. — a Vancouver-based media research and international marketing firm — examined 10,563 Asia-related stories published in 14 major daily newspapers. They interviewed 90 high-profile Canadian journalists and editors from print, radio and television media.

They found that Asia-related stories are usually given less priority than news from the United States, Europe, the former USSR and sometimes South America and Africa, even though Canada's two-way trade with Asia surpasses trade with the European Community and is second in importance only to trade with the U.S.

"Asia-related news published in the major Canadian daily newspapers in 1988 represented only five per cent of all international news covered," the survey says.

As a result, the survey says, people who want news about Asia turn elsewhere. "Canadian business people get most of

their economic news on Asia from foreign publications such as the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Economist* or the *Financial Times*."

Stories from Asia that are found in the Canadian media, the survey says, often come from international news wires and satellite feeds and, as a result, carry an American bias.

"Using foreign sources for news is less expensive than producing original coverage," the report says. "But it also

poses the question as to whether it is in Canada's best interests to have its sources of information, which influence our vision of Asia and the rest of the world, controlled by other nations whose foreign policy considerations may differ sharply from our own."

For example, the Canadian media followed the approach of the American media to the U.S.-Japan trade war by portraying Japan as an "invincible enemy" and using "photographs of ag-

1992 Atkinson Fellowship Winner

Award-winning Maclean's magazine reporter Marci McDonald has won the 1992 Atkinson Fellowship in Public Policy.

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

Under terms of the fellowship, McDonald will spend a year doing research and then prepare a series of in-depth

articles, which will be translated and made available to all Canadian newspapers next year.

McDonald won the fellowship on her proposal to study Canada-U.S. relations during the stewardship of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and to analyze policy implications of this increasingly close association.

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

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

We congratulate the winner and wish her success in the months to come.

Telephone inquiries: (416) 869-4801.



Marci McDonald

gressive stockbrokers at the Nikkei Stock Exchange [that] reinforce the belief that Japan is conquering the world's economy."

The survey also found that Canadian journalists and editors were generally unhappy with the quality of the coverage of Asia. Canadian journalists feel the media has failed to present the economic threat of newly industrializing Asian nations, the survey says. "The reasoning has been that the media avoid exposing this threat because Canada can neither understand or cope with it."

Canadian media executives blame both the lack of coverage and its poor quality on a shortage of skilled business journalists with a working knowledge of Asian languages, the report says.

According to "a number" of editors, "Canadian journalists are afflicted with the same 'malaise' prevalent in the larger society in which they live: namely, the tendency to see the world from a very narrow provincial angle rather than from a national perspective."

The \$100,000 report was commissioned by the Asia Pacific Foundation whose mandate is to teach Canadian business how to become more competitive in Asia. The survey assumes that poor communications curbs business opportunities and costs jobs.

Jim Lawrie, senior manager of international banking at the Royal Bank, agrees. I'm rather concerned and unhappy," says Lawrie, "that we have such potential in Canada to be a strong country in international trade, but one of the key elements that is missing is newspapers or, in general, journalism, that does an acceptable job at reporting in accurate, timely and useful ways on some of the key events."

In the two-and-a-half years since work on the survey began, Canadian news outlets have done little to bridge the Pacific. The CBC's sole correspondent in Asia is still responsible for television and radio reports in both French and English. Southam News has one Asia correspondent. The *Globe and Mail* closed its Tokyo bureau last spring. Only CTV has added to its coverage.

Dennis McIntosh, associate producer of CTV News, says the network acquired a crew in Bangkok to complement its existing correspondent in Beijing. He says CTV relies less heavily on American feeds as a result.

The *Vancouver Sun* will look more closely at the impact of Asian events on local business when the paper expands its business section in November, says managing editor Scott Honeymoon. But no more reporters will be hired. The *Sun* will continue to rely on Southam's Asia correspondent. □

— Jordan Reeves

Network protects endangered journalists

A new computerized communications network will make it quicker, cheaper and easier to publicize threats to journalists around the world.

Based in Toronto, and run by the Canadian Committee to Protect Journalists in conjunction with other freedom of expression groups, the action alert network is designed to coordinate international protests against censorship and attacks on the press.

When journalists are threatened or detained, speed is of the essence. It's often within the first 72 hours that they're killed or tortured. The new system which links member groups via phone, fax and e-mail, ensures a speedy, co-ordinated response.

"We can zero in on particular problems in a way we've never done before in any organized manner," says Nick Fillmore, executive director of the CCPJ.

Last September, for instance, alarmed by the situation in Turkey where nine journalists have died in the past year, the centre declared an international day of concern. Protests were mounted in 15 countries and two representatives from the network's member groups met with

officials in Turkey, making it, says Fillmore, the "largest ever international day of protest involving a journalist's case."

There used to be a lot of overlap, duplication and competition says Fillmore. Now, "the whole international freedom of expression community is getting together and campaigning, which is a major development."

The action alert network is only one aspect of the new IFEX Clearing House, which was proposed and endorsed last May in Montreal at the founding meeting of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), a loose affiliation of groups like Article 19, the CCPJ, the International Federation of Journalists, Reporters Sans Frontieres and International PEN.

The clearing house is also assembling an electronic library filled with information on press laws, attacks on the press, etc. "It will bring together tons of information that had not been used by anybody properly before," says Fillmore.

Probably the largest of its kind in the world, the data base will be up and running by early next year. "It's to serve our own members," says Fillmore, "but the longer term goal is to make it available to the general public and universities." There will, of course, be a small fee for on-line research.

The pressure to improve communication and access to information within the freedom-of-expression community increases as attacks on journalists continue. Last year was one of the worst on record for attacks on the press, with the CCPJ recording 1,264 hostile acts and 66 deaths.

The centre has already established permanent contact with journalists in Central America and Thailand. Other groups will gradually be brought on line, and for many, especially those which already own a computer, the savings could be substantial. E-mail is considerably cheaper than phone or fax and the cost of the service could run as low as \$1,500 a year.

The clearing house shares space with the CCPJ, which has moved out of Fillmore's home and into a new office at

490 Adelaide St. W. Ali Rahnema, a computer whiz who's worked with Amnesty International, will manage the data base. Kela Leon will divide her time between the CCPJ and the clearing house.

It will cost about \$120,000 a year to run the centre and Fillmore says he's hoping to get as least 20 per cent of that from individual Canadian journalists. □

—Brent Ledger

Attitude toward developing nations assailed

Western journalists got a tongue lashing for being naive and ignorant of the developing world at a recent conference in Regina on reporting on those areas after the Cold War.

It's an old, tired criticism but unfortunately one that holds true — western journalists parachute into countries to cover earthquakes, famines or wars but never spend any time getting to know the place, or the people.

The three-day conference, held at the University of Regina's school of journalism and sponsored by the IDRC and CIDA, was part of the 25th birthday celebrations of Gemini News Service in London, England. Gemini is a unique shoestring operation that is devoted to covering developing countries, but instead of parachuting in highly paid correspondents, it buys articles from people living in countries in Africa, South America and Asia.

It also gets one "free" Canadian on a one-year fellowship from the IDRC and one from the University of Regina for the summer.

Programs like these, many participants agreed, should be expanded to allow as many Canadian journalists as possible to spend time in developing countries. Exchanges were also suggested.

"We would welcome anyone who came to work for us. The problem is, we

wouldn't be able to pay them," said Ngozi Anyebulam of the *Daily Times* in Nigeria, and the only African woman at the conference.

But during one panel, composed largely of white, middle class, western male journalists, the consensus seemed to be that Canadian readers just aren't that interested in developing countries and any reporting done from there should have a Canadian angle and be written by a Canadian.

Patrick Nagle, a Southam correspondent who spent five years in Africa, got participants' backs up when he claimed, "You can't have a Zimbabwean covering Zimbabwe."

"That implies that a Zimbabwean journalist is not a professional," shot back Barry Wilson, farm reporter for the *Western Producer*.

Fireworks also flew during a panel discussion on women when Ernest Moloi, a reporter with the *Botswana Guardian*, gave his views on the importance of covering so-called women's issues.

He referred to a story about a Botswana woman, who, because she is married to a foreigner, cannot get Botswana citizenship for her children. (The same does not apply to a man married to a foreigner.) A group of women in the same boat took up the cause in the courts and eventually won, forcing Botswana to change its citizenship laws.

The story got very little coverage.

"Sure these things should be covered and sure women should get their rights, but not at the expense of our culture," Moloi said.

At times, the western journalists and students in the crowd of about 100 probably did feel naive and in awe of some of their developing world colleagues who have risked their lives fighting for the right of freedom of expression. People like Luis Tricot, a freelance journalist from Santiago, Chile who has been imprisoned and had his back broken by Pinochet's thugs in 1988. Or Joe Thloloe, a black South African who works for the Sowetan newspaper in Johannesburg and has witnessed and written about the horrors of apartheid for decades.

The conference, which at first glance may have appeared to rehash some old topics, did at least get participants thinking about news from other countries in terms of the people they had met in Regina.

"Now when a story about the Philippines comes across my desk, I will think of (participant) Abby Tan from Manila or a story of China will remind me of Zhu Yinghuang from China," Thloloe said in his closing remarks.

—Sue Montgomery

Viewers talk back to TV

The world's only interactive television service is changing the way broadcast news is collected and presented in Quebec.

Subscribers to the interactive service can watch an interactive news program, produced by Tele Metropole, at 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. each evening. The main news broadcast is shown on the channel designated F1 on the special remote control. But the viewer can leave the main telecast at any time and choose more background on the top news stories, more background on sports stories, or more international news, by pressing buttons marked F2 to F4. Segments are repeated at various times so the viewer never misses a segment of the broadcast.

T.V.I (Television Interactive), a branch of Montreal's Videotron, allows subscribers to choose from four different options at any time during a T.V.I. program. Tele Metropole, another branch of Videotron, is the largest subscriber to the interactive service.

Tele Metropole's interactive news broadcast requires an additional production team of about nine people including another producer and line-up editor responsible for the optional channels.

The two reporters who work on the interactive broadcast produce longer, in-depth reports on major stories says Phil-

lipe Lapoint, director of news for Tele Metropole.

"Journalists and reporters working for the interactive version have to research and prepare their stories knowing their story could get a six-minute interview instead of just a 30-second clip," Lapoint says.

"Camera people have to think in terms of larger and more stable shots because we run a lot of raw footage instead of short shots and cut-aways."

The interactive format has also changed the viewer's expectations of the news, says Judith Bergeron, program manager for T.V.I.

"When you watch the in-depth report and see where the 30-second clip was taken from, you get the context of where that phrase was taken and it gives you a different way of looking at the story. Simply put, more time equals more information."

Since T.V.I. began two years ago, the number of subscribers has increased from 5,000 to about 200,000 in Montreal and Quebec City.

One of the reasons interactive television hasn't spread across the country more rapidly is cost. Tele Metropole's news programming alone costs about \$750,000 a year to operate.

News is the third most popular interactive program (behind two game shows), suggesting that most viewers want more information than is provided by the traditional news story.

"It's a response to the strong message we got from people, who said, 'Give us more news. Give us more information.' This service is equally beneficial for the journalist and the viewer," says Bergeron.

The most popular program on the interactive service is a French production of Jeopardy, which allows the viewers at home to play along with the contestants.

The interactive service has also been employed by RDS, the French version of TSN, for professional baseball games, allowing the viewer to choose options with up-to-date statistics, strike zone display, and seven-second delay of all plays.

For all subscribers of basic cable in Montreal and Quebec City, the interactive

service costs \$7.95 plus tax. That includes an interactive subscription with decoder and remote, all interactive programs, about 45 video games available through the data base, and about 150 information services with information on things like interest rates, lottery numbers, astrology, and news headlines.

T.V.I. is currently working on expanding its service into London, England, and hopes to expand in Canada over next five years. □

—Robb Cribb

Objectivity takes beating

Of course newspapers are supposed to give the appearance of being objective. But when it comes time to protect its own business interests, the newspaper industry doesn't have to apologize to anyone.

That is the general message being sent out by newspaper chains and associations following criticism of a hold-no-prisoners advertising campaign attacking Ontario's labour law reform, Bill 40. Full-page advertisements paid for by the Canadian Daily Newspaper Association and the Ontario Community Newspaper Association began appearing Sept. 10 in Ontario weeklies and dailies, including the CDNA member papers the *Globe and Mail* and the *Ottawa Citizen*.

"There's no conflict of interest, not when it comes to the economy of this province," said CDNA president John Foy. "It's a very, very serious bill, and there's no fooling around here. It's a socialist government that is out to destroy this province."

Foy said provisions of the bill that would forbid businesses to hire replacement workers in place of striking employees could effectively shut down a newspaper's operations. Companies that couldn't afford to pay high union wages would likely close down and move to the United States when faced with striking workers, he said.

Opponents of the advertisements, in-

cluding Ontario Premier Bob Rae, have suggested the ads are misleading, inaccurate and are designed to scare people into opposing the law.

Calling the advertisements a "misinformation campaign," Southern Ontario Newspaper Guild president Gail Lem said they are an inappropriate intrusion by newspaper owners into the material they offer their readers. "The ads purport to be in the public interest and they're not. They're in the newspaper's interest," Lem said.

One ad shows a locked-up factory gate as the backdrop on the question, "295,000 lost jobs?" Another uses the banner "Adding to the Violence" overtop of a sketch drawing of angry picketers, a reference to the additional powers that the bill would give to striking employees, including the right to picket inside shopping malls.

Several papers, including the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record* and the *North Bay Nugget*, have chosen not to run the ads. According to *Nugget* publisher Richard Hull, the ads may be giving the reader wrong impressions about the source of editorial policy.

"I'm not terribly enamoured with the legislation," Hull said. "We have opposed it editorially, we have had it in our columns, and I feel that was sufficient to make the point."

"We must be seen to be fair ... If others don't see us as being fair then I think we may have a problem."

If there is a risk of giving readers the wrong impression it is not an opinion shared by *Citizen* publisher Clark Davey. If guild-member reporters are fit to cover the story, Davey argued, publishers are fit to give their opinion as well.

"I think we're prepared to accept their professionalism and their arms-length integrity, but by the same token I think that people (shouldn't) see publishers as having any less integrity," said Davey.

Conflict of interest or not, the ads may have achieved part of their desired effect. Davey said the ads were partly responsible for forcing the Ontario government into making pro-business revisions to sections of the bill concerning labor-management hearings before the Ontario Labor

Relations Board.

Originally, the CDNA and the OCNA asked Ontario member papers to run the ads free or as paid advertisements. John Simpson, director of corporate affairs for Southam Inc., said recently that all advertisements run in Southam newspapers would be paid.

Foy predicted the advertisements could cost the CDNA approximately \$300,000, almost one fifth of its annual budget of \$1.6 million. □

—Mark Brender

Toronto Star slims down

The *Toronto Star* is taking a bold plunge into the future with a new, slimmed-down version of Canada's biggest newspaper.

"It's going to be extremely distinctive

in North America," says *Toronto Star* publisher David Jolley. "There's no other newspaper that's printing the size we are." Thirty-two centimetres by 56 centimetres to be precise.

Why all the fuss about size? The company's market research people found that customers want something small and easy to handle while standing in crowded subways on their way to work. The big and bulky *Toronto Star* isn't that.

But it's not just a smaller *Toronto Star* that readers will start to see over the next six months. It's a much more attractive paper, with sharper, cleaner text and lots of near picture-perfect color photos.

All this is possible because of the company's decision back in the mid-1980s to build a new publishing centre and buy new printing presses. The new centre, in Vaughan, Ontario (just north of Toronto near Highways 7 and 400) is a \$400-million investment — an unusually hefty investment in a recession.

The company isn't expecting any immediate returns on its investment in the new plant. Rather, Jolley says it's an investment in the future.

"I have no doubt, when you make an investment of this nature, that it has a horizon of twenty to thirty years," says Jolley.

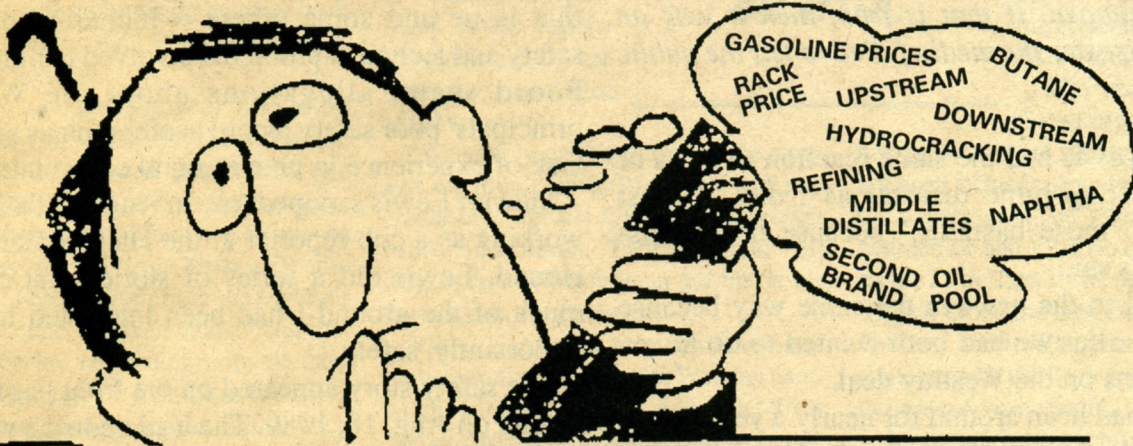
The plant's Automatic Guided Vehicles are robotic devices which move rolls of newsprint while guided by wires buried in the floor without the aid of a "human helper."

Bill Petrie, head of the Southern Ontario Newspaper Guild, says the 115 people who carry papers on and off trucks will lose their jobs, as will about 100 truck drivers, whose work will be contracted out. The first wave of layoffs is effective Nov. 30.

To ease the move to the new production plant, the company is making the switch to the new re-designed paper in stages. □

—Frances Misutka

A tough question about energy?



Imperial Oil can help.

We have people across Canada who can assist you in finding answers to questions about the oil industry.

Imperial Oil



National:

Dennis Baxter (416) 968-4875

Western:

Maureen Bradbury (403) 237-4037

Quebec:

Marise Paquette (514) 493-7397

Ontario:

Rick Hotz (416) 968-5078

Pacific:

Don Coghill (604) 451-5987

Atlantic:

Elizabeth MacDonald (902) 420-6930

Where was the warning at Westray?



When an underground explosion killed 26 miners at the Pictou County coal mine on May 9, some critics claimed the Westray Mine had been a disaster waiting to happen. If that is true, then it was an impending disaster the media failed to tell the public about.

Stewart Lewis had the same reaction to news of the Westray mine disaster as I did. "I just thought 'those bastards,' because no one listened," Lewis said.

We reacted to the news in the same way because three years earlier we had both wanted to do investigative reports on the Westray deal.

The story had been around for nearly a year before I started checking into it. Reporters had been portraying it mainly as an inter-regional conflict, pitting Cape Breton coal interests and Cape Breton politicians, led by provincial Liberal MLA Bernie Boudreau and Liberal MP David Dingwall, against their Tory counterparts in Pictou County.

I was less interested in chronicling the parochial squabble than in taking a look at the costs and benefits of the Westray deal. I wanted to look into that issue and some others—including possible safety and technical problems involved in mining the Foord seam, allegations about the Westray principals' poor safety record at other mines and their lack of experience in underground coal mining.

Stewart Lewis scooped me. In August 1989, while working as a cub reporter at the Halifax Chronicle-Herald, Lewis did a series of stories that covered much of the ground I had been interested in, most importantly, safety.

The safety story appeared on the front page of the Herald on Aug. 18, 1989. The lead quoted a warning from Derek Rance, a former Devco president fired by Premier John Buchanan (and now President of Iron Ore Co. of Canada) that Westray had to be cautious to avoid miners' deaths from methane gas explosions.

Despite Lewis's efforts and the play given his

BY RICHARD STARR

reports, the Westray story fizzled. Betsy Chambers, who covers Nova Scotia politics for the Thomson-owned Cape Breton Post and New Glasgow Evening News, filed several reports in the months after Lewis's revelations. But the media with provincial reach, notably the CBC and the Halifax Daily News, did not follow up.

Even the Herald, which had given front page play to two of Lewis's stories, seemed to want to disown them. The same issue that carried Lewis's story about safety concerns featured a shorter piece from legislative reporter Brian Underhill under the headline "Cameron Lashes Out at Critics." The piece essentially repeated what Cameron had already told Lewis in an earlier installment of his series — that opponents of the Westray project were just playing politics and had no business criticizing government support for Westray because no one had squawked when millions in taxpayers' money was sunk into Devco.

The Herald also ran a mild editorial on Aug. 21, calling on Westray to open its books if it expected government financial assistance. The editorial mentioned safety concerns, promising to come back to them another day. The Herald never kept that promise.

When Lewis's one-year probation came to an end in late 1989, he was let go.

Westray pretty well dropped off the news agenda after Lewis's stories, except for a smattering of boosterish pieces ("Westray Study Proves Mine a Double Benefit," Feb. 5, 1990) from the Herald's Pictou County bureau, and occasional reports on the continuing impasse over federal funding. On that issue, the Nova Scotia media did not appear to find much significance in the fact that a project sponsored by a Conservative government in Nova Scotia was being blocked by a Conservative government in Ottawa.

Rather than probe to determine whether this meant that the project had serious flaws, the media accepted the way in which Cameron and McKay defined the issue: that the project was being held up by a group of foot-dragging

bureaucrats in the Department of Industry (supported by Liberals in the House of Commons) out of loyalty to Devco. The impasse ended when a less favorable deal (amounting to \$8.75 million of indirect aid instead of \$26 million) was finally reached in May 1990.

Not that the project's chief opponent, Bernie Boudreau, didn't try to keep the media interested. In November 1989, he managed to write a piece for the op-ed page of the Herald under the headline "Pictou mine project makes little sense." On March 26, 1990, he was able to convince Betsy Chambers and the New Glasgow Evening News to report extensively on a speech in which he called on the government to halt the Westray project because it was "fatally flawed from a development point of view, from a technical point of view and from a financial point of view."

Otherwise, however, Boudreau was having a hard time getting his statements on Westray reported. Many in the legislative press gallery had long since grown tired of the story.

"We simply got burnt out on the story and we didn't think Boudreau had any credibility," recalls CBC radio reporter Mike Hornbrook. "People would roll their eyes when Boudreau got up on his favourite sawhorse again."

While Hornbrook may have been unmoved by Boudreau's anti-Westray campaign, Linden McIntyre and CBC-TV's Toronto-based *Fifth Estate* unit were not.

Their report aired on Dec. 11, 1990. The *Fifth Estate* revealed that former federal Tory cabinet minister Robert Coates had been the matchmaker between Westray's principal owner Clifford Frame and the Nova Scotia government, and that Prime Minister Mulroney (briefly the MP for Pictou County) had been instrumental in breaking the Ottawa

deadlock and getting the deal through in 1990.

The connection that made the biggest splash locally concerned Donald Cameron, by then running to succeed John Buchanan as premier of Nova Scotia. In his campaign Cameron was successfully portraying himself as the reformer, bent on stamping out the scandals that dominated the final years of Buchanan's tenure.

The *Fifth Estate* report tarnished that image, revealing Cameron's single-minded pursuit of the Westray project and the fact that one of the main supporters of his leadership bid had won a \$5-million untendered contract to build a spur line and railway bridge at the mine site.

But despite national exposure on the *Fifth Estate*, the Westray story once again failed to take off. The day after the report aired, Cameron held a news conference. He attacked the *Fifth Estate* for performing a "hatchet job" on him. Cameron also lashed out at Betsy Chambers, at one juncture pointing at her and snarling "I'll deal with you later."

The media reported Cameron's attacks on

reporters, and his insistence that he had not used influence to win the contract for his supporter. (The *Fifth Estate* never claimed he had.) But no one followed up on the *Fifth Estate's* work. Westray again slipped from the news agenda, and on Feb. 9, 1991, Cameron captured the leadership of the Tory party and became Premier of Nova Scotia.

McIntyre believes most of the Nova Scotia media dropped the Westray story because they didn't want the *Fifth Estate's* version of it to be true. "There is a symbiotic relationship between the Nova Scotia population and the news media," he told me.

When Cameron defended his actions on Westray, according to McIntyre, people said "We'll buy that," because that's what they wanted to buy. As for the

Nova Scotia media didn't want the Fifth Estate's version to be true.

media, they "seem to be in sync with the mental state of the province," he says.

Cameron's ability to overcome the political fallout from the *Fifth Estate* report was also enhanced by the same sort of internal ambivalence in the CBC that had derailed Stewart Lewis's reporting for the *Herald*. Within a few days of McIntyre's report, two prominent reporters were criticizing it on *Morningside*.

One critic was Susan Ormiston, then *The National's* Halifax-based Maritimes reporter, who said the *Fifth Estate* had been manipulated by opponents of Cameron, the would-be premier. The other was well-known Cape Breton journalist Parker Barss Donham, who

had put the *Fifth Estate* on the Westray trail in the first place. Between the time that he had told the *Fifth Estate* about Westray and the date the program aired, Donham had gone from thinking that Westray was a classic boondoggle to believing that it made economic sense.

Donham's conversion had come about following a long talk with Cameron. In a column which appeared in the *Halifax Daily News* on Nov. 4, 1990, Donham concluded that the Westray deal — whatever its shortcomings — was better than the alternative, which he said was for the Power Corporation to spend over \$200 million on scrubbers to reduce the environmental impact of high-sulphur Cape Breton coal.

Eighteen months later, 12 days after the disaster, Donham expressed regret at his earlier criticisms of the *Fifth Estate* and admitted that home-town journalism might have been responsible.

Geoff D'Eon, executive-producer of CBC-TV news in Nova Scotia is similarly contrite about his failure to dig deeper into the Westray story before the explosion. "A lot of us in positions of

authority made errors in judgment," he told me. "I can't give you a very good reason why that was."

Although Nova Scotia journalism generally relegated Westray to the fringes of public consciousness or treated it like a parochial tiff, the story was at least making the occasional headline. The same cannot be said about the safety angle. Safety was being almost totally ignored. Not only did reporters fail to dig into the safety issue, they sometimes neglected it when it was right under their noses.

Although unreported, the safety angle was present from the beginning. In early 1988 the Liberals went on the attack against the Westray proposal in the Nova Scotia legislature.

They used as ammunition a December 1987

memo from Cape Breton Development Corporation management to the Nova Scotia and federal governments. The memo was concerned mainly with the impact of the mine on sales and jobs at Devco, but it also contained an ominous paragraph about the Pictou coalfield's seams having "given off large volumes of gas and proven extremely liable to spontaneous combustion."

Although the Liberals made a copy of the Devco memo available to any reporter who wanted it, I could find no evidence that the safety warning made it into print before the explosion. Perhaps reporters considered Devco a biased source. Or maybe the gassy nature of the Pictou fields was considered common knowledge.

Whatever the reason, reporters paid no attention to the fact that between 1838 and 1952, 246 men died from explosions in the Pictou coal pits. In 1974, local historian James M. Cameron had written in his book, *The Pictonian Colliers*, that a mine on the Foord seam, the Allan Shaft, was considered by one U.S. authority to be one of the most dangerous

in the world.

Stewart Lewis had quoted historian Cameron when he wrote about the safety issue in the *Herald* in the summer of 1989. He also quoted a Westray official who said the mine would be safe and would use "modern monitoring systems" for early detection of methane problems. And he reported the comments of an official of the Canadian Coal Association who said that despite improvements in technology, "gaseous seams are gaseous seams."

In hindsight, however, the statement that stands out in Lewis's piece is from Derek Rance, a mining engineer and former head of Devco.

"In order for that mine to be safe," said Rance, "everything is going to have to work right all of the time. The work force is going to have to be really well-trained and really observant. They're going to have to make sure their safety procedures are up to snuff and the ventilation is right on."

A few other references to potential safety problems surfaced in the media after Lewis's stories, including in the *Fifth Estate* documentary. It featured a brief clip in which a former executive of Esso Resources (which had been interested in a Pictou County mine before Frame arrived on the scene) said the president of Imperial Oil had been concerned about the history of fires and explosions. But McIntyre and his producers didn't highlight safety concerns any further.

"I asked everybody I interviewed about safety but they all said that with modern mining methods it's all going to be taken care of," recalls McIntyre. Without any experts to raise the safety angle, McIntyre was reluctant to do it himself.

"Nobody can predict that kind of disaster. If you do, you only add to the perception that you're trying to stir something up."

In defence of the *Fifth Estate*, the safety concerns were still speculative when its report was done in late 1990. In 1991, as Westray neared production, the concerns became real. If any reporter had

Reporters sometimes neglected safety when it was right under their noses.

read and taken to heart Derek Rance's warning, it would have been apparent that everything was *not* working right all of the time.

In July 1991, two months before the mine's official opening, Bernie Boudreau asked government ministers about safety on three separate occasions in the legislature. On July 2 and 3, he asked about a roof collapse in late May. A 25- to 30-metre section of the mine roof caved in, but no one had reported it to either the Minister of Mines or the Minister of Labour. On July 10, Boudreau asked about some exemptions from provincial mining regulations that had been granted to Westray.

On all three occasions, Boudreau prefaced his questions with statements about Westray being potentially dangerous because of the gas and the fault structure of the Foord seam. On one occasion he alluded to a high accident rate at Frame's lead-zinc mine in Faro, Y.T., and conjured up a potentially lethal combination — "a dangerous mine and apparently a lax operator."

Boudreau's rhetoric failed to ignite much interest in the press gallery. The roof falls got two minutes on the CBC-TV

supper hour news on July 3. On July 11, the *Halifax Daily News* devoted just two paragraphs to his revelation that the labour department had waived explosives regulations. When more roof falls occurred in October and Boudreau urged the government to close the mine, it was worth just a two-column headline inside the *Herald*.

Only Thomson's Betsy Chambers did any investigation. In a story in the *Cape Breton Post* on Oct. 23, 1991, she told of "a few" miners who had quit their jobs at Westray because of safety concerns.

It referred to high dust levels in the mine, continuing rock falls and concerns within the provincial Labour Department about safety at the mine.

Again, the rest of the Nova Scotia media showed no interest in following up the safety angle. They were still doing occasional reports on Westray (some of which mentioned roof falls in passing) but the focus was not on safety. By late 1991, Frame had put the mine on the market in hopes of raising cash for other projects in his mining empire. More troubling for Westray supporters, the mine had failed to yield either the quality or quantity of coal expected. As a result,

Westray's operators received quick approval from the province to extract a 100,000-tonne sample from a nearby strip mine. The media reported the outraged reaction of the opposition and the people who lived next door to the strip mine.

Thus, as the fatal day approached, the media were reporting Westray the way they always had — as a political and economic story. "I really believe the political and economic agenda clouded the safety agenda," says Geoff D'Eon of CBC. "When Bernie Boudreau sounded warnings about safety, they were taken with a grain of salt. When an MLA from Cape Breton complains about a coalmine on the mainland we assume he is doing it just to protect the best interests of his constituents."

What if the *Fifth Estate* had done another documentary on Westray? What if the local media had dug harder for the truth? What if the *Fifth Estate* had focused on safety at the mine instead of a story about colliding local interests? Would the 26 miners be alive today?

Consider this. After the mine opened, there was a succession of safety problems. There were roof falls. There were instances of miners quitting. There were orders to clean up. If safety had been the story all along, those developments would have received the full glare of media attention.

It may be stretching it to suggest that under those circumstances Westray would either have been cleaned up or shut down by May 9, 1992. But Linden McIntyre, for one, says it would have made a difference. "If you had had a public forum in which safety issues were discussed it would at least have stiffened the sense of duty of the mining inspectors."

Whether stronger resolve by mining inspectors would have prevented the tragedy is something that was to have been examined by a judicial inquiry.

Now cancelled, it would have been a splendid opportunity to measure media performance against the information that would undoubtedly have emerged. □

Richard Starr is a freelance journalist in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

Asia Pacific
Foundation
of Canada

Fondation
Asie Pacifique
du Canada



The Asia Pacific Fellowship Programme for 1993 For Canadian Print & Electronic Journalists

\$12,000 plus airfare is available for up to six journalists from print and/or radio/television to spend two months in one country in the Asia Pacific region. For more information and an application form please write to:

Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada
666-999 Canada Place
Vancouver, British Columbia V6C 3E1
Telephone: 604/684-5986
Facsimile: 604/681-1370

Closing Date:
February 1,
1993

Erring on the side of sobriety

By Tony Atherton

In October, when CBC anchor Peter Mansbridge tampered with the familiar format of Sunday Report to chair panel discussions on the national referendum, he got letters.

"They said they liked the show, but wanted to know why was I standing," Manbridge recalls. "They said I should have been sitting behind a desk."

Canadians don't cotton to change, particularly as it affects their sober institutions. So it was no surprise to CBC that most of the reaction after the first week of *Prime Time News* was disappointing.

"The only response you get these days is negative," said Tim Kotcheff, CBC's vice-president of news and information. "Positive response is not the Canadian way...Change is always difficult."

Let's assume that an innate Canadian inertia has, in fact, colored our response to the program. What do we see when we look at *Prime Time News* in the abstract, not as a replacement for *The National* and *The Journal*, nor as a forced change in our daily schedule, nor even, as has been suggested, as a scheme to thwart empire-builders in the CBC current affairs division? What if we look at it as a program, pure and simple?

We see a program that, despite a lot of glamor in its shape and structure, is still very conservative and guarded. *Prime Time News's* name is pure show biz, but *Prime Time News* is not.

True, the set is bigger and more flexible, the camera angles more varied, and the anchors are not anchored, but flit about hither and yon.

But each of these changes has been held firmly in check to minimize their intrusiveness.

The program's color scheme and the lighting are dramatic, but their effect is just the opposite. The mix of deep blue and charcoal gray with just a dash of rosewood creates an effect so subdued as to be almost invisible.

Thus, our attention is focused entirely on the familiar, reassuring faces of co-anchors Peter Mansbridge and Pamela Wallin, and of Brian Stewart, whose role in the first week was more of a sub-anchor than correspondent.

Compare *Prime Time's* set to the much brassier layout CBC built for its *Referendum '92* special, where video screens and backdrops with swirls of peacock-blue and mud-brown dwarfed

the anchors, and where the anchor desk was tucked behind a great expanse of studio floor in which Mansbridge awkwardly strode about.

Comparatively, the choreography for the anchors on *Prime Time News*, though ground-breaking in concept, is minimalist, a few tightly controlled walk-ons.

The anchors themselves are, of course, consummate professionals, undoubtedly the news show's best asset in terms of presentation. But in the early days, *Prime Time News* deliberately avoided any on-screen relationship, unsure how it would affect viewers.

Meanwhile, the tone of the entire hour remained deadly sober. Supposedly, a mix of *The National* and *The Journal*, *Prime Time News* has the serious-mindedness of the former in lavish

amounts, but none of the daring or sense of fun of the latter. If such a common *Journal* feature as a John Gray satirical song or an animated Raeside political cartoon showed up on *Prime Time News*, it would stand out like a clown at a funeral.

Better to err on the side of sobriety, *Prime Time News* seems to think. Better to downplay any innovations. This is a show that has decided to be different, but not so you'd notice.

CBC's Kotcheff doesn't look at *Prime Time News* as a finished product, but an embryo. Check back in a year or so if you want a better idea of what it will look like for the long haul, he says.

This evolutionary process is already at work. There was evidence in the second week that CBC was putting more news at the front end of the show and more analysis at the back. This was a direct response to the most common criticism of the show, that its scatter-gun approach left viewers frustrated or puzzled.

However, this evolutionary step is not daring or different. It's conciliatory, like the rest of the show's cautious approach to change. It harkens back to what the hour looked like before its change. After just one week, CBC was willing to compromise on the most innovative part of its delivery, the blending of news and current affairs.

Prime Time News may yet develop into a program as bold and conspicuous as its name. But don't hold your breath. □

Tony Atherton is the television critic for the Ottawa Citizen.



Model journalism or Model-T?

By Hugh Fraser

On May 13, just 14 months after CBC President Gérard Veilleux called it an instrument for breaking the "splendid isolation" among Canada's regions, *Newsmagazine* was quietly laid to rest. The program continued until October, a lame duck fluttering to its inevitable demise.

Veilleux had touted the program as the CBC's salve for a nation on the brink of disintegration. But on that bright spring morning, using then vice-president Trina McQueen as his messenger, Veilleux cast *Newsmagazine* aside, a sad, but necessary casualty to a greater cause: repositioning. The CBC's multi-staged effort to show itself as a clearly different, national public broadcaster was in motion.

The fanfare of the program's birth announcement was in sharp contrast to its death notice: an afterthought, warranting barely a paragraph in newspaper reports, a sound-bite in TV accounts.

Ratings had been poor (from its September debut through May, *Newsmagazine* attracted 400,000 viewers nationwide, or a seven share), but conventional wisdom says a program needs more time to find an audience.

The reasons behind *Newsmagazine's*

failure were left unpursued by the media, scrambling for comment on the bold new direction of the CBC. *Newsmagazine* had long been discarded or forgotten by the press. Yet its cancellation presents many questions about both the program and the state of the CBC.

Why would the CBC kill a heavily-promoted, national news program in its first year? What happened in eight months to change the CBC's mind about

presenting a show from the perspective of the "ordinaries?" Did it have a chance to succeed or was it fatally flawed because of its rather suspect beginnings?

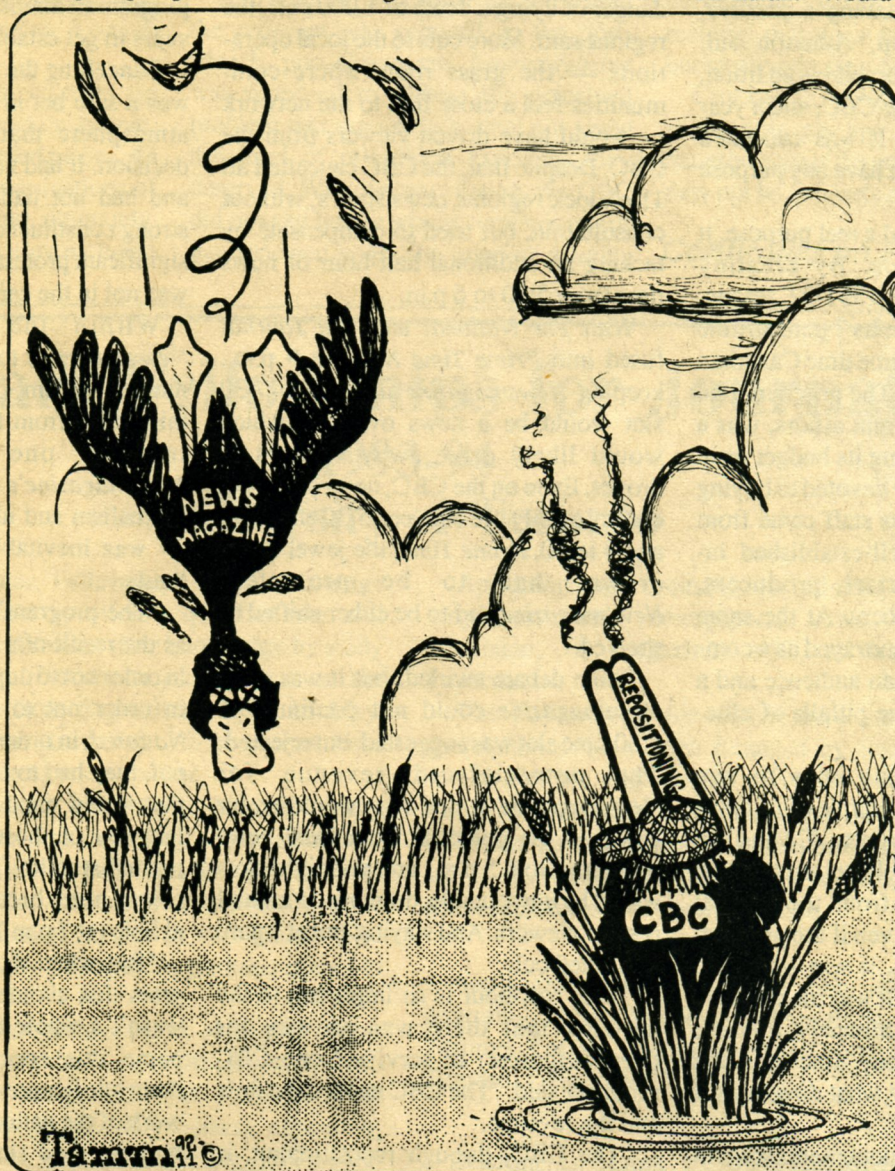
Why did it not fit into CBC's "repositioning" doctrine? With its cancellation, cynics might say *Newsmagazine* was little more than poorly-conceived pandering to the CRTC, Canadian content, and the disaffected "ordinary Canadian." Would that be justified? Did

Newsmagazine leave any legacy to the CBC or news television?

When *Newsmagazine* was first announced, CRTC Chairman David Colville thought he detected a whiff of desperation in the plan. CBC President Gérard Veilleux assured Colville it was anything but desperate: it was the way of the future.

But now, that way of the future is in the past. The repositioning moves certainly throw weight behind Colville's suspicions. The CBC appears rudderless, careering from one year's plan to the next.

Repositioning is designed to be the CBC's action plan for the future, a thoughtful



response to the fast-approaching 150-channel universe. Audience fragmentation and niche marketing have become buzz words to jittery television executives all over North America. With a rapidly splintering audience and the CBC losing its place in the Canadian consciousness, the corporation had to do something to avoid being swept away in a flood of specialty channels. Exactly what that was, no one was certain.

Tony Atherton, the *Ottawa Citizen's* television critic, called the creation of *News magazine* a stop-gap measure.

"It was must something that (the CBC) could give the CRTC that would make it sound like they were taking a positive, rather than negative step," Atherton said.

"It was touted as a marvellous addition, absolutely needed at the CBC, and a year later it doesn't exist. It was cancelled simply because it didn't have any purpose to begin with."

If *News magazine* had a real purpose, it was a pragmatic one. By creating *News magazine* for the 1991-92 season, the CBC could not lose. Its 7 p.m. airtime upped the network's prime time Canadian content to 91 per cent. The program, like all CBC news and current affairs, was a relative bargain, drawing its budget from the money traditionally devoted to buying American programs. Its staff came from within the CBC's well-established infrastructure of reporters, producers, writers and videographers. At the same time, its creation was portrayed as a commitment to the Canadian audience and a bold departure from the pitfalls of elite-centred journalism.

The CBC was also able to use *News magazine* as an example of its commitment to distinctive, Canadian programming. That likely helped to wrest another \$50 million from the federal government in 1991. Even if the program lasted a single season, it was a no-lose situation for the CBC. It was inexpensive and Canadian. And, ultimately, it was a one-year solution to buy time until the CBC really figured out what directions it should pursue.

As with the CBC's monumental cuts in December 1990, the May repositioning

decisions were made by a select few, without consulting any regional producers. "Top-down management style" was the cutting phrase used by several CBC staffers. *News magazine's* producers were told one day ahead of time, but that was the first they had heard of any discussion about the program's fate. In the regions, the moves were "a bolt out of the blue," according to one regional producer.

The regions had pleaded with management to leave their programs alone during a repositioning think-tank of CBC programmers and producers several weeks earlier in Toronto. They were in danger of dying a death of 1,000 cuts, the regions said. More cuts to the local operations — the grass roots where communities feel a close link to the network — would have driven viewers from the CBC. Despite that, the CBC cancelled all 11 o'clock regional news shows, without consultation, but tried to compensate by tacking an additional half-hour of news time from 5:30 to 6 p.m.

With *The National* and *The Journal* fused into *Prime Time News* at 9 p.m., keeping *News magazine* in its 7 to 7:30 slot would be a news overload which would likely drive away viewers in droves. Even on the CBC, news could not control a daily life between 5:30 and 7:30, and 9 to 10. *Prime Time*, the jewel in the crown, had to be protected. *News magazine* had to be either shifted or shelved.

Some debate swirled, but it was clear *News magazine* could not continue. A 5:30 time slot was suggested, but rejected. The potential ad revenue for *News magazine* at that time would be far less than the potential for a local news program. Both 5 p.m. and midnight slots would be unworkable, drawing on a small pool of viewers. And staying-put at 7 p.m. was ruled out.

"That half-hour is so important to the network that there was no way for (*News magazine*) to survive," one CBC producer said. "The CBC needed the time and the revenue.

"The CBC, through repositioning, is clearly trying to rebuild a link with the

Canadian people, and part of the way to establish that is by the number of people watching. If that thing was doing a million-and-a-half people at 7 o'clock, nobody would have touched it."

But, *News magazine* was not pulling in much of an audience. About 400,000 viewers tuned in nightly. In contrast, its lead-in, the country-wide provincial news supper-hours garner roughly one million viewers combined. *News magazine's* fate was sealed.

Ron Crocker, formerly the CBC's director of regional news and current affairs, said that the show had no time to develop a following. "If you mount a new program in almost any area, it needs two years to get established."

Cancelling the nascent *News magazine* was a safe bet in the politically-charged atmosphere that surrounds any CBC decision. It had not won a large audience and had not had time to build up any strong constituency across the country. A significant protest against its cancellation was not in the cards.

Within the CBC, many felt *News magazine* too soft to be considered real journalism, others concluded it was misguided from the beginning. According to one CBC journalist, *News magazine's* undoing — in terms of journalism and ultimately, in the ratings — was inevitable due to its muddled thesis.

"The program's thesis really emerged as the result of a series of compromises: in order not to duplicate the supper hours, in order not to scoop or preview *The National*, in order not to offend *The Journal*, they had to come up with a program that would stand on its own and not violate any of those principles," the CBC journalist said. "And there was a perceived need, because of the small national hole (at 7 p.m.) to get regional content.

"But when they decided to do a program that avoided the other three, there wasn't a whole lot left. And out of that came this concept of doing largely domestic features that would combine the work of the national staff and some of the regions. And since you always try and find some sort of unifying principle, what

emerged was this grass-roots, let-the-people-speak kind of concept."

The result of this philosophy was *Newsmagazine's* eclectic, scattered style. It could be argued that it was this lack of cohesion, along with the poorly-conceived news summary, that made it nearly impossible for *Newsmagazine* to find an audience. The show's producers felt that such slices of life from all over would build both "texture" and a sort of unity through disunity.

As one CBC producer observed, however, it would be difficult to imagine an audience warming to such a broad spectrum of stories. When *Newsmagazine* began to focus its mandate, toying with single-issue programs or series, it was in a catch-22.

It devoted a week to a series on problems in Canada's education system, featuring some good, extended pieces. As well, it aired full-length examinations of a woman's story of abuse and, ultimately, her death. Other strong stories included

portraits of a child molester and a murderer. But, as it steered towards some "hard news" journalism, *Newsmagazine* became embroiled in an inevitable conflict with *The National* and *The Journal*.

Newsmagazine's serious ventures into journalism would invariably hurt it. An effective news and current affairs program at 7 p.m. would become an alternative to the nightly news. The program could continue airing its news-lite pieces, but if it tried significant news too often, it would cause conflicts within the CBC. The message: keep up the people stories and puff pieces, keep the serious journalism to a minimum.

And what of "the ordinaries" for whom the program was created? In the post-Meech, post-Spicer era, *Newsmagazine* was supposed to address the perceived problem that regular folk were not given the kind of television exposure they deserved. With its cancellation, the CBC did not say how it would compensate for that renewed void. The populist *Midday*

continues as a sort of daytime equivalent and *This Country* does a sort of lower-budget-style *Newsmagazine* on *Newsworld*. On the main national CBC network, however, no substitute is in the offing.

But the program may leave a legacy at the CBC. "It certainly didn't fail from where I sit, being responsible for the regional news and current affairs programs," Ron Crocker said. "It enhanced the level of co-operation between network news and regional news. And it was instrumental in promoting a lot of specific pieces that might not have been aired otherwise. It provided a forum on the network for a lot of excellent regional material that does get done all the time but rarely gets seen outside its own area."

Crocker says *Newsmagazine* proved there was an appetite for regional material across the country. That appetite may not be as hearty as Crocker suggests,

Continued on Page 22

Southam Fellowships for Journalists 1993-94 University of Toronto

The objective of these Fellowships is to encourage improvement in journalism by offering qualified men and women an opportunity to broaden their knowledge by study in a university setting. For the academic year at the University of Toronto, from September, 1993, to May, 1994, up to five Canadian journalists will be chosen from the applicants by the selection committee.

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

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

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

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

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

Deadline is March 1, 1993, and early application is advised. Selections are announced in late April.

Advocacy journalism doesn't serve public

By Joel-Denis Bellavance

"It's war!" exclaimed Michel Vastel to a crowd of reporters attending the Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec's convention in December 1991.

Vastel, a journalist whose articles are published in three French-language newspapers and who has covered Parliament Hill for over 15 years, was encouraging other reporters to be more active in the constitutional crisis and to respond to attacks on Quebec from anglophone columnists such as Diane Francis (*Financial Post*) and Bill Johnson (*Montreal Gazette*).

He argued that all but one francophone columnist in Quebec were "street entertainers" ("des amuseurs publics"), the exception being Lise Bissonnette, director of *Le Devoir*, who has written in an editorial that she favors independence for Quebec.

Vastel later maintained in an interview with "Le -30-," the French equivalent of *Content*, that he was not leading a campaign for advocacy journalism but was only requesting that his fellow columnists be proactive in the constitutional debate.

His comments led to some controversy during and subsequent to the convention.

The majority of reporters in attendance did not endorse Vastel's position but his statements only underlined the fact that advocacy journalism — "le journalisme de combat" — is indeed already practiced by a number of Quebec journalists.

In fact, some reporters from Quebec covering Parliament Hill believe they have a mission to fulfil in Ottawa by openly admitting they are there to ensure the protection of Quebec's interests.

However, by practicing this form of journalism, are they serving their readers and their audience or satisfying their own interests by letting the public know what their convictions are? They are certainly not providing the public with the facts since their articles often contain personal comments.

(This is not to say, however, that the English media are without fault when it comes to covering political or social events, especially in Quebec. The lack of objectivity English reporters displayed during the 1990 Oka crisis is a very good example. The government of Quebec was portrayed in some media as a torturer whereas the Mohawks were described as martyrs.)

Advocacy journalism is not "illegal" as such, but it deviates from one of the most

fundamental and basic rules of journalism: objectivity. All respectable reporters must observe this rule, in every event they cover, in order to help the public understand the issues.

Centuries subsequent to the invention of the printing press, reporters began to draw a line between factual and opinion-filled reports. In fact, the search for a balanced story is an "invention" of the 20th century which began with the creation of news agencies.

Owing to the fact that the traditions of fairness and objectivity took so long to achieve, why should any journalist wish to jeopardize these accomplishments? Especially during a highly emotional constitutional debate.

Advocacy journalism should still be practised to encourage debate. But the product of such a practice must be published in a clearly identified section of the paper, such as the Op-Ed pages. Failure to do this will only threaten the well-being of democracy and be a step backward in the way news is delivered to the public. □

Joel-Denis Bellavance is a city hall reporter for Le Droit in Ottawa.

NEWS FROM THE  WORLD OF FORD

We're available when you want facts, photos, interviews, background, or whatever, on the auto industry in general and Ford in particular.



Ford Motor Company of Canada, Limited, News Service, The Canadian Road, Oakville, Ontario L6J 5E4

Tony Fredo, Jim Hartford, John Jelinek, Chris Banks

Richard Deziel

Telephone (416) 845-2511 After business hours (416) 622-1826

7800 South Service Road, Pointe Claire, Quebec (514) 697-8220

When writing is a pain!

The hidden cost of technology

By Lisa Keller and David Hickey

When Shirley Muir started using a mouse with her Macintosh computer, she noticed a strange thing: pain.

"I'd be in pain all weekend, after using the mouse at work during the week," Muir recalls. "I have a Mac at home, and then when I started using a Mac at work as well, it obviously stressed my one hand."

Muir, past president of the Canadian Association of Journalists, found a simple solution to her problem. "I stopped using the mouse, and the pain in my wrist went away."

She was lucky. The problem Muir described is not new, but it seems to be growing fast in an increasingly technological world where job specialization is forcing workers to do repetitive hand tasks thousands and even tens of thousands of times a day. While rest is the cure for some people, others must resort to a variety of treatments, ranging from wrist splints to steroid injections or even surgery.

The problem is called carpal tunnel syndrome, or CTS, and when you bend or twist your wrist repetitively, you put yourself at risk of getting it. That includes typists and journalists who pound on computer keyboards every day, butchers who cut meat and fillet fish, grocery store clerks at their tills and even grandmothers who knit too much.

The pain doesn't end when you put your work down at the end of the day. Suddenly, it becomes difficult, even impossible, to cuddle your baby, play with

the dog, put on make-up, button a coat or caress your spouse. Your fingers may suddenly fall asleep in the midst of the most mundane task: driving a car or holding open a book. But the average person may not link these symptoms with CTS because initially the pain doesn't occur during work.

"The first thing you notice is you wake up at night with a tingling sensation and you have to get up and shake your hand," says Dr. Manfred Zeismann, chief of plastic surgery for the University of Manitoba and the Health Sciences Centre, Manitoba's largest hospital complex.

As the syndrome progresses, the tingling becomes more frequent. "There may be some weakness in the thumb, and a pins-and-needles sensation," says Zeismann. In bad cases, the tingling turns to fiery pain in the wrist, radiating out into the fingers.

The human hand is a delicate and complex machine, composed of 27 bones, and a variety of muscles, tendons, ligaments and nerves. CTS occurs when repetitive motion causes tendons in the wrist and hand to expand and pinch the median nerve, which passes through a tunnel in the carpal bones in the wrist.

Three major nerves—the ulnar, radial and median—connect the hand to the brain and spinal cord, and give humans finely-tuned finger dexterity.

The median nerve supplies power to the thumb, forefinger, middle finger and half the ring finger. It passes through the carpal tunnel which is narrow and

crowded with tendons, membranes and nerves. Swollen tendons caused by repetitive motion can squeeze the median nerve until it is physically flattened and filled with pain.

Zeismann warns several groups are at risk: those doing repetitive motion tasks, people with thyroid disorders and diabetes, pregnant women who retain



CELANESE

Celanese Canada Inc. is a diversified manufacturer of man-made fibres and industrial and chemical products. With its

head office in Montreal, the Corporation operates three plants and sales offices across Canada, employing close to 1,900 persons.

CONTACT:

Head Office
Montreal, Quebec
WILMA WIEMER
Manager,
Communications
(514) 871-5524

Polyester Division
Millhaven, Ontario
JIM W. GIBSON
Human Resources
Manager
(613) 389-2210,
ext. 441

Textile Group:
Cellulosic Fibres Division
Drummondville, Quebec
ALAIN CÔTÉ
Supervisor,
Employee Relations and
Communications
(819) 478-1451, ext. 218

Chemicals & Industrial
Products Group
Edmonton, Alberta
GARRY SHURY
Human Resources
Manager
(403) 471-0511

Celanese Canada Inc.

800 René-Lévesque Blvd. West
Montreal, Quebec H3B 1Z1

fluids and some people who've had wrist fractures.

There is no Canadian central registry which keeps track of the number of people who get CTS. Zeismann notes that between April 1, 1991, and March 31, 1992, 129 carpal tunnel operations were performed at Health Sciences, where the majority of such surgery in Winnipeg take place.

Zeismann performs the fairly low-risk operation in 20 minutes under local anaesthetic. "Most patients say the relief is immediate," he says. Many people with desk jobs can be back at work in a couple of days, he adds.

But surgery should be a last resort, says Zeismann. He advises other curatives first. An injected steroid will reduce swelling, but this is a temporary solution, and not often used. Zeismann suggests rest first and foremost, and often uses splints to restrict the range of motion.

That can be problematic. Journalists who need to rest their wrists aren't writing or earning much.

Despite that fact, neither journalists nor their employers seem to be taking the problem too seriously.

Brian Cantley of The Canadian Daily Newspaper Association admits the association has no policy in place for alerting writers to the risk of CTS. Ironically, Cantley, manager of editorial services for the association, has ongoing problems

with his fingers and hands.

"I get a lot of tingling the thumb and first two fingers of each hand are bothered," says Cantley, who rarely engages in even "steady" amounts of typing.

Though there is a growing awareness of the disorder, Cantley says few newspaper managers take the time to edu-

research of Elizabeth Burt, a physiotherapist who works for the city. She has been looking into the health problems reported by city workers, trying to find out as much as possible about CTS in Winnipeg.

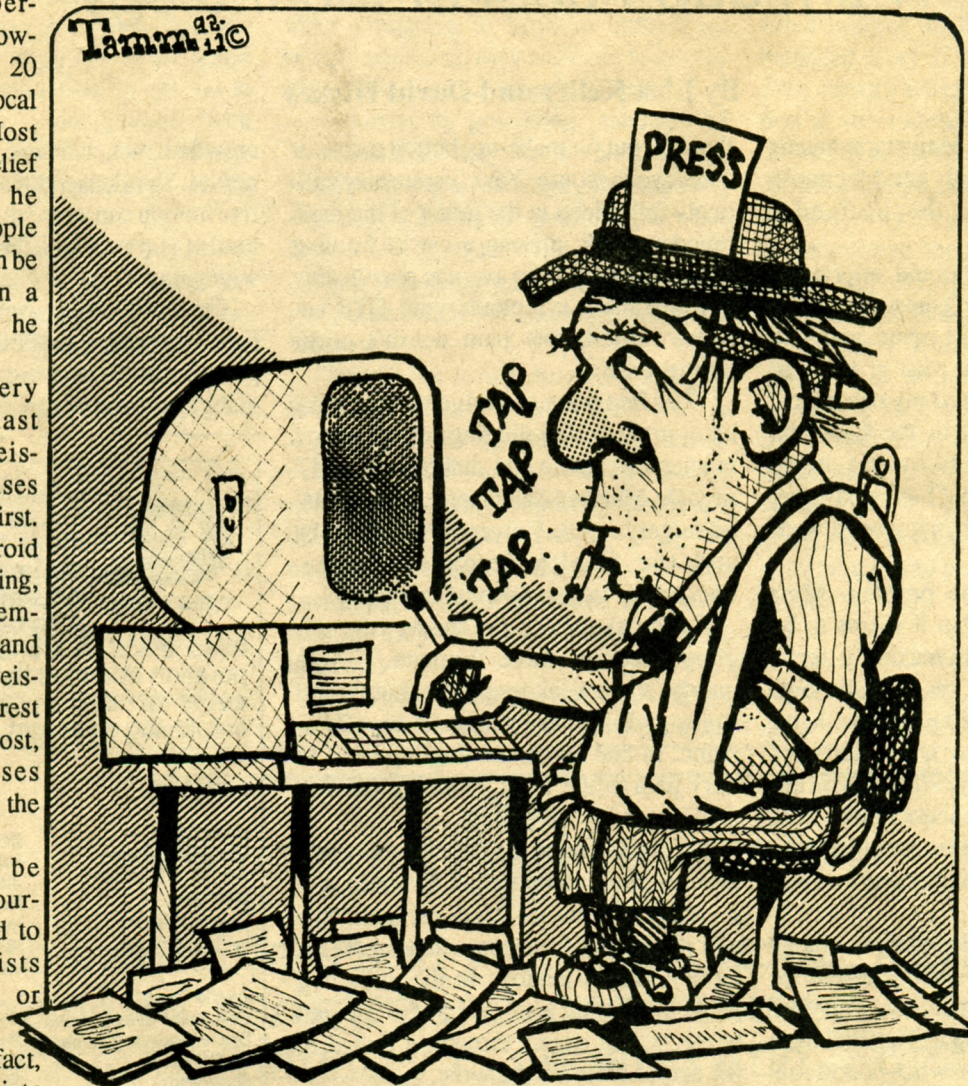
One thing Burt couldn't find was comprehensive statistics on the syndrome. What she did find, after a lot of reading and experimenting with workers and their environments, is that "the best solutions seemed to be the simplest. People can help themselves once they know how."

To complement her study, Burt tried to put together a picture of carpal tunnel injuries using provincial workers' compensation reports.

Because of the method of classifying injuries by the workers' compensation board, she could only estimate the number of injuries in the city or province. Burt searched under a variety of headings for injuries including upper arm, lower arm, hand, sprains, strains, etc. Of a total 21,000 claims in Manitoba in 1990, she guesses that perhaps 500, or about two per cent were CTS-related.

But the exact numbers are not the issue. Burt says it is clear many people are suffering repetitive motion injuries every year, and "workers' compensation should never be hearing about them," she says.

While she understands that heavy-duty jobs like meat-packing will always cause some injuries, Burt says making a com-



cate their staff about CTS.

One employer who isn't leaving things to chance is the City of Winnipeg. The city is going out of its way to educate employees about CTS, before they risk injury and lost time.

This unique pro-active stance is no accident. It came about largely due to the

fortable work environment for VDT operators could almost eliminate chance of injury.

"When I started checking our offices, I found people who had their computer screens tilted back so far that you could see the overhead fluorescent lights reflected in them," she recalls.

"One clerk started working at a desk already set up by someone else. She was afraid to move anything."

Burt started working with employees to help them overcome their "fear" of adjusting chair heights, computer screen angles, and other simple things.

She suggests that anyone working at a VDT keep his or her wrist and forearm level. If that means sitting on a phone book, so be it.

"Even the best posture, if held all day, is harmful. Static postures should be avoided," Burt warns.

Periodically stand and stretch, and take short, frequent breaks to avoid eye strain. If glare off a computer screen brings on

headaches, the solution may be to turn the entire desk, if necessary. In short, Burt advises turning the workplace into a comfortable, safe place.

She also places some responsibility on the shoulders of employers.

"They really shouldn't have unreasonable expectations of their employees. I'm not so sure the VDT is to blame. We need enlightened employers who give people power over their environment."

Zeismann agrees with Burt's assessment that redesigning a work station can be a "big help," but he also notes there really aren't any exercises that can prevent or cure motion injuries.

Both Zeismann and Burt agree the real reason behind the recent sharp rise in carpal tunnel injuries is a case of technology pushing the body past its limit.

"If you run it at top speed, a machine or a body will break down," Burt warns.

It is true people aren't typing much faster than they did 40 years ago. But they

also aren't doing little things like adjusting paper in a typewriter, or moving their hands to throw a carriage return lever. On a computer, the cursor moves automatically to the next line. All the operator need do is pound the keys, always in the same position, day after day.

At 60 words a minute, it's easy to see that a typist hits the keys tens of thousand of times in an average day. And every time a finger flexes to hit the keyboard, the ligament must slide through the carpal tunnel.

As work becomes more and more specialized, many people find themselves in jobs with repetitive motion. Zeismann agrees with a statistic put forth by U.S. National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health that up to 50 per cent of the workforce may suffer symptoms of repetitive motion disorders by the turn of the century. □

Lisa Keller and David Hickey are Winnipeg-based freelance writers.

Call for entries

THE ATKINSON FELLOWSHIP IN PUBLIC POLICY

The Atkinson Fellowship in Public Policy, now entering its sixth year, is an award designed to further the tradition of liberal journalism in Canada begun by the late Joseph E. Atkinson.

It will be awarded to a full-time journalist for a one-year research project on a topical public policy issue, culminating in the publication of results in a series of articles or a book.

The Fellowship includes a stipend of \$60,000; a budget for research expenses up to \$25,000 will also be considered. The research year begins September 1, 1993.

Application forms will be available after January 18, 1993. The closing date for entries is March 26, 1993.

Sponsored by The Atkinson Charitable Foundation, The Toronto Star and The Beland Honderich Family.

For application forms:

Adele Jushka, Secretary, Atkinson Fellowship Committee,
One Yonge Street, Sixth floor, Toronto, Ontario M5E 1P9
Telephone inquiries: (416) 869-4801

continued from Page 17

however, when one recalls the slight, seven-per-cent share that *Newsmagazine* garnered.

Nonetheless, Crocker believes that *Newsmagazine's* spirit will live on, with its sort of regional stories appearing on the expanded regional supertime news.

Newsmagazine's cancellation was also the cancellation of the regions' main access to a national audience. However, the regions have not received all of *Newsmagazine's* \$4-million budget for their expanded supper news this fall. Inexplicably, \$2 million was taken back by the CBC's head office in Ottawa; \$1 million was diverted to the national newsroom; and the final \$1 million was split among the 11 regional supper hours. The CBC may throw in anywhere from \$500,000 to \$1 million to the regions.

"It's almost nothing," one producer said. *Newsmagazine's* budget had to fill five 30-minute shows (two-and-a-half hours) per week. With its cancellation, the 11 supper hours will have 30 minutes extra per day to fill (27 1/2 hours) for roughly one-quarter the budget of *Newsmagazine*.

In the final analysis, *Newsmagazine* was symptomatic of the turmoil and lack of vision in the CBC head office. Reeling after its devastating, self-inflicted surgery in 1990, the network's brass

reacted to the crisis atmosphere by presenting a panicked, cynical package to the CRTC in March 1991.

A sop to the CRTC, the program was on the road to ruin from its conception. It was the worst kind of compromise, planned not on what it would do (beyond covering stories about "real people"), but rather on what it would not do. *Newsmagazine's* mandate was to avoid scooping news from both the preceding supper news shows and the upcoming *National*. By doing stories on "the ordinaries," it would be outside the agenda of other news and current affairs programs, while tapping in on the public's increased resentment of officialdom.

While the program's creation was both cynical and political, its performance was sometimes frustratingly good. Frustrating because alongside some bland, inoffensive stories, *Newsmagazine* ran some genuinely affecting, hard news, from a slightly non-traditional angle. After a harrowing baptism, *Newsmagazine* -- supporters and detractors agreed -- had begun to do some effective television before its cancellation. But that made any gains irrelevant and broke any remaining spirit in its contributors.

What will be missed most is its undeniable strong cross country presence. While the show was not riveting journalism, it was the CBC's best venue for showing Canada to Canadians -- a worthy achieve-

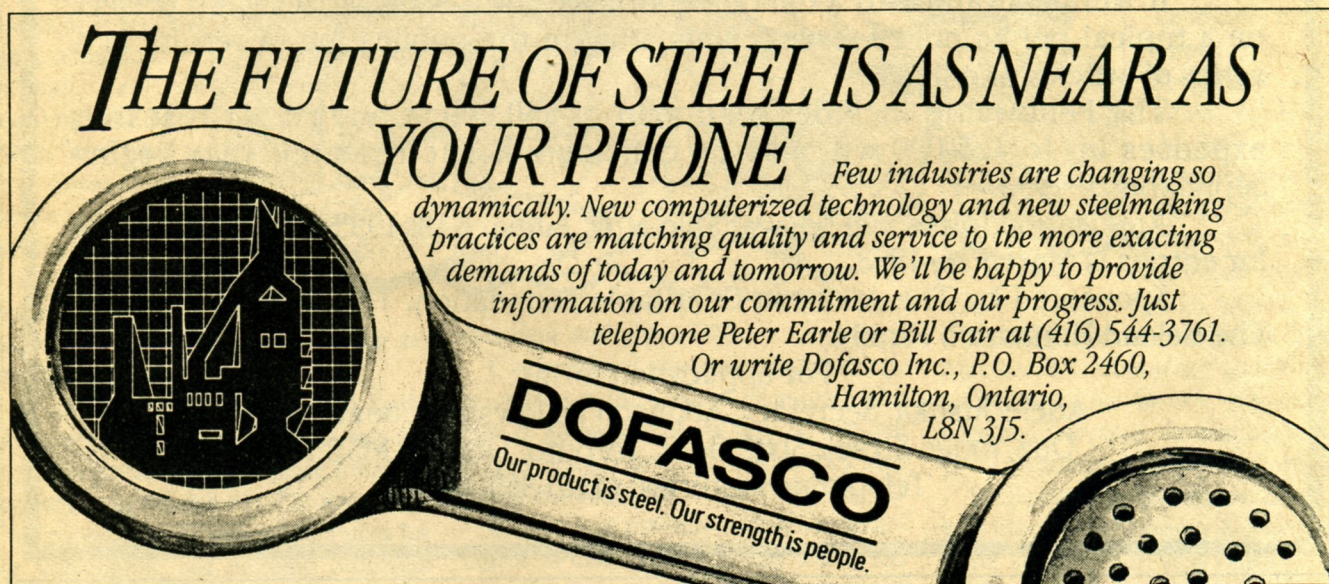
ment in itself.

Despite *Newsmagazine's* suspect origins, the program offered flashes of innovation, style and gutsy journalism, rising above mediocre infotainment. As a result, however, it was part of a disturbing trend in television journalism: blending real journalistic pursuits with personality profiles or frivolous entertainment, under the banner of real news.

Entertainment and journalism should be strange bedfellows. But the private media rely on advertising and commercialism, and entertainment values have crept into news programs. As a public broadcaster, however, the CBC should be able to resist the allure of commercialism in its news and current affairs programming. If the CBC intends to be truly distinctive with repositioning, the network must clearly separate news values from entertainment, and not present them interchangeably.

The CBC's reasons for creating *Newsmagazine* were cynical, so it seems appropriate that its reasons for cancelling it were equally suspect. *Newsmagazine* wasn't killed for any philosophical or journalistic reasons. Last year's model simply didn't fit this year's model. □

Hugh Fraser is a graduating student from the journalism program at Carleton University. This article is an excerpt from his Master's Research Project.



THE FUTURE OF STEEL IS AS NEAR AS YOUR PHONE

Few industries are changing so dynamically. New computerized technology and new steelmaking practices are matching quality and service to the more exacting demands of today and tomorrow. We'll be happy to provide information on our commitment and our progress. Just telephone Peter Earle or Bill Gair at (416) 544-3761. Or write Dofasco Inc., P.O. Box 2460, Hamilton, Ontario, L8N 3J5.

DOFASCO
Our product is steel. Our strength is people.

Media thrives on union bashing

Through Jaundiced Eyes — How the Media View Organized Labor,

By William J. Puette,
ILR Press, Cornell University, 1992,
228 pages, \$16.95 (paper)

By Ron Verzuh

Ever wonder why the trade union movement has such a consistently lousy public image? Well, wonder no longer. *Through Jaundiced Eyes* lays it out in full historical detail: people have been taught by the media to see unions as corrupt, violent, greedy and self-interested.

News and entertainment media alike have been painting this same one-dimensional negative portrait of working people and unions since the movement began back in the mid-19th century. No matter how many "good news" stories a union manages to generate, there's always that lingering image of cigar-smoking union bosses who are probably connected to the mob.

In fact, William Puette argues that almost all attempts to reshape the public image of labor have been beaten back by the repeated media themes of power and corruption in organized labor.

Take the movies, for example. Puette takes us on a tour of Hollywood films that include some labor content. Almost invariably, the unionist is the bad guy. *On the Waterfront*, *Blue Collar*, and *F.I.S.T.* are just a few of the movies that have portrayed "the American labor movement as corrupt and violent."

When a pro-labor movie does come along, as it did with *Salt of the Earth* in the 1950s, its distribution is undermined, its contents panned by critics, and its promotion undercut. "*Norma Rae* stands alone...as Hollywood's token pro-labor film," says Puette.

What about TV sitcoms and drama?

Same thing. "Over and over again the themes of power and corruption characterize the depiction of organized labor in televised dramas," Puette says. He looks at *All in the Family*, *The Untouchables*, *Serpico*, *Quincy*, *Chips*, *St. Elsewhere*, *Hill Street Blues*. All contribute to the negative image of workers and unions, tending to "emphasize the pettiness of foolishness of union bargaining goals."

In newspaper comics, the track record is equally dismal, says Puette. Unions are often represented in cartoons as the "worthless, unproductive, overpaid blue-collar work force." Worse than that, there is a detectable class bias in the way most comic strips treat labor. Puette shows that the "preferred occupations of cartoon characters were professional and managerial." Also, most characters are white.

O.K. That's entertainment. How about the news media? Surely things aren't as bleak. Guess again. Puette argues that labor has often been associated with crime reporting and that "is probably the single most damaging form of bias affecting the labor movement." Often, he suggests, the labor beat has been covered by a police beat reporter, and often the labor story is printed near the crime reports.

On the editorial page, cartoonists have long bashed unions, and far more readers tend to see cartoons than read news stories or editorials.

In television news, power and corruption again mark coverage of labor. Puette cites bias in reports by Mike Wallace of *60 Minutes*, for example, and he argues that other reporters tend to seek out employer sources far more often than union ones. "Even when labor's foes are vastly more powerful or corrupt, the media's heavy thumb of denunciation almost always turns labor down."

Puette rounds out his pro-labor critique of media coverage with a review of how unions have responded to this "formidable barrage of negative imagery." He suggests that "the lack of unity and pur-

pose in labor's response has been its greatest handicap." He says unions have not done a good job of surveying and evaluating media coverage, with the exception of a much-cited 1980 survey by the International Association of Machinists. He also notes that unions have only started using public relations seriously in the past decade.

However, he says most of the new generation of union leaders now share Steelworker PR director Gary Hubbard's view that "any union in today's society that doesn't have good communications with its members and the public will not survive."

Puette also plugs recent efforts by labor to use advocacy advertising to improve its image. He gives high marks to the AFL-CIO's \$13-million Union Yes Campaign. The two-year image-building effort began in 1987 using celebrities to deliver the union message.

He says such communications techniques will determine the future of the movement and he fears the momentum of such campaigns will be lost if it isn't followed up by other national campaigns to counter the mass media's negativity.

Through Jaundiced Eyes is not the first analysis of labor's media image, but it may be the first to look beyond the labor beat to other media that influence public opinion in more subtle ways. That's a critical distinction, because as Puette argues, "people's values are shaped mostly by experience and emotion and only a little by logical thought. For this reason, the portrayal of unions in the media, particularly in movies, plays a major role in shaping the attitudes of Americans toward labor unions."

Needless to say, Canadians, too, can learn much from this study in the uphill struggle to wipe some of the media tar-nish off the union movement and the working people it represents. □

Ron Verzuh is a public relations officer for a major Canadian union.

ShortTakes

Seven Canadian journalists have been chosen to participate in an international exchange program.

The reporters and their newspapers are hosting visiting journalists from six developing countries this fall. The Canadians will complete the exchange by visiting overseas in January.

The program is sponsored by News-Link, a joint initiative between the Canadian International Development Agency and the Canadian Organization for Development through Education, a development agency that supports literacy efforts in 15 Third World countries.

Participating in the exchange are **Joseph Mukolwe**, editor of *Sauti ya Kericho*, in Kericho, Kenya, and **Bill Clarke**, a reporter with the *Campbellton Tribune*, in New Brunswick; **Gibbs Dube**, editor of *Ilanga* in Gwanda, Zimbabwe, and **Hazel Postma**, a reporter with *Coquitlam Now* in British Columbia; **Citanjali Persaud**, a reporter at *The Stabroek News*, Georgetown, Guyana, and **Alison Uncles**, a reporter at the *London Free Press* in Ontario; **Theophil Makunga**, editor of *Tujifunze*, Songea, Tanzania, and **Lin Orosz**, editor of the *Melville Advance* in Saskatchewan; **Nellie Njawala**, assistant editor of *Boma Lathu*, Blantyre, Malawi, and **Keren Adlerley**, a reporter with the *Cambridge Times* in Ontario; **Boubacar Sangare**, a reporter at *Les Echos* in Bamako, Mali, and **Gilles Toupen**, a reporter with *La Presse* in Montreal; and **Bassiriki Toure**, editor of *Kibaru*, Bamako, Mali, and **Francois Belisle**, a reporter with *Les Echos Abitibiens*.

The journalists are spending three weeks working at each other's newspapers.

Ottawa Magazine has a new editor. **Rosa Harris-Adler** replaces **Heather Loucks** who was laid off in June. A freelancer, Harris-Adler has written for *Chatelaine*, *Canadian Living*, *Report on Business* and *Reader's Digest*.

Three senior editorial appointments have been made at the *London Free*

Press. Former managing editor **Tony Bembridge** is the news executive editor with responsibility for administration and operations.

Saturday editor **Helen Connell** has been promoted to associate editor with responsibility for the editorial page, the daily and Saturday Forum pages and other commentary functions.

City editor **Mary Nesbitt** has been named associate editor with responsibility for the news- and information-gathering functions of the editorial department.

The editor and associate publisher of Winnipeg-based *Business People Magazine* is making a career change. **Howard Burshtein** has left to attend law school.

Catherine Wilson has replaced **Pam Bristol** as editor of *Food in Canada* published by Maclean Hunter.

Freelance writer **Janice Biehn** is a new copy editor for *The Medical Post*.

The senior editor of *Where Toronto*, **Pauline Hill**, has moved to *Chatelaine* as an associate copy editor.

Meanwhile, **Sandra MacDonald** has been named the first president of the Canadian Film and Television Production Association. MacDonald was director general of television for the CRTC. The CFTPA, formed in 1990 by the merger of the Canadian Film and Television Association and the Association of Canadian Film and Television Producers, lobbies on behalf of the independent production industry.

Harrowsmith editor **Michael Webster** has resigned after a disagreement with publisher **Fred Laflamme** over the choice of freelancers. Gardening editor **Jennifer Bennett** has also left.

Managing editor **Steve Kowch** has been named general manager of Standard Broadcast News. He had been acting general manager for several months.

Meanwhile on the West Coast, Vancouver freelance writer **John Masters** has taken over as senior editor of the *Georgia Strait*. He replaces managing editor **Charles Campbell**, who is on

leave of absence.

Publicists in Canada can now reach media in the former Soviet Union through the TASS news agency. Canada News Wire is now offering its clients exclusive access through TASS which serves 387 media outlets in Russia, the Ukraine and the nine independent states, including a direct feed into the office of Russian President Boris Yeltsin. □

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

For
concise,
authoritative
information
about
international
communications

Cindy Hoffman
(514) 289-7483

Teleglobe
Canada 
A memotec Company

Globe book lacks insight

The *Globe and Mail* presents a curious double image. In some quarters, the *Globe* continues to be saluted as an agenda-setter, a reference point for thinkers and policy-makers, one of the world's elite newspapers — a veritable national institution.

In other circles, it is seen as a shrinking entity with profits sagging, circulation static or dipping near the 300,000-mark, and chunks of advertising sliced off by its immensely successful rival, the *Toronto Star*. These critics find the paper tilted too far toward the business world, with diminishing attention paid to such traditional areas as sports and local coverage.

David Hayes' new book on the *Globe and Mail* (*Power and Influence* — Key Porter Books) leans closer to the first interpretation: the *Globe* as a national institution. But he concedes the paper has been hampered by blunders in policy and practice and by the increasing pressures of the television age.

Power and Influence provides a chapter-and-verse account of the *Globe* from the mid-1930s to 1991. But the sharpest focus is on the post-1978 period -- the era of Roy Megarry as publisher. The book stops just short of the recent announcement of Thomson Newspapers Ltd., corporate owners of the *Globe* since 1980, that David Clark, head of Campbell Soup Co. Ltd., has taken over from Megarry as publisher.

The strength of Hayes' account is the vignettes of successive publishers and editors-in-chief of the newspaper -- the career of Oakley Dalgleish as editor and publisher, the reign of the inscrutable Dic Doyle as editor-in-chief, and the powerful impact of Clark Davey as managing editor for 15 years.

Hayes chronicles the end of the Dalgleish-Doyle-Davey era in adequate fashion; he is better at describing the long

lead up to the Megarry ouster of Norman Webster as editor-in-chief and Geoffrey Stevens as managing editor in early 1989. The skirmishes, the sniping, and the guerilla warfare by word and memo are neatly etched, and the change of pace brought about by William Thorsell, Alberta-bred resident intellectual, as new editor-in-chief is assessed.

But the newsroom intrigue and infighting seem to engage Hayes so much that he gives scant attention to other components of the *Globe* story. The pervasive presence of the Thomson empire as the ultimate controller of the *Globe*'s destiny is scarcely mentioned after the reference to Thomson's takeover from FP Publications in 1980. What budgetary limits did Thomson Newspapers Ltd. place on the *Globe*? How do these compare with FP operations? Was Megarry under any pressure to step down?

Hayes does deal in a couple of sentences with Megarry's ill-starred attempts to introduce a Metro section and an afternoon edition; after two years and several million dollars, these experiments were abruptly cancelled. More analysis of these misadventures would be helpful.

Early in the book, Hayes recognizes as "often misguided" Megarry's persistent attempts to de-emphasize coverage of Metro Toronto, the nation's "largest and most influential metropolis," but this facet of the Megarry mystique is not fully explored. Nor is the parallel urge to dilute major sport coverage. Both of these developments occurred when the *New York Times*, one of the *Globe*'s models, was expanding both Metro and sports coverage with more staff and special sections.

Hayes is given to inflating the *Globe*'s achievements in technological change and makeup during the past three years. At various points, he describes them as

"monumental," symptomatic of "audacious initiative" and a signpost of "radical transformation."

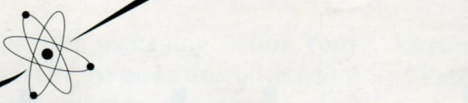
The changes are worthy of note, but scarcely revolutionary. The latest front page remake with its full-length index straitjackets the rest of the news in a predictable format — and the headings are in part a copy of London's *Independent*, and in part a throwback to the style of a half century ago.

Hayes quite properly credits Megarry, and later the Megarry-Thorsell, team with certain achievements. Building on a solid tradition of the Dalgleish-Doyle-Davey period, the *Globe* has increased and diversified its national and international bureaus. The paper's Report on Business, a solid plus for years, has been expanded and brightened. An essay-like Facts & Arguments page has been introduced.


What remains disconcerting is Hayes' apparent belief that Megarry and Thorsell have given the *Globe* the added dimension of interpretive reporting and backgrounding of events, issues and trends. That has been a trademark of the *Globe* for decades. Its current inadequacies lie elsewhere — stagnant circulation, sliding advertising revenues, uncertain policy direction at the top, and a skimping on editorial resources apart from business coverage.

David Hayes has contributed a useful review of the *Globe*'s recent past. But his quota of lively personality snapshots and "insider" memos cannot entirely make up for an under-supply of insight. □

Murray Goldblatt is a journalist who has served at the Globe and Mail's national editor and Ottawa bureau chief and taught at the Carleton University School of Journalism.



The temperature of the aqueous content of an unremittingly ogled saucepan never reaches 100 degrees celsius.



Everyone knows "a watched kettle never boils". And while the jargon associated with the nuclear industry can seem as muddy as this rewrite of an old aphorism, we can explain it in simple, understandable terms.

When you get right down to it, using a nuclear reactor to generate electricity is just another way to boil water for steam to spin the turbines. If someone tells you the nuclear core that contains the controlled fission process is called a calandria and it's Greek to you, you're right. It's the Greek word for kettle.

We understand your need to render the complex into simple terms. We also understand deadlines. In short, we can help.

So next time you're doing a piece on energy, call us. We'll help you boil down the economic and technological complexities of the CANDU reactor into language your audience understands.

Make your life easier. For the facts, fast, call our Mississauga media hotline, (416)823-2480, and ask for Penny Metza. After all,

Exclusive dedication to necessitous chores without interludes of hedonistic diversion renders John a hebetudinous fellow...



AECL EACL

AECL CANDU

EACL CANDU