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Note from the Editor


If you needed a reminder of how short Montana's past is — at least as far as the white man is concerned — here's a shocker: Montana's first newspaper, the Montana Post, was published less than 34 years before the Kaimin rolled off the presses. And Ruth Mather's article about the Post's famous editor, Thomas Josiah Dimsdale, will come as a shock too: she rings him up as a closet Vigilante.

Deception, of course, can take many forms, as journalism ethics professor Deni Elliott notes in her piece, pegged to the recent Food Lion case, in which ABC was held liable for fraud in its PrimeTime Live report on the giant supermarket chain. Deception, she says, is justifiable under limited circumstances, but on the whole, deceptive newsgathering techniques do more harm than good.

Former Congressman Pat Williams warns us of a different evil: that posed by profit-hungry media conglomerates. But just to remind us that the bean-counters haven't beaten us all down, Gary Moseman, managing editor of Gannett's Great Falls Tribune, gives us the scoop on access to juvenile proceedings in the state.

Carol Van Valkenburg, who's been on sabbatical researching a follow-up to her acclaimed “An Alien Place: Fort Missoula,” gives us an intriguing look into the POW camp. William Marcus details the birth of KUFM-TV, now broadcasting from Mt. Dean Stone. The first dean of the J-School, Arthur Stone, would not have understood the world of online media; nor, indeed do many of today's editors. But Kyle Wood, a 1996 graduate of the UM J-School now employed by MSNBC, offers keen insight into this intriguing new medium.

A record number of articles were written by students. Yukari Usuda's sensitive photos reveal the soul of a Guatemalan village. Dan Nailen recalls his first tour of the biennial bombast, known as the legislative session. Bill Platt profiles a revolutionary documentarian for whom the eco-pendulum described by Marc Peruzzi has no meaning. Kim Skornogoski describes why the nation's fourth-largest state is too small for its journalism graduates. John Laundon and Lisa Kerscher take on a much-loved Missoula institution and Tara Turkington critiques newspaper coverage of her native South Africa's first democratic elections. Enjoy!
Deceptive newsgathering techniques cause more harm than good to society

By Deni Elliott

A trucking firm in Maine seeks damages against the NBC news magazine, Dateline, for misrepresentation. The firm claims that the Dateline producers gained access and cooperation by telling the firm that this was to be a positive segment on the life of long-distance truckers. The firm was horrified to find itself the subject of a story on the dangers truckers pose by using drugs and driving when tired.

A North Carolina jury awarded Food Lion $5.5 million in punitive damages for the ABC Prime Time Live story that had reporters going undercover with faked resumes and hidden cameras to illustrate how store employees doctored outdated, spoiled food and placed it back out on the shelves to sell.

Two celebrated 1991 U.S. Supreme Court cases, Cohen vs. Cowles Media and Masson vs. New Yorker raised claims of misrepresentation. In Cohen, the Court ruled that reporter’s promises made to a source might constitute a legal contract; in Masson, the Court ruled that altered quotes can constitute libel.

The journalistic practice of producing a story through sorcery is under new scrutiny. While journalists are expressing concern that legal limitations will chill newsgathering practices, it is important to consider the ethical implications of deceptive newsgathering techniques. Here I argue that trickery, slight of hand, and misrepresentation are tools for the magician, not for the journalist. From the passive practice of a journalist allowing a source to erroneously believe that the intended story will be a flattering one to the elaborate illusion of the journalistic mole in corporations and convalescent homes, deceptive newsgathering techniques cause more harm than good to the profession of journalism and to society as a whole.

Consumer Gut Not a Good Measure

First, it is important to note that the fact that citizens are uncomfortable with deceptive practices is irrelevant to determining the ethics of this or any other journalistic practice. What makes deceptive newsgathering wrong is not that it is a public relations problem. Audiences get queasy about a variety of journalistic practices. Some of those practices, such as displaying the shock and grief of a mother informed in public of her daughter’s death, are wrong as well as gut-wrenching. Other practices, such as displaying the body of an American soldier dragged through streets of a foreign city, are equally gut-wrenching, but justifiable because they are depictions that American citizens need to see and understand. This is a result of the U.S. government doing its people’s business and it is the responsibility of citizens to know what their government is doing.

The special role of the news media is to fill in the information gap between the people and their government. Telling citi-
When journalists are fulfilling their social function, they have a powerful tool for justifying actions that we might otherwise call unethical.

It is not true that any means justifies that important ends, but the more closely a store conforms to telling citizens what they need to know for self-governance, the more easily unusual action can be justified.

Deception is a Prima Facie Wrong

Deception is an action intended to lead an individual to a false conclusion. Deception can be a stated or physically demonstrated falsehood, as when journalists dress up as store employees or nursing home attendants while still working as journalists. They are lying in these cases, with their dress and actions saying that they are fulfilling one role when they are fulfilling quite a different one.

Deception can also occur by withholding information that it is reasonable for an individual to expect to be told. If journalists fail to tell sources the true nature of their reporting or fail to tell them that they are journalists working on a story, the sources are being deceived. They are being deceived because the journalists have withheld information that the sources have a reasonable expectation to know.

Deception is a prima facie wrong because it is parasitic on our usual belief that people are who they present themselves to be and that they will tell us all relevant information concerning their relationships with us. Life is too full to question or investigate the truth of each of our interpersonal encounters. No matter how cynical we believe ourselves to be, our social interactions revolve around trust.

When I check my watch by saying to a stranger in a questioning tone, "My watch says 10:30," I assume that she will tell me if there is a large discrepancy with what her watch reads.

When I face a class at the University, I assume that those are students, there to complete course requirements, and not investigators of the journalistic or governmental type. Deception works because it is in our human nature to trust.

Because it is a prima facie wrong, deception always requires justification. The most common justification for deception is consent. Just as we have a society built on mutual trust and truth telling, we have cultural conventions of consent to deception. If I go to a magic show, I want to be deceived. If my husband plans a surprise for me, I want him to withhold information that would lessen that surprise. And when I show up at work with a fabulous new haircut, I do want my colleagues to keep their unflattering, unsolicited opinions to themselves.

As a societal group, we consent to more serious kinds of deceptions. We allow unmarked police cars and carefully restrained governmental undercover investigations. In the interest of national security, we allow public officials to withhold some information and, in times of crisis, to provide "misinformation." Consent, in these cases, are provided through a combination of citizen action and inaction. While we may disagree on whether deception was called for in a particular situation, we allow for a kind of paternalistic deception by our government. The social function of government is to protect its citizens. Citizens have agreed, implicitly or explicitly, that in a narrow and protected range of cases, that it is justified for the government to deceive us when that deception is in the best interest of the country or community.

Journalistic deception is rarely justified. That is best shown through an examination of journalistic justifications offered for deception.

The Story Isn't Certain: Reporters who withhold information from sources about the true nature of the story often justify their actions by explaining (to themselves or others) that the reporters themselves aren't sure how the story is going to turn out. "Why tell the source that he is likely to be presented in a negative way," they
reason, “if I don’t really know that myself?”

More often, reporters refrain from offering such information because they are concerned that sources will refuse to talk to them if they know the truth. They withhold information from the source, such as, “We’re investigating this story because it has been suggested that you’ve done something wrong.” That is information that a source has a reasonable expectation of being told, just as they have a reasonable expectation of being told that they are talking for publication.

It’s true that a story will change, grow and develop through good reporting. Reporters need to have an open mind and to be ready to learn that things are not as they suspected when they began researching the story. But, the reporter does start out with an idea. Reporters talk to particular sources because they are looking for information that they believe that only that source can supply. If sources are not told the true nature of the story, even in light of the story changing and developing, they are being made more vulnerable than they know themselves to be. Sourcing is a voluntary activity. Withholding of information interferes with the voluntariness of the source’s action; it eliminates the possibility of the source giving informed consent to the interview. This is unjustified deception.

Reporting is a Con Game: New Yorker reporter Janet Malcolm made this justification for deception most articulate in a 1990 publication, “The Journalist and The Murderer.” She opens the book this way: “Every journalist who is not too stupid or too full of himself to notice what is going on knows that what he does is morally indefensible. He is a kind of confidence man, preying on people’s vanity, ignorance, or loneliness, gaining their trust and betraying them without remorse.”

This justification for journalistic misrepresentation implies that the relationship between the journalist and source is something like a poker game. The source ought to bluff, to coerce the source into putting her cards on the table.

That metaphor for reporter-source relationship would not allow for journalists to fulfill their social function of telling citizens information that citizens need to know. A source that is trying to outsmart the reporter is not one that is providing needed information.

The reporter-source relationship is more like a relationship between professionals with a similar goal. The source is not a client; the reporter is not working in the interest of the source, but rather that of the audience. Sources cooperate because they, as well as reporters, believe that it is important for the audience to have certain information. Sources and reporters may disagree as to which information is most important for the audience to have and it should be clear to sources that the news organization always has the last word.

The most efficient way for the audience to get its needs met is for the reporter-source relationship to be one of continuing conversation and negotiation. The reporter wants certain information for a particular reason. The source supplies that with further information or explanation that had not occurred to the reporter.

The reporter takes in that new information, checks with other sources — documents as well as people — and the story expands and changes. Or, it doesn’t. The reporter then returns to the source for further conversation. Within this style of reporter-source relationship, they need not agree or even like one another; they simply must understand and respect one another’s agenda. That is, the reporter and source are morally obligated to treat one another in a professional manner.

Let’s Catch the Bad Guys: Journalists argue that truly deceptive techniques, such as going undercover or masquerading to get a story, are used to catch people who doing things that endanger individuals or society.

The Food Lion story, for example, showed that Federal regulations for how food should be handled were ignored.
Consumers were harmed or in danger of being harmed by being sold tainted food. Thus, in these cases, journalists are doing their job, they are fulfilling their social function by getting information out that citizens need to know for self-governance.

This justification has greater plausibility than those that purportedly allow for generalized conning or withholding of sources. But, still it is problematic.

Just who are the bad guys? How does a source know if a reporter, believing the source to be a good guy, is being truthful or if the reporter, believing the source to be a bad guy, is thereby justified in deceiving to get a story?

As these questions are unanswerable in specific reporting situations, this justification, like the others, creates a scenario in which all sources are more vulnerable than they know themselves to be.

In addition, the story here is not just that the store employees have failed to do their jobs. The governmental agencies that we trust to oversee such practices have failed to do their job as well. And this is more systemic problem. What citizens need to know for self-governance is how the government keeps track of how well its regulations are being followed. Do regulatory agencies conduct undercover investigations to ferret out such practices? If not, why not?

As citizens have tacitly given approval for government to carry out restrained and justified undercover investigations, it is more consistent for government, not news organizations, to take on such projects.

**Justified Journalistic Deception**

With the understanding that almost no journalistic deception is justified, it is important to note that there is one case in one hundred where it is justified. Criteria for how to justify journalistic deception fall out from the analysis of what is wrong with the justifications usually offered. Journalistic deception is justified only if all of the following criteria are met:

- **All usual means of gathering have been attempted and exhausted.** The need for deception is not justified by a journalist’s assumption that it would be easier to get information that way. Deception will have met one criterion if it can be shown that journalists attempted and failed to develop the story differently.

- **Regulatory agencies that have the responsibility of overseeing the problem have been approached.** The story most often missed in undercover exposes is why the government is failing to do its job. Federal, state and local agencies form a web of oversight for bad truckers and bad meat. It is an important matter for self-governance if that oversight is not happening. Too often journalists skip the step of approaching regulatory agencies because of their fear that the story will “evaporate.” Upon learning from journalists that there is a problem, regulatory agencies step in and take care of the problem. The story is gone. But, while that story is gone, another has emerged: a story of government that works. Or, if the matter was cleaned up simply in response to journalistic pressure, the problem will recur and quickly. In that case, the story is delayed, not gone and when journalists begin checking into the matter again, they have the additional information that agency oversight didn’t solve the problem.

- **No innocent person is deceived.** If a story is important enough to warrant journalistic deception, the problem is broad enough that only persons involved in the wrongdoing ought be taken in by the journalistic ruse. The Wilmington, N.C. Morning Star provided an example of journalistic deception that met this criterion when, in the mid-1980s, reporters infiltrated a military base in a mock-terrorist raid. All people who work on a military base, including civilians, have a duty to be security-conscious. No “innocent” person was duped by the mock raid because all should have been ready for an infiltration by terrorists, or journalists.

- **The news organization must publicly discuss its use of questionable tactics, regardless of the outcome.** Citizens have not given consent to be deceived by news organizations. In the highly unusual case in which reporters and news managers determine that journalistic deception is justified, it should be justifiable after the case, in a public sense.

Journalistic deception tears at the fabric of trust that holds society together. News organizations who take it upon themselves to deceive owe the public an explanation of why it was necessary. If the case is strong enough, the explanation ought to make sense regardless of outcome.
Surviving budget cuts, administrative crackdowns and angry calls from the governor, The Montana Kaimin celebrates 100 colorful years of university journalism

By Matthew Ochsner

Nestled in a dilapidated three-story building on Missoula’s north side, a handful of young journalists gather anxiously, planning the newest addition to the University of Montana’s fledgling campus, The Montana Kaimin. Editor Chas Pixley, class of 1899, watches over the production of the 26-page publication, which will soon hit the newsstands at the outrageous price of 15 cents an issue and will sell 600 copies.

Spreading across Kaimin pages four and five is “Russia or England?”, a less-than-seething editorial telling readers why the Soviet Union would make a better ally than Britain. Filling page 18 is a preview of the university’s first football team, complete with a picture of players sporting leather helmets and baggy knickers. And on page one, a full-page description of how this, the first issue of The Montana Kaimin, came to be.

“The students have felt the need of some common interest, something around which they can rally,” Pixley’s staff wrote in 1898. “In view of this they have begun a college paper, of which this is the first issue.

“The Kaimin will bid you welcome at the beginning of the college year, it will be with you during the year, and bid you farewell at the close.”

Some 9,000 issues later the Kaimin has kept that promise, evolving from a literary magazine in Pixley’s day into a daily college paper today seen by 6,000 readers.

This fall the paper will celebrate its 100 year - a century of university news that most Kaiminites admit hasn’t always come easily.

“I wish I would have kept some of those letters,” said Ed Dugan, Kaimin faculty adviser for more than 30 years before retiring from the journalism school in 1974. “Letters on pink stationary from little old ladies. They wanted to know why I wasn’t protecting the morals of the young people. There were always people out to can me, out to fire me.”

Recognized as the Northwest’s first daily college newspaper in 1938, the Kaimin has survived a long history of administrative run-ins, fallen editors and zeroed budgets. In the mid 1980s a student senate angered by the paper’s reporting slashed the Kaimin’s budget to $1. Ten years later the paper didn’t even fare that well as the senate cut its budget completely.

Beginning this fall, the Kaimin will be funded by a $2 per semester student fee in attempt to avoid this political juggernaut.

But through all its battles and its blunders the Kaimin kept on printing, fine tuning a century of journalists — a list that includes former Time magazine editor Bill Forbis, painter Monte Dolack and television actor Carroll O’Connor.

“A lot of these kids owe quite a bit to the Kaimin,” Dugan said. “I don’t mean a little bit, I mean a lot. I think most of them will tell you the same thing.”
A group of young journalists gather around a linotype machine in UM’s journalism building. The \textit{Kaimin} bounced between army tents and a bicycle shed before ground was broken for the journalism building in 1936.

The \textit{Kaimin} began turning heads in Montana way back in 1909 when it slimmed to four pages and emerged as Missoula’s newest weekly - five years before the journalism school would appear on campus, housed in Army surplus tents. Nearly 100 miles away, the Anaconda Standard heralded the \textit{Kaimin} as “neat and attractive in style” and “full of real university news...which will be read with pleasure by the general public.”

By 1915 the \textit{Kaimin} had become bi-weekly, and five years later, found room for a regular humor column dubbed “The Grist.” Considered by many to be a little too outspoken and a little too risque for a college paper, “The Grist” was heavily criticized by the campus community, especially after the \textit{Kaimin} decided to include a poem titled “The Real He-Man.”

\textbf{THE REAL HE-MAN}

\textit{He doesn’t smoke,}
\textit{My pal named Mike;}
\textit{He says it’s too}
\textit{Damned ladylike.}

In the early 1920s the journalism school and the \textit{Kaimin} offices were moved into a World War I barracks built for the Student Army Training Corps. Known as “the shack,” the building shook so violently every time the presses ran that once journalism faculty and students didn’t even realize they were in the middle of an earthquake until they went home for lunch. Everything in the building, from the walls to the plumbing, was outdated and decrepit. It was even rumored the \textit{Kaimin}’s typewriters were original models their inventors had used when they applied for patents.

In October 1926 the \textit{Kaimin} reminded students to hurry and get their train tickets to the Cat-Griz football game in Butte, a game that even then was dominated by Missoula.

“Stirred by the desire to return home with another Bobcat pelt, the Grizzly journeyed to the new battle grounds with a winning determination,” the \textit{Kaimin} reported in 1926. “Finding the Bobcat off guard, the Grizzly clawed him and tore him to pieces and returned home with the usual hide.”

\textbf{T}he \textit{Kaimin} \textbf{f}inally \textbf{f}ound a permanent home in 1936 when Dean Arthur Stone broke ground for UM’s journalism building. Bill Forbis, who would eventually go on to become an editor at Time magazine, headed the paper in the late ‘30s. In one his more popular editorials, Forbis compared Adolf Hitler to Napoleon Bonaparte, concluding that “Time alone will tell the fate of one Adolph Hitler, terrorizer of Europe.”

Perhaps one of the brightest splashes of color in the \textit{Kaimin}’s colorful history came in 1949. On the front page of the first issue of the paper that school year was an editorial cartoon blasting the Board of Examiners for going against state budgeting recommendations. The cartoon depicted three rats – each believed to be representing members of the Board of Examiners — gnawing at a bag containing the university budget. Accompanying the cartoon was a stinging editorial written by \textit{Kaimin} editor Bill Smurr also criticizing the board.

Fearing the cartoon and the editorial might offend the governor and other state bigwigs, University President James
McClain ordered the presses stopped and the copies of the paper taken to the dump. McClain then asked Smurr to tone down his editorial and to remove the cartoon before reprinting the newspaper. Grudgingly Smurr agreed to revise the editorial but refused to budge on the cartoon and ordered a new press run. Once again the presses were stopped, and this time an emergency Central Board session was convened to hand down a decision. The board sided with the president, and Smurr resigned a short time later.

"I never was able to make up my mind that I did the wise thing in resigning," Smurr wrote in a letter to journalism dean Nathaniel Blumberg years afterward. "As you know, people simply do not understand the profundity of the issues tied up in the concept of a 'free press,' and though only a small college paper was at stake the affair has bothered me from that day to this. I don't like to talk about it much. As I see it today, I was foolish and honest, and the others were wise and dishonest. On the whole, I would rather be honest, I think."

A week after Smurr's resignation, a Kaimin associate editor named Carroll O'Connor followed his lead and also stepped down. Carroll O'Connor would eventually go on to play Archie Bunker on television's "All in the Family."

After mellowing a bit in the 1950s, the Kaimin shocked the state in the '60s with the "roaring" editorials of editor David Rorvik. Eventually going on to write for Forbis at Time magazine years later, Rorvik attacked everything from the Vietnam War to laws prohibiting prostitution, all the while drawing fire from all corners of the state.

"The response we got in those days was enormous," Rorvik said some 32 years later. "We had people calling us a communist organization and demanding we stop corrupting the minds of university students.

"I cringe a bit when I think about some of those editorials today, but I think they were all appropriate at the time."

In one of his most notorious editorials titled the "Contemporary Lay," Rorvik blasted the Catholic Church for its stance on birth control.

"Asked if it is not more sinful to bring into the world children doomed to malnutrition, severe inequalities and possibly even death," Rorvik wrote, "the Church has smugly maintained that couples who cannot provide for progeny need only restrain their sexual desires — by sublimating them, we imagine, in Good Works and church bazaars."

And in "Going to Pot," Rorvik called for the legalization of marijuana.

"This may not be 'Boo-U,' but everybody who's In knows there are many here who are (off-and-) On. Only a couple years ago, five or six devotees could be seen, en huddle, Puffing the Magic Dragon right in front of Old Main."

While 52 students signed a letter asking that Rorvik be dismissed, several Montana newspapers were writing editorials critical of the Kaimin. A Billings radio station aired a multi-part editorial series blasting the paper, calling the Kaimin "a red rag..."
wrapped around filth and smut, seasoned with treason.

An Associated Press story that ran in papers throughout Montana said some parents were threatening to remove their children from the university because of "alleged sex-flavored and subversive material in the Kaimin."

Dismayed by these threats, Gov. Tim Babcock also began attacking the paper, especially after the Kaimin came within a few inches from printing a poem filled with sexual connotations.

"I'm the most broad-minded person who's ever sat in this office," he said in a phone call to the Kaimin in 1966. "But I think the line should be drawn somewhere above that."

But even with the governor breathing down his neck Rorvik didn't back down, continuing to toss barbs left and right until his year-long editorship ran out in 1966.

"If subversion entails deviating too far from flag-waving standards of provincial Montana in the defense of free expression, political freedom (even or especially, for the communists), and total sexual autonomy to suit the supporters of Little Orphan Annie, J. Edgar Hoover, Pope Paul, Tim Babcock, pristine printers and the rest of those tired old women, then we are in fact subversive. And proud of it," he said in a 1966 Kaimin article.

Four years later came Kaimin editor T.J. Gilles and with him more controversy.

In only the second issue of the 1970 school year, Gilles wrote an editorial blasting UM program director Lee Tickell, whose job was to attract speakers and concerts to the university. Calling Tickell a "liar" and attacking "his weasel-like character," Gilles accused Tickell of lying to a reporter who had asked to see the minutes from a recent meeting. Gilles also referred to Tickell as a "tinhorn gambler," blaming him for the council's $33,000 debt.

Even though the Kaimin ran a retraction two weeks later, Tickell contacted a lawyer and threatened the paper with a libel suit. Two days after the retraction, Gilles told senior editor Bill Vaughn he had decided to resign and left Missoula that day with only $5 in his pocket. Tickell eventually dropped the suit.

"I sort of hit the road for awhile after that," said Gilles, who returned a week later and was eventually rehired as the Kaimin sports editor.

Though Gilles is probably most remembered for this run-in with Tickell, it's the start he gave a young Montana artist that stands out in his mind.

"I gave Monte Dolack his first art job," said Gilles, who is now a news editor at the Great Times in Great Falls. "He was our cartoonist, and I paid him $1 to draw a caricature of this guy who was retiring."

Even with the war winding down in the 1970s, headlines like "Avoiding draft now easier" and "All night sleep-in planned to protest Vietnam War," continued to be commonplace on the Kaimin front page. The paper followed student protesters through the streets of Missoula during peace marches and ran a constant barrage of national Vietnam coverage, all at a time when Missoula was being recognized across Montana for its aggressive anti-war movements. This attention again put the Kaimin in the spotlight.

"There's been a lot of times when the Kaimin has given other papers across the state a real run for their money," said Carol Van Valkenburg, who worked as a Kaimin reporter in the 1970s before taking over as adviser in 1982. "That's always a lot of fun."

Some 20 years later Missoula and the Kaimin have again mellowed. The paper has trimmed down to two editorials a week instead of four and has added a home page on the Internet, updated daily.

The Kaimin graduated three reporters in May. Two interned at the Great Falls Tribune and the other went to the Billings Gazette as a Cody, Wyo., correspondent.

This fall the paper throws a new crop of aspiring journalists into the fire, preparing them, like so many before, for a rough-and-tumble career in the world of journalism.

"It's like that saying that no one wants to watch sausage or laws being made," Van Valkenburg joked. "It's a little bit the same with learning how to become a journalist. But if the university isn't the place for that then I don't know what is."
Sheriff Plummer's revenge

The editor of Montana's first newspaper found that covering the Vigilantes meant becoming one himself

By R. E. Mather

One of the most famous newspapermen of the Western frontier, Thomas Josiah Dimsdale, appears to have been a fraud, and a cowardly one at that. In the 1860's, Editor Dimsdale informed Montana Post readers that pure democracy was the "acme of absurdity" so the justice system should rest in the hands of Vigilantes. Later, he described a series of lynchings as a "proud" record. But because Dimsdale was pious and scholarly, modern historians took him at his word when he claimed his articles were "impartial."

In 1978 Merrill G. Burlingame — then history professor at Montana State University — wrote that since Dimsdale did not participate in vigilance activities, his narrative should be "more objective than if he had been a member."

Wanting to appear objective seems to be exactly what Dimsdale had in mind back in the 1860s. In all probability, he deliberately concealed the crucial fact that he himself was a Vigilante. Also, his defense of the movement was probably so passionate because it was motivated by his own terror of meeting death at the end of the disgraceful hangman's noose — a punishment for his role in the Vigilante takeover of the miners' justice system.

Do these two probabilities suggest we should strike Dimsdale's name from the list of newspaper greats of the Old West? Not at all. The far-flung influence of his articles has earned the editor of Montana's first newspaper a secure place in history.

In fact, Editor Dimsdale could be considered as much a victim of his times as the victims he gained fame by describing: a bedridden college graduate whom armed men limped out into the snow and then strung up on a pole leaned over a corral gate, ... a merchant they waked in the dark of night and dangled by the neck from a blood-stained windlass used for butchering beef...Fortunate suspects were provided a drop; others were noosed, hoisted from the ground, and left to strangle. During the lingering death, the body could flail at the end of the rope for as long as eight minutes.

Newspaper sales of the Post escalated as Dimsdale continued to furnish details like one victim's gangrenous feet smelling so putrid that hungry wolves were lured to the scene. Though a Vigilante lieutenant named John X. Beidler was honest enough to admit that strangulation was a "horrible" death, Dimsdale advised his growing reading audience against the use of drops and neck-snapping. Strangulation, he insisted, was "the only really merciful way of hanging."

Though none of the victims he wrote about were given a trial, all have been villainized in subsequent histories. Editor Dimsdale — with his Christian burial and Masonic grave marker — has been lionized as a decent citizen and dedicated recorder of his times.

When he arrived in the Far West, he appeared to have the breeding and character to qualify him as a conscientious reporter of momentous events. In 1831 he was born into a prominent family of northern England. Besides being fragile
Historians have used Dimsdale’s accounts of Vigilante activity because of their “objectivity,” but Dimsdale himself could have been in the organization.

Dimsdale’s defense of the movement was probably so passionate because it was motivated by his own terror of meeting death at the end of the disgraceful hangman’s noose... a punishment for his role in the Vigilante takeover of the miners’ justice system.

Lacking the stamina to work at mining, he supported himself by opening a private school in Virginia City. And to supplement his income he gave private singing lessons after class.

In Alder Gulch the aloof teacher was recognized as an “Oxford-educated gentleman.”

His eleven-year-old pupil, Mollie Sheehan, thought the “small, delicate-looking and gentle” schoolmaster who spoke in a precise British accent “knew everything.” While children “buzzed and whispered over their readers,... the professor sat at a makeshift desk near the little window of the log school house writing, writing,... always writing.”

In the fall of 1863, two stage coach robberies took place between Virginia City and Bannack, home of Sheriff Henry Plummer, the popularly elected law officer for all mines east of the Rockies. Then in December, a grouse hunter stumbled across the frozen corpse of orphan Nick Tiebolt, robbed of two mules and then murdered. With Nick’s raven-pecked remains on display in the Gulch, predecessors of the Vigilantes galloped off to round up murder suspects. In late December—after the miners’ court held trials for Nick’s suspected murderers—the Vigilantes formally organized.

By February 3, 1864, they had hanged Sheriff Plummer and two deputies on the gallows at Bannack, carried out a joint execution of five men along the beam of an unfinished building in Virginia City, and hanged fourteen others at locations as far north as Hell Gate.

In May of that same year, Montana became a territory; and in August, the first newspaper appeared in the Territory, the Montana Post.

Soon after, the owners named Dimsdale editor. In August of 1865, he began his serialized articles on the Vigilantes’ heroic war against the criminal element that had been headquartered at Bannack.

Plummer’s outlaw band, Dimsdale wrote, was a formidable network manned with spies, stool pigeons, fences, roadsters, telegraph horsemen, officers and a sadistic chief. These outlaws were responsible for countless robberies and over one hundred murders of innocent citizens.

The titillating stories of robberies and lynchings were so popular with the public that in 1866, Tilton and Company decided to resurrect them as a book. But while “The Vigilantes of Montana” was still in the galley stage, Dimsdale’s health took a turn for the worse and the project had to proceed without his help. On September 22, he succumbed to his lung disease.

The grave of the pioneer journalist perchers on a hill overlooking the semi-ghost town where he achieved fame for editing Montana’s first newspaper and writing Montana’s first book. Subsequent historians did not sully the respected writer’s reputation with suspicions he belonged to the vigilance organization.

Because of the secrecy of the organization, it is not possible to offer the membership roll as evidence that Dimsdale did or didn’t belong. However there are far more reasons to assume he was a Vigilante than that he was not.

First, as one scholar of American vigilantism puts it, “Thomas Dimsdale’s classic book... was a veritable textbook on
the vigilante method." Dimsdale did not just present the vigilante philosophy, he embraced it. "While society is organizing in the far West," he wrote, "swift and terrible retribution is the only preventive of crime."

He contended there was neither time nor money for "the wearisome proceedings" and "the absolutely frightful" costs of trials held in the miners' courts. (As an example of costs, the miners' sheriff or deputies received fifty cents for serving a subpoena or summoning a juror.)

There is no doubt that Dimsdale was mightily impressed by "the Vigilantes, whose power reaches from end to end of Montana." His claim that "nearly every good man in the Territory" belonged to the lynchers provides a second clue. Dimsdale insisted it was "an absolute necessity that good, law-loving, and order-sustaining men should unite for mutual protection, and for the salvation of the community." And after "being united, they must act in harmony."

If Dimsdale failed to unite, he would be acting contrary to his own advice. And when other pro-vigilante pioneers claimed every good man at the mines united, they certainly were not implying that Dimsdale was not among their number and therefore not a good man.

Even if Dimsdale held a high position in the organization, he would have considered it his duty to suppress the information. "Secret," the Vigilantes "must be, in council and membership," he wrote, "for the detection of crime."

It seems reasonable that he was describing the precise course he chose — a silent unification. His own weakness and lack of self-defense skills were good reasons to unite with a powerful group that promised protection from the murderous criminals who supposedly honeycombed the camps.

A third consideration — which is so important it eclipses previous points — is that Dimsdale had little choice in the matter of membership. Alexander Davis, a judge of the miners' courts, has left an account of his experience with Vigilante recruiters. When Davis "politely refused" to enlist, the outraged recruiters advised him "he had the choice of joining the Vigilantes, leaving the region or being hung."

Dimsdale could have opted to leave the mines rather than join a body of men acting outside the law, but he did not. And since he was noted for his lack of courage, it is doubtful he defied recruiters and risked being hanged. He himself described the Vigilantes' authority as "resistless."

As a final reason, we have the report left by his successor at the Post. The new editor, a young Bostonian named Henry Blake, stated that he received notice he "had been elected a member of the Vigilantes."

There is no reason to suppose Vigilantes required Editor Blake to join them, but not Editor Dimsdale. As early as autumn of 1864, members were becoming uneasy about having their names on the roll because of rumors that a Federal investigation was underway. Nathaniel Lanford — who admitted to being a Vigilante officer and also admitted that Vigilantes had made mistakes — wrote in his book, "The Vigilantes ... knew full well that ... they themselves would in turn be held accountable before the law for any unwarrantable exercise of power."

The purpose of Dimsdale articles was to exonerate the Vigilantes and thus head off prosecution. But in light of Dimsdale's behavior as an editor, it is amazing he mustered the courage to write them. His close friends confessed that Dimsdale did not possess the grit to be a newspaperman; he was too "thin-skinned and sensitive."

When rival papers sprang up in the Territory, he preferred to resign rather than exchange quips with other newsmen. To keep Dimsdale at his desk at the Post, Sheriff Plummer's outlaw band was a formidable network manned with spies, stool pigeons, fences, roadsters, telegraph horsemen, officers, and a sadistic chief. This band was responsible for countless robberies and over one hundred murders of innocent citizens.

– Thomas Dimsdale

Sheriff Plummer was demonized by Dimsdale, but a correspondent for the Sacramento Daily Union wrote in 1863, "No man stands higher in the estimation of the community than Henry Plummer."

Drawing by C.M. Diaz
Editor Dimsdale’s grave overlooks Virginia City, where he gained fame as the editor of Montana’s first newspaper and author of the state’s first book, “The Vigilantes of Montana.”

Friends had to periodically give him what they called “some injection of spinal stamina.”

The question that comes to mind is what sort of spinal injection was necessary to induce Dimsdale to publicly defend a besieged vigilance organization? Perhaps an injection of fear, a fear of receiving the death sentence in a Federal court. And had the prosecution commenced, the fact that Dimsdale’s closest confidant was Vigilante Prosecutor Sanders would not be helpful to a defense.

One further hint that Dimsdale’s involvement in vigilance activities was greater than previously supposed came after the joint lynchings at Virginia City. After the five victims were buried atop Boot Hill, Vigilantes forgot the order in which they had arranged the men along the building beam. Interestingly enough, they went to Dimsdale for an answer. Though the teacher had purposely delayed his students at the school until the last dry-goods box was jerked out from under the last noosed victim—and therefore was not present at the executions—he quickly divulged the location of each of the five men hanged on the beam.

Any role Dimsdale played in the vigilance organization would have been in the upper echelons, rubbing shoulders with officers like Paris Pfouts and Wilbur Sanders, men who wisely left the dirty work of chasing down and eliminating suspects to underlings such as Beidler, who could ride and shoot well. Dimsdale’s poor health prohibited such vigorous activity, and besides, he did not know how to use a weapon.

As a reward for writing his articles, Vigilantes presented their cooperative little editor with “an ivory-handled, silver-mounted pistol.” Spectators watched Dimsdale bashfully accept his first weapon and then dash off with “almost boyish glee” to learn how “to shoot it off.” During his practice sessions, worried citizens were said to “tremble” for “the safety of the children and the family cow.”

Reportedly, the highest proficiency Dimsdale reached was “to be able to hit an oyster can at ten steps once in ten times.

In some instances, Dimsdale’s reporting was as inaccurate as his shooting. His main goal was to persuade readers of the existence of a murderous outlaw band, but it is highly unlikely that outlaws at the mines had ever organized.

Dimsdale exaggerated lawlessness and also inserted fabrications, such as his claim that the password of the outlaw
band was "innocent." Thus when a lynch victim stood under a crude gallows and insisted: "I am innocent," his words could later be explained away as a final recitation of the password.

Dimsdale created a lasting image of Sheriff Henry Plummer as a veritable demon. Yet early journals and memoirs claim the Sheriff had "a strain of nobility" and performed many kindnesses for his constituents, such as escorting a packer to his destination during a bitterly cold winter, or searching for a buffalo robe a lone prospector had lost somewhere on the trail.

In May of 1863, a journalist more objective than Dimsdale visited Bannack and dispatched an article to the Sacramento Daily Union, marvelling that he had seen workmen taking $3,800 in gold dust out of one of the Sheriff's numerous rich claims. "No man stands higher in the estimation of the community than Henry Plummer," the correspondent concluded. But Dimsdale's tirades reveal a personal hatred for the cultured young Sheriff whose riding, shooting, and mining skills made him the envy of the toughest gold-camp veteran.

In spite of Dimsdale's deficiencies as a journalist, his writing has had a profound influence on history. In 1958 J. W. Smurr — then a history instructor at Montana State University — complained that modern histories were a mere "reworking" of Dimsdale and Langford.

Since 1958, some Eastern scholars have dismissed Dimsdale's account of the outlaw band as a tall tale, but most Western histories still echo the Dimsdale narrative.

What place does Thomas Josiah Dimsdale hold in the history of journalism? He violated professional ethics and had lapses in objective reporting. Nevertheless, through the morass of propaganda in his articles, many colorful images of the mining frontier shine through. His description of an evening at a hurdy-gurdy house, for example, is unsurpassed in gold-rush accounts.

But Dimsdale has left posterity more than a heritage of powers of observation and a flair for using words. His articles are awesome proof of a journalist's power to not only mold public opinion, but even shape history.

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THE GHOST TOWN OF BANNACK— Dimsdale claimed Bannack was headquarters for a murdering outlaw gang, headed by Plummer, but it is doubtful crime at the Montana mines was organized.
Beware the bean counters

The push for higher profits and more efficiency is pushing the news out of today’s newsrooms

By Pat Williams

In this era of once unimaginable technological change, the power over information and news and who or what control it is in great measure determining how well we respond to the problems of the coming millennium. The early industrial, colonial domination of the news that we Montanans suffered early in our history may well be happening again; this time in more subtle but none the less dangerous ways. The growing concentration of authority over news, information and entertainment in the hands of fewer and fewer corporations, global conglomerates and individual information moguls is virtually unprecedented and, frankly, dangerous.

Two hundred and ten years ago this summer, the debate for four sweltering months in the Philadelphia state house, now called Independence Hall, returned again and again to the necessity for our new country to avoid the concentration of unrestrained, consolidated power by government. To assure that the levers of government required many hands to operate, the framers fashioned the effective checks and balances of our constitution.

Ever since, the concentration of power by the state has been of paramount concern to people not only here but around the world as well.

What the founders did not imagine was that by the close of this century the concentration of power over speech and information would end up under the control of gargantuan commercial media and entertainment enterprises that dominate on a global scale. Even had they foreseen this, it is doubtful they would have attempted to prevent its occurrence. The founders were intentionally protective of the freedom of the press and the freedom of expression. But they, most particularly Jefferson, also understood the threat of conglomerates, consolidation and concentrated power.

Today information and the dissemination of news is gathered under the authority of a handful of people in a manner that many believed would have alarmed our founders and does alarm us.

Today General Electric, Westinghouse, Time-Warner, Disney, Paramount, Turner and Murdoch are empires that control virtually the entire news programming and much of the amusement provided on network television. The corporate reach into daily newspapers, local television, book publishing, professional sports and Hollywood is without precedent. And the bottom line is not public service — it is profit.

The pattern of corporate chain ownership of daily newspapers is running in high gear. For the most part it is not creating newspapers, it is eliminating them. Since the beginning of this decade the New York Tribune, The Pittsburgh Press, The Anchorage Times, Arkansas Gazette, The Houston Post, Sacramento Union — there are dozens of others — have been put out of business by their owners.
The management mantra is greater efficiency and higher profits. The result is newsroom downsizing, cost cutting and termination. In the last 10 years, the three major networks have cut their foreign staffs by half, closing or reducing offices in Frankfurt, London, Rome, Beijing, Johannesburg and Paris. *Time* has reduced its ranks of foreign correspondents by a third.

In the last year and a half, major papers from *The Los Angeles Times* to *The Wall Street Journal* have laid off hundreds in their news departments. Corporations have trimmed the ranks of the working press throughout Montana while, at the same time, consolidating ownership. The most recent example is Lee's purchase of the Big Fork Eagle. Lee now owns most of the major daily newspapers in the state, including the Missoulian, the (Butte) Montana Standard, the (Helena) Independent Record and the Billings Gazette.

*USA Today* has eliminated the equivalent of four daily editions and shrunk its news hole by five percent. The *LA Times* has eliminated its “Weekly World Report” along with six suburban sections. *The Miami Herald* killed its Sunday feature section. In Iowa, the once family-owned *The Des Moines Register* has entered the “bottom line” age, killed the Register’s famed border-to-border Iowa coverage and is now a metro Des Moines’ only newspaper.

Is this a dark conspiracy by sinister corporate captains? No. However, it is a visible example of green eye shade, bean counting, corporate journalism running loose. And it has a detrimental effect on both how much and which news is covered. That coverage is increasingly being determined by absentee executives operating as investors, not news people.

The news must now meet a standard of marketability. News is now shaped and

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Pat Williams began his position at the Center for the Rocky Mountain West in January 1997. Last spring, Williams also taught a course at the University of Montana on Congress in the 1990s.
presented, not for its value as news, but as to what has audience acceptability. It has finally come to pass: what sells now passes as the news. That is particularly true in the electronic media of television. The news which appeals to a certain demographic audience is the news worth covering. The other news of foreign matters, government processes, the true problems of the poor go almost unreported because they don’t meet the new conglomerate bottom line standards.

We know one hell of a lot more about Tanya Harding, Princess Di and OJ Simpson than we do about the 1,000 of the world’s 9,000 bird species on the edge of extinction. We are told almost nothing about that two-thirds of the planet’s population that live in the 130 poorest nations. Perhaps Americans would not have turned away if we had known that during the first half of the 1980s 50 percent of the children who died in New York City before their second year of life were buried in unmarked mass graves in Potter’s Field.

Yes, we get our health tips, entertainment, trivia and brightly colored weather maps from today’s news gathering conglomerates, but is it news and is it the news we Americans must have if we are to carry out our responsibilities of the leading citizens of the world?

To be a world citizen today carries new responsibilities. With the fantastic global reach of technology, with the spread of information, entertainment and news, we are presented with both challenges and obligations. We live in a global community now in which once faraway places are on our very doorsteps and in our living rooms. And we are accessible to those people as well.

In the small Philippine town of Balanga, located on the route of World War II’s Bataan Death March, the local bakery sells Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle birthday cakes. In Rio, children carry Michael Jackson lunch boxes to school. A friend of mine on a trip a few years ago into Africa told of the tribal person who proudly retrieved from his hut a photograph of Evil Knievel.

A year ago, MIT economist and fellow Montanan Lester Thurow, hiking in the desert of Saudi Arabia, happened upon a Bedouin camp. There a satellite dish and a generator were bringing American television into their desert tents. Bedouins watching you — us!

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Perversely, we are shown the Hubbell images of stars being born at the edge of the universe, but we do not know about the unmarked graves of our children here at home.

We can recall with great detail the accomplishments of basketball’s Final Four, but we haven’t examined the past decade and a half of widespread increase in the inequality of wealth among our people, the likes of which no nation has ever experienced without undergoing a revolution, military defeat or subsequent conquest. And, yet, we seem not to know it has even occurred.

The trends of the new conglomerate news media coverage are alarming. In this nation, we must be informed if we are to thoughtfully carry on with this experiment of ruling ourselves through representative democracy. The resolution of the world’s most far reaching problems depends upon a fully informed American citizenry. Only with accurate, complete news and information can we thoughtfully address and resolve the great problems of our age.

In this nation, the wonderful results of our brand of free market capitalism are everywhere for all to see: so are its scars — the wealth and the poverty, the skyscrapers and the toxic waste dumps, the heart transplants and the Thalidomide babies. Without restraint, the wages of unrestrained capitalism have been very high indeed.

What will be the price of the recent corporate domination of our news and information gathering resources? Is our society willing to pay it? Is it even worth the risk to find out?

MJR
Barbed wire and butter battles

Fort Missoula holds its place in World War II history as a Japanese and Italian prisoner of war camp

By Carol Van Valkenburg

BEFORE THE UNITED STATES COULD EVEN BEGIN TO TALLY ITS losses from the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, hundreds of prominent Japanese living on America's western shore were taken into custody. These men, classified as enemy aliens, were spirited away by FBI agents as their families watched in terror, uncertain of their fate or even their destination.

Indefinite confinement at an abandoned army post could not have been a happy prospect for these 2,000 men. Two incidents of unrest among the Italian group give testimony to the discord that is perhaps inevitable when men of diverse views are kept in close quarters. And, while internal strife among the Japanese was not evident during their Missoula sojourn, one of their number would be killed by a guard after transfer to another camp. In addition, Fort Missoula was to play a role in the aftermath of a riot at the Manzanar, California, relocation camp in which guards shot and killed two Japanese men and wounded several others.

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In custody were the leaders of the Japanese community in the United States. Most had been barred from citizenship by racist laws enacted earlier in the century. Justice department officials feared if these influential Japanese proved disloyal, their actions would have a ripple effect in the cohesive Japanese community.

The men were soon herded onto shade-drawn railroad cars to begin a journey north. The first of what would soon grow to a contingent of more than 1,000 Japanese arrived at their destination on Dec. 18. When the men stepped from a Northern Pacific rail car into the crisp mountain air they learned that their new residence was to be behind barbed wire at Fort Missoula, Montana.

The Japanese were told they were at Fort Missoula for swift and fair hearings into their loyalty. These prisoners joined a thousand Italian men who had been at the fort for six months already. The Italians were trapped in the United States, or in U.S. ports, when war broke out in Europe in 1939. Most were merchant seamen and when Axis leaders got word to the ships' captains to scuttle their vessels, many complied and arrests ensued. The crews of the Italian ships were sent to Fort Missoula.

On the afternoon of July 19, 1941, Fort Missoula guards observed about 30 Italian seamen standing outside the mess hall, shouting and gesturing wildly. The Italians told a camp official they suspected the suet unloaded from trucks at the kitchen would entirely replace the butter and oil they were used to. They also lodged complaints that ships' officers, who were housed and fed separately from the crewmen, were hogging more than their share of coveted provisions. P.R. McLaughlin, second-in-command at the camp, tried to allay their fears. They dispersed but soon renewed their agitation. One man swung a large chunk of suet at an Italian assigned duty as a butcher.
McLaughlin summoned guards and alerted three senior officers on the grounds. At camp headquarters, Wilmer Beckstrom and George McNaughton jumped into a 1940 Ford Tudor sedan and Jesse Giles hopped onto the car's running board. In the car were two Thompson submachine guns, a tear gas gun with 12 cartridges, and three “candle-type hand grenades, at least one of which [contained] nauseating and sickening gas,” according to accounts that ultimately reached the desk of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.

At the scene the officers concluded they lacked sufficient firepower and ordered Giles back to headquarters for more weapons. As they hastily unloaded weapons from the car a tear gas canister exploded. The ensuing chain reaction engulfed the car in fire.

John Moe, an immigration service guard who was later to serve as Missoula County sheriff, remembers more of the story than is in the official report.

Moe was at the site and former Montana Grizzly basketball star Leonard Kuka was in a nearby guard tower. When the explosion went off, a startled Kuka shot himself in the foot.

“The Italians thought, ‘These guys are armed and they’re dangerous. They set a patrol car on fire and shot a guy,’” Moe recalls. “We had no trouble after that.”

--John Moe

Fort Missoula—1942
MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

"We had no trouble after that," he recalls. But there was trouble later, sparked, oddly enough, by the camp doctor.

There were bitter political divisions among the Italians at the fort and camp officials worked hard to keep ill will in check. One of the obstacles to easing the tension was Dr. Orvall Smiley, a surgeon for the U.S. Public Health Service and the medical officer in charge at Fort Missoula.

Smiley was a complainer and a troublemaker. He belittled the Japanese physicians detained at the fort who assisted in the camp hospital, badgered the patients, spouted racist remarks and made life unpleasant for his staff.

Smiley got a hold of a letter from Antonio Visini, an internee whom he had treated for hemorrhoids. The letter praised the medical care at the fort, saying it would not have been better in the “much vaunted Italian hospitals.”

“I can now testify that I was treated better in the concentration camp than in the hospitals of our famous country, which certain individuals wish to show as a paradise,” he wrote.

The doctor posted the letter, though he was warned by staff members to refrain. The criticism of Italy incensed the fort’s pro-fascist faction. A fight broke out near the camp stables and some in the angry mob beat up Visini. Soon 300 men began moving toward the main gate. Another group joined the first, dragging a man and beating him as they came.

Guards shot tear gas into the crowd and when the mob dispersed, 13 men were left injured, five of whom required hospitalization. Benito DeBiasi was seriously hurt.

Smiley showed up at the riot but Bert Fraser, the acting supervisor of the camp, ordered him to leave. Saying he wasn’t afraid of “these guineas,” Smiley volunteered to wade into the crowd with a weapon.

Trouble with Smiley was nothing new. In one formal complaint, the Italian spokesman complained he conducted “bestial prostate exams” and resorted to "very strange treatment..."
meant to cure a persistent headache by introducing a tube of respectable size into the anal orifice of the patient."

Camp officials requested his dismissal. Soon he was gone, though records at the National Archives don't reveal whether he was transferred, as he requested, or dismissed, as the camp supervisor requested.

The fascist and anti-fascist forces were segregated by barracks and there is no record of further serious disturbances among the Italians.

No divisions were apparent among the fort's Japanese population, though the majority of these men were housed in Missoula for only about six months. When President Roosevelt signed an order in February 1942 that led to the removal of the 120,000 Japanese who remained on the west coast, many of the Fort Missoula Japanese were transferred to camps operated by the newly created War Relocation Authority.

The only violent incidents at Fort Missoula involving Japanese came at the hands of Immigration Service inspectors who interrogated some of the men as to whether they were in the United States illegally. A few guards and interpreters slapped and kicked some of the Japanese and used racist epithets. Immigration Commissioner Earl Harrison fired two interpreters and suspended three inspectors for 90 days for their conduct.

**While violence at Fort Missoula was unusual, it was neither rare nor inconsequential at the other prisoner-of-war camps.**

Ichiro Shimoda, also known as Itsuji Shimoda, was arrested Dec. 7 in Los Angeles and sent to Fort Missoula. Professor Tetsuden Kashima reports that on the train to Missoula Shimoda tried to bite off his tongue, but was restrained by other Japanese. In Missoula he tried suicide, prompting a Jan. 16, 1942, evaluation by Dr. Smiley, who called him "definitely insane." Despite his medical condition, Shimoda was transferred to Fort Sill, Okla., where in March he tried to climb a camp fence and was shot in the head by guards.

Violence on a larger scale erupted at Manzanar, a WRA camp located near California's border with southern Nevada. On the night of Dec. 5, 1942, several Japanese severely beat Frank Masuda, the chairman of the Japanese American Citizens League's southern district in Los Angeles. [He is referred to in some reports as Fred Toyama, probably a pseudonym used to protect him from further retribution.]

Masuda had earned a reputation as an informer well before his internment. The JACL's Los Angeles office allegedly gathered information before the war about the backgrounds and activities of Japanese and passed it on to government agents. Such information was the foundation on which the FBI and Naval Intelligence recommended the arrest of many of the Fort Missoula Japanese.

At Manzanar, Masuda was branded an informer and beaten in his bed by six masked men. Camp administrators singled out Harry Ueno, arrested him and whisked him to a jail outside of camp. Several in the camp were enraged because Ueno, who worked in the mess, had lodged complaints that guards were pilfering provisions and selling them on the black market. Many Japanese viewed Ueno as a scapegoat.

Several men went to the camp administrator's office to complain and negotiate Ueno's release. Outside the office demonstrators gathered. Government officials claim the negotiating committee incited the mob, but for whatever reason, when members of the crowd moved toward the administration building guards opened fire. One man lay dead, a second died soon after. Ten more people were treated at the camp hospital. Several others were injured but did not seek treatment for fear of retribution.

Arrests followed, not of the guards who fired at the crowd, but of members of the negotiating committee and others charged with inciting the violence.
Six months earlier Toole had tried to keep any Japanese students from enrolling in college in Missoula. Montanans won’t want to send their children to a college that invites or accepts Japanese students, he wrote to Gov. Sam Ford, asking him to halt a proposal to permit their transfer to the school.

Four of those arrested — Raymond Hiroshi Hirai, Genji George Yamaguchi, Bill Kenji Tanabe and Sokichi Harry Kashimoto — were shipped to Fort Missoula for hearings.

Edward Ennis, chief counsel for the Immigration Service, appointed Missoula lawyers E.C. Mulroney and Howard Toole to hear the cases, along with Bert Fraser, who by then was the officer in charge at Fort Missoula. Both Mulroney and Toole had already served on hearing boards investigating the loyalty of Japanese detained at Fort Missoula.

Six months earlier Toole had tried to keep Japanese students from enrolling in college in Missoula. Montanans won’t want to send their children to a college that invites or accepts Japanese students, he wrote to Gov. Sam Ford, asking him to halt a proposal to permit their transfer to the school. “It is pretty generally felt that the American-educated Japanese have been largely responsible for the strategical advantage that the Japs have had over us in this war,” Toole noted.

Nevertheless, Toole, Mulroney and Fraser conducted what records suggest were unbiased hearings for the four, though they were hampered by no direct access to witnesses other than the accused. They relied on reports prepared by the government and the testimony of the four men.

At the conclusion of their work, board members expressed their frustration with the quality of the WRA investigation, saying it was neither careful, nor analytic, nor complete. Members cited obvious inaccuracies in the investigative reports. They also scoffed at characterizations about Hashimoto, described as “having a rather fearful and almost vicious countenance, with very flashing and penetrating eyes.”

The board, in effect, threw up its hands and asked the WRA to conduct a better investigation. Almost a year after their arrest, the four men were still at Fort Missoula, prompting Fraser to send a letter to Ennis, asking for a resolution of their case. Fraser said the four were among the hardest workers at the camp.

“I therefore cannot understand why these men should be such dangerous troublemakers at Manzanar and such model internees at Fort Missoula,” he wrote.

Fraser also demonstrated the humane attitude that was characteristic of the officials at Fort Missoula.

“If these men are not paroled,” he added, “I certainly feel that immediate action should be taken to permit Genji Yamaguchi to be joined with his family, as he has patiently waited for months, and his wife has three small babies, which naturally worries him considerably.”

Camp records do not show the resolution of these cases. Within six months the Fort Missoula camp would close. The Italians were permitted to work outside the camp while awaiting repatriation. The 250 Japanese at Fort Missoula in March 1943 were sent to a camp in Santa Fe, N.M., to patiently wait out confinement for the duration of the war.
Two years ago, the doors to Montana's youth courts were opened in a policy shift aimed at treating young criminals more like their adult counterparts. Impetus for this ray of sunshine in a traditionally dark corner of the justice system came not from frustrated news reporters, as one might expect, but rather from the officials who are charged with exercising control over those court proceedings: judges and prosecutors.

Before the 1995 amendments to the Youth Court Act, the public was allowed information only when charges were filed with the clerk of court alleging a serious offense—a crime that would be punishable as a felony in adult proceedings. This limited public access was easily circumvented. Serious crimes could be and were plea-bargained down to lesser charges to avoid public disclosure.

Reversing decades of secrecy in youth court, the 1995 Legislature responded to climbing juvenile crime rates by making public most court proceedings and documents, including those relating to misdemeanors. Despite effecting landmark openness in the youth court itself, the 1995 changes leave most juvenile criminal matters secret. The Youth Court Act carries over from prior law procedures that allow complaints against juveniles to be resolved without the filing of charges. The law permits probation and "assessment" officers to enter into "consent adjustments." Although these written documents are analogous to plea-bargain agreements in adult court, they are not treated as public documents.

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer Dick Boutilier estimates that only about 4 percent of criminal complaints against Cascade County juveniles result in the filing of public charges.

While "consent adjustments" are commonly used to resolve such minor matters as truancies, vandalism and theft, the law allows these written agreements to be used to impose probation, and, with the consent of a judge, to require detention and restitution and to resolve felony cases.

But in practice that’s not done, according to a judge who was a prime mover behind the 1995 amendments. "I think it's very unlikely that a serious matter would be handled that way," said Missoula District Court Judge John Larson. "With violent crimes I see no reasonable prospect any of those would be hushed up."

Yellowstone County Attorney Dennis Paxinos, testifying before the 1995 Legislature on behalf of the Montana County Attorneys Association, favored the amendments opening proceedings. He viewed the prospect of publicity as part of a young criminal's punishment. Historically, he said, "The whole idea of keeping confidential youth records was that youth make mistakes, so let's not brand them and taint them for the rest of their lives." But youth crime has "changed dramatically in the last 25 years," he said.
“This bill would introduce the element of shame.”

In his 1995 testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Judge Larson focused in part on the public’s constitutionally guaranteed right to know: The legislation has the benefit, he testified, “of advising the community about the seriousness of this problem. The general person on the street does not realize the level to which juvenile crime has risen and may help with community support of prevention projects needed.”

The 1995 changes brought full circle the concept of openness in Montana juvenile court. Early Montana law did not require secrecy in juvenile criminal cases, although judges were given discretion to close trials to the public. In the 1940s, the Legislature enacted mandatory closure laws that remained in effect until 1961, when the Legislature opened proceedings in felony cases.

The drive to open felony proceedings was led by the late District Court Judge Lester H. Lobel of Helena, who had “established a national reputation for his tough stance on handling juvenile offenders and his insistence that their names be a matter of public record.”

With variations enacted by successive legislatures, this law prevailed until 1995. Missoula County prosecutor Karen Townsend describes the 1995 amendments to the Youth Court Act as “a complete shift from confidentiality to presumptive openness.”

The 1995 amendments do not appear to have spurred drastic changes in press coverage of juvenile crime. The Great Falls Tribune applies the same standard to juveniles as it applies to adults when it comes to misdemeanors. If a fine exceeds $100 or a sentence includes jail time, the final disposition generally gets a paragraph on the records page, in small type, listing the offender’s name, address and punishment. The Tribune appears to be the only daily in the state that routinely publishes information on all misdemeanors.

To avoid needlessly stigmatizing youthful lawbreakers, particularly first-time offenders, the Tribune does not routinely publish stories on felonies committed by juveniles, says executive editor Jim Strauss. The exceptions, probably one or two a month, are cases in which the news value of the crime merits coverage, he said.

That appears to be the rule at other daily newspapers in the state, too. The Bozeman Chronicle, for example, is “fairly flexible” when it comes to more serious crimes, according to editor Bill Wilke. “There’s a threshold where the juvenile crime becomes egregious enough” that coverage is necessary, he said.

The Billings Gazette’s policy on juvenile felonies focuses on news value. “We pick and choose what we think is newsworthy,” courts reporter Nick Ehli said. The changes in the law have “cleared up the access,” he said, “but court clerks and police don’t always know that.”

Still, he said, juvenile justice records are no longer much of a problem. “It’s much better in Youth Court than in District Court,” he said. “The public defender doesn’t try to close up all of them.”

The Missoulian, too, judges felonies case by case. “We don’t do all of anything,” said Michael Moore, courts reporter for the Missoula daily. “The same standard I have in general holds for juveniles.”

The Montana Standard in Butte also is selective about which felonies it will cover. “Generally we try not to run them (juveniles’ names),” managing editor Drew Van Fossen said. “The thinking is that it was just a mistake they made... We err on the side of being human.” But, like the others, the Standard will print juvenile offenders’ names, and it will be the news value that is the key determinant in the decision.

It’s not always easy, said Dan Black, editor of the Kalispell Inter Lake, but “we publish things there’s an interest in. We just do it in terms of compelling news interest.”

In the view of two of Montana’s busiest Youth Court judges, Larson and Cascade County District Court Judge Marge Johnson, the new approach is working well. “Judges are always accused of trying to keep things closed,” Larson said, “but here’s an instance where it’s the other way around.”

The opening of Youth Court squares with Montanans’ constitutional right to know about the activities of their government. The 1995 legislative amendments recognize the value of and need for public awareness and involvement in court proceedings. “It gets at accountability, responsibility and community support,” Larson said.
Mayan Souls

The crowd looks up at the effigy of Jesus during a procession in San Antonio Aguas Calientes. Easter processions take place all over the country, during Semana Santa, Holy Week.
In Tikal National Park, the spectacular pyramid temples of the mighty Mayans cast shadows over the jungle of El Petén. Once Mayans had a flourishing empire. Today's Mayans suffer inhumane acts of terror and live in poverty. Yet, they have not forgotten the Mayan soul — pride, dignity and the faith in God.

Located about six miles south-west of Antigua, a Mayan village called San Antonio Aguas Calientes nestles in the bosom of the mountains. Brick or bamboo houses with zinc roofs stand side by side. Concrete crosses by the unpaved streets watch over people, some of whom are barefoot, passing by. Everybody know everybody else, and I am the only "Chinese" in town. All Asians are Chinese here, and that's OK. In Japan, most foreigners are Americans, regardless of their true nationalities. So, I enjoy being Chinita for three months.

The evening walk is my favorite pastime because people often call me into their houses. Some want to sell beautiful woven clothes and usually lose interest in me as soon as they find out that I won't buy anything. Others seem to like having Chinita to ask about the world they have never been to and about things they never seen.

"Tell us about life in America. Do you eat tortillas? Have you seen the Statue of Liberty? What do you do as a Buddhist?" Then, "What's snow like?" A tough question.

Spending time with a family of five children, I wonder how they can be so calm despite the hard circumstances they face. The family lives in a rented house, sharing one room, one bed and one hammock. At night, the cool air slips in through the gaps in between the wooden walls. Their earnings, less than $4 a day from a coffee plantation, don't give them much choice of how they live. Yet, they are generous, and offered to buy bread for me when I was starving in the plantation. They are rich in spirit.

After each meal, they thank everyone at the table. Starting with God, the list of thank-yous continues — thank you father, thank you mother, thank you Armando, thank you Estefana, thank you Flora, thank you Ronal, thank you José, etc. This practice helps me remember the word for thank you in Cakchiquel, which is “matiox.”

This is one of 51 languages in Guatemala. Although those who grew up during the time of oppression do not speak it very much, the language makes up an important part of their identities.

Below: The candle light flickers at church in Chichicastenango. A devout woman practices Mayan-Christian rites, occasionally pouring alcohol on petals spread on a stone slab.

Now, children are encouraged to learn it in school.

The Chicago Bulls' cap is taking the place of the traditional men's hat. The Macarena and the Power Rangers dominate TV. Yet life here still revolves around the Mayan soul. They have pride and dignity as Mayan descendants, and most of all, they are thankful for life. They have peace of mind. In the eyes of Chinita, they are in God's great care.

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY Yukari Usuda
Above: The morning air smells of burning wood, and carries the rhythm of tortillas being slapped into shape.

A wedding is coming to Comalapa in two days, and neighbors have been helping the groom's family since dawn.

Now it's time for breakfast. Women are baking tortillas on a platter called a Comal.

Above: Santiago Atitulán is the largest Mayan town among the seven situated on the shore of Lake Atitulán. Fishing is the main source of income for local residents.
Mountains of bills, manipulative representatives and damage control are all a part of covering the legislature

By Dan Nailen

For a reporter, covering the 90-day, biennial Montana Legislature is a unique challenge involving countless committee hearings, a few 14-hour days and over 1,000 pieces of legislation. It's essentially an endurance contest, a marathon for lawmakers and reporters alike. At its most basic, the session is like one big city council meeting, with a wider variety of personalities. There is an air of importance and earnestness surrounding the people in the capital and the work they do.

The 1997 session was covered, gavel to gavel and then some, by 14 reporters in the capital every day, plus a few from around the state who dropped by for the occasional hearing or a particular floor debate. For some, the session was old hat; for others, including myself, it was a brand-new experience.

There is little in the way of past experience that can prepare a reporter for what he or she encounters the first day in Helena. Stacks of bills up to six inches thick fill your mailbox daily, and from the get-go there are up to ten different committees meeting on a given day, each hearing three or four bills.

Trying to choose the best story and the ones that readers need to know about is the greatest challenge for a capital reporter. Veteran legislature reporters like the Associated Press' Bob Anez and Chuck Johnson of the Lee Newspapers state bureau have a historical perspective to help determine what the biggest issues are, but even the novices only need a few weeks before they can look at a daily committee schedule and find the stories.

"It's like having a dozen balls in the air at the same time," Anez says. "You choose which ones you're going to catch, and hope someone else catches the others."

Most reporters agree that the Republican dominated legislature resulted in few surprises or unexpected big scoops, which Anez and Johnson both say made covering the capital less interesting than in sessions past.

However, issues and bills affecting every conceivable aspect of life in Montana were considered this winter, and reporting on those bills — the good, the bad and the ugly — is the centerpiece of a capital reporter's experience.

The AP and Lee state bureaus concentrated, and often coordinated, their efforts on the daily reporting of statewide issues, while the Great Falls Tribune and Bozeman Chronicle reporters seemed to do more enterprise stories than hearing stories.

Radio and TV reporters had a unique problem. Sometimes there was much more news than they could fit in their allotted time slot, other times it was hard to find a worthwhile two-minute story.

Paul Bergen, the capital correspondent for the Montana Television Network, worked his first full session this year after covering half the 1995 session. He says he
Reporters covering the legislature listen and take notes as a bill is considered.

PHOTO BY KIM SKORNOGOSKI

In fact, Bergen, Anez and Johnson are concerned that Montanans may actually get overwhelmed by too much legislative reporting. All three reporters note the insular nature of capital work, and the danger of getting too wrapped up in "inside baseball." It's true that if you cover the Legislature for any amount of time, your vocabulary changes into journalistic wonk-speak.

Bergen adds that the day-to-day grind of covering debates and hearing constant political rhetoric can desensitize a reporter to the controversial issues he's reporting. Committee hearings on abortion and obscenity this year packed some intense testimony and graphic imagery that many people would not want to see on the evening news or read about over breakfast.

One issue that affected every reporter in Helena this year is the closed-door policy currently in effect for the party caucuses. A lawsuit by 22 news organizations to open the private strategy meetings is before the state Supreme Court, following a 1995 District Court ruling that the pre-session caucuses must welcome the media, while in-session caucuses do not have to.

Politicians argue that the meetings are private, designed to discuss political philosophy, and therefore should not be open to the public. Media lawyers say the closed caucuses violate the Montana Constitution's "right-to-know" provisions, and any meeting by elected officials, in a public building and on the public's dime to discuss public policy, should be open.

There's no question that allowing the media into the caucuses would constitute a major change in doing business in the capital. The parties use the caucuses to orchestrate their votes and arguments for the full-floor sessions, and a media presence would reveal what votes are based on genuine philosophical differences with the opposition, and what votes are done as political retribution.

If the Supreme Court decides to let the media in, the arm-twisting and deal-making would likely just move to private meetings and phone calls, but every capital reporter says they want access to the closed doors they encountered all winter. Anez says that if the meetings do go underground as a result, the parties could be breaking the law. "They'd be defying the court by meeting elsewhere," Anez says. "The court would have said, 'This is what the Constitution requires.'"

KUFM's Nicole Perusich, covering her first session, agrees with Anez, saying, "This is a public process, in a public area, and they're making decisions that affect the entire public. The closed caucuses should not be done at the capital."

From my perspective, the closed causes are typical of the relationship between the press and the elected officials in Helena. When a reporter might be helpful for a particular legislator's bill or argument, the lawmakers seek you out to give you a "great story." At the same time, the legislature doesn't want the press to know everything. If a lawmaker decides you made them or one of their bills look bad, you're guaranteed to hear about it later.

The Bozeman Chronicle's Tracy Ellig, reporting on his first session, says the rare
"I think it's fine if the subjects of the stories complain. That's the way it works up here."
—Tracy Ellig, Bozeman Chronicle

Representatives and reporters work side by side on the chamber floor.

While most of the capital reporters say the session was a smooth one, I had one bumpy week. When working on my weekly stories, I generally concentrated on one main topic—the environment, corrections, budget issues, etc. Early in the session, the governor’s office and legislative accountants were $64 million apart on how much money there would be to spend. After Republican leaders asked the budget subcommittees to cut $32 million from Racicot’s proposal, I did a story on what items in the governor’s original spending plan might get the axe.

I went to each subcommittee’s accountant and asked for examples of cuts that had already been made in the preliminary process, and those that were likely to be made in the future. As I talked to one of the accountants in his office, he looked at some paperwork and saw that his committee had actually increased the spending Racicot proposed in one area.

"It’s Christmas in January for the Department of Agriculture," he remarked.

When the story came out a week later, the chairman of his committee apparently got upset at the “partisanship” of the quote, and the accountant reacted by claiming he had never said it. Then his boss, the Legislative Fiscal Analyst, called me to his office to tell me I had supposedly made up the quote. When I told him the accountant had said it during an interview, with just the two of us in an office, the LFA folks said they believed their guy.

Later, the source told his boss that he may have said “It’s Christmas in January for the Department of Agriculture,” but that he had said it to another staffer, and I must have been eavesdropping. By the end of the session, the story had changed again, and someone else was saying it to the source when I “overheard an offhand remark.”

Regardless of the fact that I got the quote during a one-on-one interview, me with notebook in hand and him with budget estimates on hand, I still had to learn the art of credibility damage control, an experience as new as covering the capital.

Overall, I think I was able to get virtually all the information I wanted and needed for my stories, as a new face working for a virtually unknown wire service. It’s probably the biggest lesson I learned: there’s always a way to get the information you need.
GENE BERNOFSKY HAD BEEN STANDING BESIDE THE PHelps-Dodge booth at the county fair talking to people for a couple of hours when five Missoula policemen walked up and surrounded him. “Four of them are huge and one of them is big,” he said, with the gleeful drama of an experienced storyteller. “The biggest cop, the ten-footer, he says, ‘Sir, do you have a weapon in your pack?’ Then he said, ‘The lady in that booth,’ and he points to the woman who is running the Phelps-Dodge booth, ‘She says you have a bomb. Do you have a bomb in that pack?’”

After a few moments Bernofsky decided making the police go for a search warrant wouldn’t do anyone any good. He took off the pack and opened it for the police. Inside they found 20 or 30 copies of “A River Cries,” Bernofsky’s documentary denunciation of the open pit gold mine Phelps-Dodge has proposed for Lincoln at the headwaters of the Blackfoot River. He had been giving away copies of his video to anyone who was interested. Many of the people he spoke to at the fair had just come from the mining company booth where they could check out the model of the recreational lake the company has planned for the mine site after the cyanide heap leach work is done.

Satisfied, the police left him to exercise his constitutional rights, but Bernofsky had the last word: “I said ‘You should go and arrest those people in that booth because they’re telling lies and they are big-time criminals,’ and this one cop, who knew that what I was saying was the truth, he had this big grin on his face like he knew that I had been totally set up.”

In fact, the woman in the booth was right. Video is Bernofsky’s weapon. He has been making films for more than 30 years, and has been fighting a guerrilla documentary war against mining companies in Montana for more than a decade, all on his own time and mostly with his own resources. He runs his own production company, Worldwide Film Expedition, out of his Mount Avenue house.

“You could say I believe in revolution through the barrel of a lens,” he said during a backyard conversation beside a fence covered with “Danger” and “Keep Out” signs he has swiped from mine sites across Montana.

His brand of video activism would not be possible without the equipment available from Montana Community Access Television (MCAT), which he calls the only truly democratic medium in Missoula. Using an e-mail mailing list, he makes his work available to thousands of public access broadcasters. Stations as far flung as Milwaukee and Brooklyn have shown his work.

“I don’t want to have anything to do with the establishment media. They’re full of shit. They just want to get to people to sell them something,” he said. “I’m lucky. I’ve been able to avoid personal issues of compromise. I’ve always had this insane idea that I wanted to keep what I cared about separate from making a living.”
"You could say I believe in revolution through the barrel of a lens," Bernofsky said during a backyard conversation beside a fence covered with "Danger" and "Keep Out" signs he has swiped from mine sites across Montana.

"I think partially it's in my genetic makeup. I see something that pisses me off and I'm like a nuclear reactor," he said.

Maybe there is something to genetics. His father fought in the Abraham Lincoln brigade during the Spanish Civil War. Bernofsky worked for many years as a welder and boilermaker and says he developed strong class consciousness during his years traveling the country as a union iron worker. The Brooklyn native came to Montana to fight fire for the Forest Service in 1959, and settled here with his wife and three children in the 1980s.

His most recent work is "Red Thunder," the story of the Assiniboin and Gros Ventre people's fight against another expansion at the Zortman-Landusky mine in the Little Rockies. In the film tribal members from the Fort Belknap Reservation tell about water running red in showers and sinks, about watching as both the Milk and Missouri Rivers were poisoned by illegal mine wastewater discharged from the Zortman complex, and about the pain of seeing the place where their people have lived for thousands of years literally stripped raw and dumped into waste piles. These personal stories carry the entire film. Bernofsky uses no other narration and no music.

Since 1979 the state has granted 15 expansion permits to the Zortman-Landusky mine (named after two men who began an illegal gold mine on the reservation in 1894). Pegasus Corp. and Zortman have applied for another 1,000-acre expansion that will include an 80-million ton cyanide heap leach pile. Tribal members talk about the mine as a cancer on their community. It feels like eavesdropping as they agonize over this looming threat to their land and culture.

Bernofsky spent a week at the Fort Belknap Reservation with his friend Terry Jimmerson shooting "Red Thunder." They collected about 15 hours of video and spent three weeks in the MCAT (Missoula Community Access Television) studio editing it down to a 24-minute documentary. The whole production cost about $600 including gas, food, and videotape. Production values may be low, he said, but the message has its own power.

"I wanted to focus on what these Indians were saying and get the idea that these are real human beings," Bernofsky said. "These are not cigar store Indians. These people care about the mountain. I mean, it's their mother. When he says it's sacred that's real. It's their church.

"What the mining corp's doing is like someone going into St. Anthony's (Church) and smearing it with feces."

The message was powerful enough to grab the attention of the judges at the International Wildlife Film Festival. This year "Red Thunder" won a merit award for awareness of an environmental problem.

"This shows the festival still has grassroots values, otherwise this would never have happened for me," Bernofsky said.

He relishes the chance to get the message out to the kind of international audience the Missoula festival attracts.

"These white people here, National Geographic and the BBC, let them see what happens out there with the Indian people. Guilt is a powerful thing," he said. "My point is easy. I want Pegasus out of the Little Rocky Mountains."
In fact it was Charles Jonkel, the founder of the film festival, who first convinced Bernofsky to switch from film to video 15 years ago. Jonkel told him an independent film maker can’t survive with the cost of film. Video is much easier to work with and distribute, which fit well with Bernofsky’s activist strategy.

He started making experimental movies in the 50s when he tried to film the progress on a canvas he was painting. When he finished that project he gave up brushes and pigment for the camera. His early films were abstract, a mix of beat poetry and surreal imagery. Then somewhere along the line something changed.

“I used to think I could get satisfaction from exploring personal expression,” he said. “Then I realized that’s bullshit. I’ll wind up with my head up my own ass. I have to forget about this kind of ego business and try to make a contribution.”

He turned to activist documentaries. Looking around for some deserving enemies, he found the mining companies. He leaves no question about his opinion of the mining industry.

“They’re major, big, ugly giants. I mean they are the original dirty industry. They’ve hurt people, they’ve hurt the land — everything just for greed,” he said.

His strategy is to get a story early, when a mining corporation is first starting on a project. He said he realizes he can’t put out a high-production piece. His goal is to put together what he calls “a reasonable piece of media” that will get the message out. Once he has a project he will go to the site and do all his shooting in a couple of days, and then hit the MCAT studio to put it together. If he can get hundreds of copies out, then other people pick up the cause and go with it, he said. Usually his videos end with addresses of groups people can write to, to get involved.

In 1991 Bernofsky made the film “Undermining Yellowstone” about Noranda Mineral’s plan for an open pit gold mine just outside Yellowstone National Park. He dramatized the mine’s threat to the community, the land and the environment by personifying each. In turn, a fishing guide standing beside the Yellowstone River, a grizzly bear biologist in the animal’s canyon habitat, and a woman from Cooke City outside a restaurant and gift shop in town each speak passionately about what is at stake. As counterpoint Bernofsky interviews a geologist from the mining company who points to a topographic map and describes the mine as if it were on another planet.

Since 1991 Noranda Mineral’s project has come under increasing criticism, and late in 1996 President Clinton pledged to stop it. The fate of the federal plan to buy out the mining company’s interest in the site is still uncertain, but Bernofsky says he believes “Undermining Yellowstone” did what it was supposed to do.

“That thing just took off. We got thousands of copies out everywhere and people really picked up on it,” he said. “I think we had a major impact.”

While Bernofsky has a message, he still experiments with abstract expression. He says he tries to break out of the formula in every film. In his 1996 film “Abandoned,” he examines some of the more than 6,000 abandoned mine and mill sites in Montana, listing the dangerous elements, like arsenic and cadmium, in the waste rock and the nasty things these can do to the human body. Bernofsky counters each mine site segment with a reading from Lazaris Ercker’s “Treatise on Ores and Assaying,” a 16th-century Czech work on mining. During the Ercker segments the camera pans over renaissance woodcuts of mining work. In “A.b.c. (America before cars),” another of Bernofsky’s more abstract films, the camera explores figures in an outdoor folk sculpture garden. The video lingers over animals, the crucifixion, and a mother with child. Over these images we hear callers describing their car problems to the Car Talk radio guys.

Working on the media fringe is not a hindrance to getting his message out, Bernofsky said. His independence makes his message possible. He said he believes the commercial forces at work in the media trickle down to every level, so even the best reporters and videographers can’t escape the influence of publishers or business interests on their work.

“The mainstream media is very powerful. They have their heads in everybody’s home and their mouth in everybody’s ear,”
Paper chase

Montana’s young journalists are jumping from paper to paper to out-of-state paper.

Story and photos by Kim Skornogoski

After graduating from the University of Montana School of Journalism, Bill Heisel Jr. floated from a Great Falls Tribune internship to a job with the Associated Press. Six months later he landed at the Montana Standard in Butte, where he worked for a year and a half as the Anaconda reporter. Now, he's a bureau reporter at the Yakima Herald in Yakima, Wash.

“It’s just about position,” said Heisel. “If I was going to play the transplantation game I’d better get in a good location right off the bat.”

There is nothing unusual about Heisel's story.

He is just one of Montana’s young crop of journalists who are bouncing from job to job, looking for experience at small newspapers before moving on to larger papers with bigger circulations and better pay.

When Heisel left the Butte Standard, its staff barely resembled the one he knew when he first arrived.

Only four people have worked on the Standard news staff for more than two years. The others count their time in months.

The paper is now asking new reporters to give two-year, verbal contracts, hoping to slow down this revolving door.

“If you want a superstar career the only thing to do is to cut ties and move on,” Heisel said. “To become a New York Times reporter, you’re going to have to jump around. (The newspapers) understand you’re going to leave. You can’t stay in one place while opportunities pass you by.”

Erin Billings began working at the Montana Standard two days after graduating from UM in 1995. Her search for a new job began a month after accepting that position.

“The people were talented enough,” said Billings, now in the Lee Newspaper Helena bureau. “But there was no one really to learn from. All the staffers were either my age or they were not from Montana.

“It was a problem from the get go. I didn’t feel like I was walking into a challenge.”

In Billings’ three months, she felt the pressure of turnover.

“There were too few reporters, too few resources,” Billings said. “We didn’t have time to develop any stories, so we ended up writing fluff pieces.

“There was a definite hole, a definite deficiency that we had to fill every day. With greater demands, the people got crankier and more stressed. It got to the point where it was just ‘hire somebody’ so we don’t have to cover for it anymore.”

The Butte job offered Billings the chance to stay in Montana and a chance to avoid the “big move” right away, but it's a move she knows will come and will come soon.

“I'll stay here for a couple more years,” said Billings, who admits that she doesn't see herself ever working for any paper for more than 10 years. “But I'll definitely have to leave the state. There's no where
Erin Billings likes working in Helena, for right now. But soon she knows she'll be heading out-of-state. The only other options are the AP and the Trib and that would be a lateral move."

Drew Van Fossen, editor of the *Montana Standard* for the past two years, said the urge to leave hits young journalists the hardest.

"For young journalists, they use us for their first job," Van Fossen said. "You can say that especially about UM graduates. Essentially, you get used as a post-graduation training ground. Some go to weeklies, some go to dailies.

"Quite frankly I'm proud of our record. We've got a good reputation, and our reporters are going on to get better jobs at bigger papers. We've never lost reporters because they were simply dissatisfied with the job. I wish we could hold on to our reporters, but I understand why they're leaving. There's a shortage of good reporters, and the big papers are recruiting heavily."

Brian Kennedy, editor and publisher of the *Hungry Horse News* for 18 years, said for weeklies the revolving door policy has been the only policy.

"It's not new," he said. "I've had people last seven years, and people last seven months. It's not a trend, it's the way it is. I'm hopeful with everyone I hire. I'm hopeful they'll stay, but time has shown that just doesn't happen."

From interviewing sources to pasting up pages, each of Kennedy's staff members has a hand in the weekly paper every step of the way. This translates into good experience for energetic journalists but not necessarily into good careers.

"Someone could learn a lot here," he said. "Whether it be taking pictures, laying out pages or editing copy rather than just writing stories. I don't know about a career though. If you live in a small town you find yourself doing the same stories every year."

But it's also the appeal of a fatter paycheck that entices young journalists to move on, especially recent graduates facing the debt that comes with four years of college.

"You can't live on what they pay you," Heisel said. "If you have accumulated debt or you want a newer car you simply can't live on what they pay you."

Billings said journalists know when they sign on the pay isn't a selling point.

"If you're doing something you love to do then you don't mind putting in the hours, motivating yourself to go to work every day for no money," she said. "You got to make people stay. Make it a place they want to work. Challenge them daily."

Standardized computer programs are making training and transition smoother for job hoppers whether they're moving within or out of Montana.

But while training time might be shrinking, recruiting time and the time it takes to get to know sources isn't, leaving papers short-staffed and short stories.

"If you're always recruiting then when you're looking you're always short-hand-
“There is definitely that stigma that if you don’t go then you haven’t made it as a journalist.”

—Kathleen McLaughlin

ed,” Van Fossen said.

“It takes some time to develop beats and sources. In some communities people don’t trust newcomers. If you don’t know the community, if you don’t have some background, you may not get the story.”

In Montana the problem is magnified because of the tendency to bar outsiders, especially in smaller communities.

“The people of Butte expect to know the reporters,” Heisel said. “They’re used to being covered a lot, little society notes or events. And they’re used to having people from Butte covering it.

“Not only are people not from there, they can’t establish any roots because they’re coming and going so fast.”

But editors admit that high turnover isn’t all together bad.

High turnover means a lower payroll for many papers because reporters don’t stay long enough to get many raises. New reporters also bring “fresh blood,” energy and ambition to the table.

But not all papers see yearly turnover, and not all young journalists are ready to take flight.

In the last two years, the Great Falls Tribune had one full-time staffer leave for another paper. Editor Jim Strauss said many on his news staff have been at the paper for more than 10 years, and others have been there for more than 20 years.

“A lot of people on our paper are native Montanans who want to stay in the state and be able to practice the craft of journalism,” he said. “At smaller papers you still have the option to move up and stay in state.”

The Tribune, the Billings Gazette and the Missoulian can pay reporters and photographers better and have more resources to help research and develop stories, Strauss said.

Turnover might not be a problem at the Tribune and similar-sized Montana newspapers, but even continuity has its own drawbacks.

“If a newspaper’s stagnant then it can be a problem,” Strauss said. “In most cases the overwhelming majority wants to stay at the Great Falls Tribune, but they also want to grow and move on as journalists. So it’s our responsibility to work with each staffer to help them reach the next level.

“It’s a challenge to help your staff move on to the next level. Not necessarily promotions or moving to management, but within their own positions and skills,” he said. “Turnover may be a greater challenge than what we face, but it’s still a challenge.”

While many young journalists are bouncing from job to job Lee bureau reporter Kathy McLaughlin said she is content to avoid this paper chase.

After taking a weekend reporting internship at the Missoulian, McLaughlin was hired by the Great Falls Tribune. But it wasn’t until a stint at USA Today that she realized she wanted to return to Montana and stay there.

“I don’t see myself leaving in the near future, or even the distant future.”

McLaughlin came back for the mountains and the skies and the people. She said her current position in Lee’s Helena bureau is the most satisfying job she’s had.

Still McLaughlin feels the pressure to leave and sees the raised eyebrows when she tells people that Montana is where she wants to be in 10 years.

“There is definitely that stigma that if you don’t go then you haven’t made it as a journalist,” she said.

That attitude of getting what you can then getting out hurts the quality of reporting and the growth of journalists, McLaughlin said.

“If you have that attitude then you don’t learn because you don’t get involved in the community,” she said. “It’s seen as working at a small town paper, but really it’s the same as other bigger states. It’s circulation may be smaller, but you’re basically writing for the entire population.”

Still, McLaughlin writes on undaunted.

“The only thing that will drive me out of Montana,” she says, “is the winter, and I mean that.”
The perfect place to die

Missoula's Chalice of Repose harps on and on about controlling its media image

By JOHN LAUNDON AND LISA A. KERSCHER

On Christmas Day 1996, Missoula appeared to a national audience as the perfect place to die. ABC's Nightline broadcast "The Gift," a story about an organization called the Chalice of Repose Project. It was the perfect story for the season, resulting in ABC receiving a national Christopher Award for "affirming the highest values of the human spirit." The Chalice is an organization that exists to comfort the terminally ill with music of the harp and ancient chants from 11th century monks of Cluny, France. Its founder, Therese Schroeder-Sheker, brought the program to Missoula in 1992 where she established a two-year certification program that enrolls 16 to 25 students every other year. They are taught not to cure but to surround their patients in soothing sound, caress them with "prescriptive music" and love, and move them to let go of their sufferings and die in peace. Since 1992, the program has had a significant effect on the Missoula community where the musician-clinicians she has trained have served over 1,000 deaths.

The story of The Chalice is a hopeful one that portrays how a hospital and doctors can still administer to their patients even when they can no longer cure them, demonstrating that there is dignity in dying. From a journalistic perspective, the Chalice project is an appealing one—a perfect opportunity to answer the public's growing demand for positive news, while providing answers on how to face the last dramatic event in a lifetime — death. But out of this need to fill the uplifting news void, arises another story: the media's apparent willingness to surrender its independence and editorial control over a news story, especially when there are aspects of The Chalice that may not be so angelic.

Last November, the Montana Journalism Review received a letter from The Chalice in response to the authors' interest in the project. The letter expressed The Chalice's desire to work with the media but only if the journalists agreed to allow the project to have the final editorial say over the content of the article or broadcast.

Without this agreement, said Annie Soerensen, administrative director of The Chalice, in a brief interview before sending the letter, the project would not cooperate with the press. The letter also stated that the Chicago Tribune, National Geographic, Yoga Journal, National Public Radio, CNN Medical News, and The Salt Lake Tribune had all confirmed in writing that they would agree to work according to the The Chalice's guidelines (see box, p. 38)

The Chalice's concern for accuracy is merited, considering the potential for unjust comparisons to euthanasia and their patients' need for privacy. It is also common for reporters and editors to check their facts by reading back portions of their articles to those they have interviewed. This is especially true for medical stories, where the terminology can get
confusing or the field is relatively unknown. Both scenarios are true for The Chalice, which describes its practice as being “musical-sacramental-midwifery” in the field of music-thanatology. Yet, to demand total editorial control over the press takes this concern to an uncomfortable extreme and the apparent willingness of so many influential news operations to submit to censorship is alarming.

In response to inquiries from MJR, both The Salt Lake Tribune and Chicago Tribune denied ever signing a contract. The National Geographic story, described as one of the “extraordinary and mutually beneficial media experiences,” was never published. The Salt Lake Tribune’s Features editor, Judy Rollins, said that a finished copy of the article was faxed to The Chalice where some technical terms, and quotes were corrected. She said the editorial content was intact but said that she was still a bit uncomfortable with the process.

“We were attempting to be technically accurate and understand the sensitivity of the subject. But people must understand that as professionals we want to do quality work,” Rollins said. “They should be willing to go with their gut feelings when receiving publicity and give up a bit of control.”

CONTROL IS A MAJOR ISSUE with The Chalice. As important as whether or not these news organizations signed this agreement is how they received their information—from The Chalice alone. Most of the articles and broadcasts on The Chalice echo each other. They report how Schroeder-Sheker became inspired as a nurse’s aid in a geriatric home about 20 years ago, how the program claims to be an extension of the infirmary practices of the Cluny monks, how the music of the harp and ancient chants can be personalized for the patient, and how the the program has blessed families from Missoula to Denver.

What articles about The Chalice do not reveal is that a growing number of students and professionals have become disillusioned with The Chalice. Their overall critique is that the program is too psychologically demanding on students and that students’ ideas about the program and their experiences are not recognized. Instead, students must learn to surrender their egos and accept Schroeder-Sheker’s teachings without question. Since The Chalice came to Missoula in 1992, it has lost about a third of the students for each class. Six of the 16 students enrolled in 1996 had left by the end the first semester.

To be sure, The Chalice is an academically intense program that requires a commitment far beyond enjoying music and comforting the needy. It demands diligent effort similar to that of most medical students. It is hard work. Nonetheless, some of these dropouts are no strangers to graduate studies and their growing number raises a question of whether The Chalice’s educational philosophy is too focused on the intimate details of a person’s psyche as opposed to their musical and care-giving capabilities. To the public, the experience of these individuals goes unnoticed because The Chalice refuses to conduct interviews or to provide information unless the news organization agrees to yield control of the story.

ABC, not mentioned in Soerensen’s letter, received letters from disgruntled students asking it to examine some of these criticisms. “I encourage you to have your eyes wide open, read between the lines, and not limit yourself to interviewing only those chosen by the administration,” wrote Velma Cameron, a former student.

Apparent satisfied with its Christmas feel-good program, ABC did not bother to examine these charges; in fact, it sent the negative letters back to the president of The Chalice’s board of directors.

ABC is not the only example of the media’s unwillingness to read between the lines. On the front page of The Salt Lake Tribune’s Sunday Feature section last November, Laurie Rasmussen was identified and pictured playing a harp during a vigil along with Schroeder-Sheker. Rasmussen was a senior teaching resident, assistant clinical supervisor and primary harp instructor in the program. She is a performing artist who has received awards in American harp competitions and completed at least 200 bedside vigils. According to The Chalice’s biography of faculty members, she was “a protégé of Therese Schroeder-Sheker.” But Rasmussen had resigned from The Chalice a year before The Salt Lake Tribune’s article had appeared, and no longer wishes to be identified with the program. She left to focus on her career as a performing artist and because she became disillusioned with
the teaching demands and philosophies of its founder.

As a Chalice instructor, Rassmussen recalled, she was told to lean on specific students, especially those who openly questioned Schroeder-Sheker's philosophical and spiritual beliefs. Others, less academically proficient and more submissive, could move on.

"I was told to watch them and make their life difficult," Rassmussen said. "People who are quiet and go along with the program will slide by and won't get the treatment.

Most often Rassmussen found herself critiquing these students with memos and meetings, encouraging them to be more open to change and to surrender their conceptions of who they are.

Surrendering is a major theme behind The Chalice's educational philosophy. Students are urged to achieve a form of inner emptiness and become detached from their ego. As recently explained by Schroeder-Sheker in InterMountain Woman, "How will I be able to play if my ego is attached to the fact I played wrong notes yesterday - or that I played particularly well? We can't do any of those sorts of ego attachments. We hold our attachments our grudges, our angers. We have to die to something every single day."

For some students, this concept of self-sacrifice was an ideal that too often escaped Schroeder-Sheker herself. They found the directors of the program insensitive to their feedback and unwilling to justify elements of The Chalice curriculum that seemed irrelevant or insignificant.

Tod Trimble applied because he thought it was a program where he could bring together his interests and skills in music, language, psychology, hospice work and the Middle Ages. Trimble received a B.A. in Modern Language (French and German) from Millikin University in Decatur, Ill., in 1977, and advanced degrees in conducting, psychology and choral music in the 1980s. He did a doctoral minor in historical musicology, concentrating on medieval chant. Later at Thiel College in Pennsylvania, Trimble chaired the music department and conducted a 45-voice choir for seven years.

Trimble left his position as a tenured associate professor. His wife left her position as a medical social worker in oncology. With their three children, the Trimbles moved to Missoula.

Trimble said he and other students had been "given every indication that Therese had music from the Cluniac monastery from the Middle Ages — particular chants that were used in the infirmaries for chills, fever, unconsciousness, spiritual restlessness and pain," he said. But "I never saw any of that music in the year I was in the Chalice program."

Nonetheless, before the end of his first year, Trimble was helping Schroeder-Sheker teach The Chalice choir, called Schola Cantorum.

In a year-end evaluation, the Student Affairs Committee suggested other people be brought in to help Schroeder-Sheker with her heavy workload. They recommended Trimble be the primary Schola instructor the next year (see box, p. 40)

Trimble himself suggested he could help with curriculum development, since he had worked on a major curriculum review at Thiel College. But he also voiced concerns about the program's disorganization, including the lack of systematic training and clinical experience.

After meeting with Trimble, Schroeder-Sheker decided not to hire him as the Schola teacher, because, she said, "I felt a resistance from you in your willingness to understand corporate management guidelines. Employees need to be able to take directives," she said, and his "loss of alignment resulted in a lack of teamwork."

Trimble said this was a typical interchange with Schroeder-Sheker. "Therese is very skilled at using wonderful-sounding language. But it cloaks her agenda of power and control," he said.

At the end of the spring semester, Trimble withdrew from the program. He had become disillusioned, he said. As a former professor, he had serious ethical problems with the discrepancies between how the program presents itself and what the students actually experience. "There was too much misrepresentation," he said.

"[P]eople must understand that as professionals we want to do quality work," Rollins said. "They should be willing to go with their gut feelings when receiving publicity and give up a bit of control."

—Judy Rollins, features editor, The Salt Lake Tribune

Title frame from ABC Nightline's program on The Chalice, aired Christmas Day, 1996
Trimble is now the Director of Conferences and Continuing Education at the College Music Society, a national professional organization of college music faculty based in Missoula. He plans and manages about eight events a year, including annual meetings, workshops and international conferences.

But Trimble wasn’t the only student to leave The Chalice. Before the beginning of the second year, a third of The Chalice students in his class had left the program.

In 1994, Patrick Holland was drawn to the program because “it was presented as a fact” by Schroeder-Sheker and the program literature that The Chalice music was used historically in clinical settings.

Holland soon found out the program was not exactly what it purported to be. The course work was based on ambiguity and secretiveness, both in language and concepts, he said. Furthermore, it was geared toward taking students “through some kind of a psychological breakdown, so they would become spiritually capable of dealing with this mystic realm of music-thanatology.”

Schroeder-Sheker told Holland he had to change his “inner body metabolism” before he could go on in the program, he said. She never explained to him what that meant, only that he “would have to take a series of small walks with Therese to be spiritually counseled and returned to the fold.” Holland left The Chalice after the first semester, because “the Cluniac music apparently didn’t exist” and he didn’t approve of the environment he found himself in, he said.

Rachel Barry-Thompson left last semester after an experience she called “demeaning and humiliating.” The Chalice informed her that she needed to buy a left-shouldered harp. Rachel is right handed.

According to Jerry Brown, owner of Musicmakers, one of two harp manufacturers from which Chalice students must order, “A left-shouldered harp is like a white elephant. You can never sell it.” Brown also said that any individual who is familiar with the keyboards or piano would find this harp unnecessarily difficult to learn. The reason is that the finger patterns are similar between the two instruments. To invert the harp is like switching the black keys with the white keys on a piano.

At the time, none of the instructors in The Chalice had chosen to play the left-shouldered harp and neither had the vast majority of the harp playing world.

Barry-Thompson has been playing keyboards all of her life. Her musical career began with the Third U.S. Army Soldier Show during the Vietnam War. She purchased a $1,404 left-shouldered harp without question, only to discover that making the transition was a monumental task. In an essay by Schroeder-Sheker called “The Alchemical Harp of Mechtild of Hackborn,” distributed to all students, she explains her preference for the left:

“The non-mechanized medieval harp is played on the left shoulder, where Jesus carried the cross, and is therefore always held over the heart and the genitals, the two most vulnerable aspects of our humanity. The risen Christ becomes a harp when he appears as the divine groom...He longs to be played.”

Besides this questionable interpretation of The Bible, Barry-Thompson was much more concerned that an organization which claims to have no religious affiliation insisted she spend over a thousand dollars on a nearly-worthless instrument simply because it represented the manifestation of Jesus. Schroeder-Sheker also claims that a left-shouldered harp was the traditional style in Celtic cultures, yet the evidence for this belief is sparse.

Barry-Thompson began to develop a more skeptical attitude toward Schroeder-Sheker’s teachings, drawing attention to herself from the program’s faculty. Even after extra lessons, her inadequacies continued to be noted. Just before her Schola performance, she was summoned to a meeting with Schroeder-Sheker, Soerensen and her harp instructor, Sharon Murfin. It was the first time she had ever seen Schroeder-Sheker, she said. She was told that her “skills were deficient.” The next day, Barry-Thompson said, she was devastated and completely broke down.

“I used to be able to sing before thousands,” she recalled. “Now 16 people was such a big deal. The Chalice wore me down.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: MJR offered The Chalice an opportunity to respond to questions in writing and on three separate occasions attempted to set up interviews with The Chalice. Without the promise of editorial control, the project refused to comment.
Smart newspapers byte back

There are just as many eyeballs looking for news content. But many more of them are turning to the Web.

By Kyle R. Wood

When Mark Matassa quit as a political reporter for The Seattle Times to guide the science and technology section of the upstart MSNBC Interactive last summer, the newspaper was abuzz. Rumors flew that the paper's top editors, rather than congratulating him on the career move, shunned him in the paper's corridors. He left before his two weeks were out. When he returned to the paper in November as the political editor, the management was triumphant. “Score one for the good guys,” wrote David Boardman, the paper's regional and enterprise editor.

The incident is an illustration of the fear and loathing newspapers harbor toward the new online ventures. The Seattle Times, like many of the bigger dailies in the Puget Sound area, casts a wary eye toward the Redmond-based Microsoft and its online ventures. As they have watched their writers and artists leave the newspaper for higher-paying jobs with the company's online ventures, some have come to regard Microsoft as “the new devil.” Those who leave are half-jokingly referred to as “microsluts” and the mantra, “Better Dead Than Redmond” even found its way onto a Seattle Times bulletin board.

The Seattle Times is not alone. A 1996 Editor & Publisher survey found that 45 percent of publishers, editors and advertising directors worried about the long-term impact of the Internet, which they said was the fastest-growing of their daily concerns.

But the paper's editors have also been doing what 700 other U.S. newspapers have done: create a Web presence. While some were openly dismissing online information delivery as "a passing fad," they were quietly bolstering the Times' own Website. It now includes an interactive election section that allowed voters to match their views to local candidates, a Datebook section, targeting the same audience as Microsoft's own Sidewalk, and an online, searchable classified advertising section. A paper whose editors once dismissed the Web as “on-line hype” now produces Web sites commercially.

The Seattle Times, and regional dailies like it, can't afford to be irrationally afraid for much longer without creating a genuine presence on the World Wide Web devoted to the local markets in which they are already established leaders.

Much indeed stands in the way of the feared Web juggernaut that newspaper doomsday sayers predict will sweep today's newspapers into the dustbin of history. There will always be a market for the printed word no matter how wired the world gets. The Internet's propagation is still too much in its infancy to gain the kind of saturation necessary for any company to start mining money from the Web.

But the future of the Internet is real, and the real place for expansion is into local markets. Newspapers can only ignore that truth at their own peril. Experts predict 163 million people will view nearly 95 billion pages on the World Wide Web in the year 2000. Rather than
fearing the Internet and the world it promises to usher in, newspapers must embrace it in order to preserve their positions as the primary source of news for the communities they serve. The only way to save the inky print is by going digital.


Leading examples of Microsoft websites include MSNBC (above) and Seattle Sidewalk (top of page)

York Times’ Jim Weeks was quoted as saying in Editor & Publisher in 1994. “We are the primary source of news in our markets. If we have to do that with Web pages, we’ll do that. If we do it with video feeds, we’ll do that.”

Indeed, the handwriting is becoming ever clearer: Readers of newspapers are growing older at a time in which the youth embrace the Internet in ever-greater numbers. The daily newspaper is a dying habit among U.S. adults. In 1970, 78 percent of adults read newspapers. By 1995, that had dropped to 64 percent, still a considerable amount until you consider the following: just 52 percent of 16-24 year-olds read a paper daily now and, according to a 1996 survey conducted by Parade magazine, 35 percent of youths aged 13-17 said they had not picked up a printed newspaper in the previous week. Nearly 80 percent said information access over electronic networks was a “fairly” to “very” important part of their daily lives.

To be fair, the faint of heart still have plenty of ammunition to discount the Internet. Cyberspace is still saturated with an overwhelming amount of drivel and suffers from a shady image as a place filled with pedophiles and other sexual deviants. Connect and download times are still slow enough to turn many people off, and new communications deregulation has thus far failed to win the Internet the widespread audience that some had anticipated even a year ago.

It is also a young medium that is known to slow to a crawl during heavy traffic (election night, for example, overwhelmed many newsites, MSNBC’s included) and it is still sucking up more money than it is generating for its masters. Web advertising is expected to generate nearly $2 billion in advertising revenue yearly by 2000, but few sites are actually making money yet.

Web-related ventures themselves account for more than 50 percent of the estimated $200 million in ad revenue generated there. Readership of the Wall Street Journal’s Web site dropped by an astounding 93 percent when it began charging online subscriptions and Microsoft’s own Slate magazine wisely announced early this year that it would not proceed with its plan to charge users a $20 yearly rate. Time Warner’s popular Pathfinder (http://www.pathfinder.com), may be losing as much as $10 million annually, according to a March New York Times report.

Microsoft has said publicly that is expects to lose about $1 billion during the next three years on Internet ventures and that it doesn’t expect MSNBC to turn a profit for at least four to five years. But, at the end of the day, managers in a business that’s notoriously slow to change must follow the same simple principle they’d try to instill in beginning reporters: follow the news. Increasingly, readers or potential readers of newspapers will be turning to the Internet for their information. Newspapers that refuse to meet them there will become increasingly irrelevant.

Perhaps the producers of newsprint have something to fear of the Internet, but providers of news do not. “Newspapers are recognizing that they can compete from a position of strength if they have a smart sense of urgency about working together with and serving their communities,” Seattle Times Executive Editor Mike Fancher wrote in a February installment of his weekly “Inside the Times” column.

But the power of the medium demands even more of papers: customization, push technology that delivers information to Webviewers without their searching for it and the newspaper’s full content delivered to Webviewers, updated continuously outside the time constraints of the pressmen and carriers. Reprinting the same local content, updated at the same time as the paper’s regular editions, does little to expand the medium.

In order to survive, newspapers must aggressively protect their stake in local news. The Internet gives them a real motivation to beef up local staffs, to turn inward rather than trying to serve all news to all people. Saving newsprint, indeed saving the institutions themselves, means turning to the Internet rather than running from it. Those who don’t are run the risk of become irrelevant to everybody but the old and the technologically belligerent.
Reporting a “miracle”

How three newspapers covered South Africa's founding democratic election

By Tara Turkington

Living thousands of miles away from South Africa in the little town of Missoula, nestled in the Montana Rockies, in April 1994, I experienced my country’s first democratic election and the demise of apartheid through the eyes of foreign correspondents. What came across was a bewildering array of differences of opinion and perspective—a living example of how no two journalists look at the same event and draw the same conclusions.

South Africa’s transition to democracy was one of the greatest news events of the 20th century, and the fact that it was a “good news” story in a sea of bloody international stories like the Rwandan genocide and the war in Bosnia, both happening at roughly the same time, made it all the more remarkable.

News organizations around the world went all out to capture the event. Neil Behrmann, a reporter for South Africa’s premier daily The Star, on Friday April 29, 1994, wrote: “About 5,000 foreign journalists and TV crews are estimated to be in South Africa.”

Against this background, I set about finding exactly where the differences of opinion and style in covering this event lay between two world-renowned foreign papers—The New York Times and The Times of London—and South Africa’s 110-year-old newspaper, the Johannesburg-based The Star.

The New York Times and The Times both have proud and prestigious histories. Both are in a sense representative of countries that were (and are) important trading partners for South Africa, so the way in which they portray South Africa to their readers has a direct impact on South Africa’s future.

Both the United States and the United Kingdom had been involved in bringing about change in South Africa, through government-instituted measures such as sanctions, and through the vociferous, civilian-led, anti-apartheid movements in both countries.

These pressure groups played no small part in pushing their countries into taking moral stands against apartheid, which systematically subjugated South Africa’s blacks (in the majority by far) in order to promote the welfare of the country’s minority whites.

Apartheid had been a racist hallmark in South Africa since the strongly Afrikaner National Party (NP) came to power in 1948. Through the 1950s, the Nationalists promulgated a series of laws that enforced “grand apartheid.”

This comprised far-reaching laws such as the Group Areas Act of 1950 which outlawed blacks and whites from living in the same area, and the 1952 Population Registration Act, a cornerstone of apartheid that defined all South Africans at birth as “white,” “black” or “coloured,” through complicated legal and linguistic acrobatics.
"Petty apartheid," which was also brought to life at this time, comprised more trivial laws such as the Separate Amenities Act of 1953 which ensured that whites and blacks could not share facilities ranging from public bathrooms and buses to park benches. The National Party ruthlessly suppressed internal resistance to apartheid as it gained momentum in the 1970s and 1980s, not least by severely curtailing the freedom of the press.

Other state methods included detention without trial, and often torture and murder, as has continued to emerge in recent criminal trials within South Africa such as that of Eugene de Kock, a government-backed hit-squad commander, at the country’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

This commission was set up in 1996 with powers to grant amnesty to those who admitted committing politically motivated crimes within a defined time frame. It is still taking applications and hearing testimony from victims of apartheid and their families and friends.

Apartheid survived sanctions first instituted by the United Nations in 1963 (initially only against the shipment of equipment and materials for arms manufacture), and by a wide variety of trading partners, including the United States and Britain, which both imposed various trade sanctions in 1986, but only after years of international pressure. Apartheid also survived the pariah status enforced on South Africa in the arenas of international sport and theater.

The system looked as strong as ever in 1989 when Frederik Willem (FW) de Klerk took over as state president from the ailing Pieter Willem (PW) Botha (known for wagging his finger and making speeches such as his 1985 utterance quoted by the now defunct South African paper, the Rand Daily Mail: “I am going to keep law and order in this country and nobody in the world is going to stop me.”)

When, on February 2, 1992, during his opening of Parliament speech, De Klerk announced that he would release apartheid’s most famous prisoner, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, who had been imprisoned for 27 years for treason, the nation — and the world — gasped in surprise.

De Klerk kept his word, and nine days later Mandela walked free: the first step on a path which would see South Africa eschewing almost 40 years of racist history and embracing multi-party democracy, under the guidance of none other than Mandela himself, who became the first president of the “New South Africa.”

In this context, media organizations around the world — not least those within South Africa itself — began to plan their coverage of the watershed election, from both inside the country, and from various international viewpoints.

The Star mustered 75 writers, The Times of London had 14 reporters on the story (although three were based in the United Kingdom), and The New York Times boasted eight bylines, although only five of those reporters actually wrote from South Africa (two reported from the United States and one from South Africa’s neighbor, Zimbabwe).

On most key issues, The Star, The Times and The New York Times differed considerably, as they did on levels of professionalism ranging from subtle skills such as the careful identification of sources to contextualizing issues and events.

Thirty-five percent of The Times' April 1994 editions carried stories about the South African election on their front pages. Britain has closer historical ties with South Africa than does the United States. It twice governed the country, and it fought the three-year Anglo-Boer War against white Afrikaners from 1899 to 1902. The war, which still evokes bitterness in some parts of South African society, was fought mostly over control of the country’s mineral riches. Britain won

Ironically, F.W. De Klerk's Afrikaner National Party was supported by some blacks. The Star and The Times of London were far less critical of the party which invented and implemented apartheid — and then gave up power — than was The New York Times.

Steve Hilton-Barber,
Mail & Guardian
the war but granted South Africa independence in 1910.

Despite these ties with Britain, *The New York Times* editors considered the election story 20 percent more interesting and important to their readers than did the Times' editors, if front-page placings are anything to go by.

South Africa appeared on the front page on 17 days out of the 30 *The New York Times* was published in April 1994 — or in 57 percent of the editions.

Predictably enough, the election made the front page of *The Star* every day of the 22 days that the paper was published in April. (*The Star* isn't published on a Saturday or Sunday.)

*The Times'* average story length was 350 words — a third longer than the average 230-word story in *The Star*, but just half the length of the average *New York Times* story which ran at 700 words.

*The Times'* correspondents wrote approximately 37,500 words about the election. In comparison, *The New York Times* ran about 60,000 words, although the paper had fewer reporters working on the story and published fewer stories: 86 compared to *The Times'* 107. *The Star* had 75 different reporters, although only about half of these were full-time, but managed only about 200,000 words, just a little more than three times as many as *The New York Times*.

**A S BECAME CLEARLY EVIDENT THROUGH a careful examination of three newspapers, *The New York Times*, *The Times* of London and *The Star* of Johannesburg, all newspapers reveal their own sets of values, perspectives and biases, not only through their opinion columns, but also in their news pages.**

In the case of the South African election, which arguably was one of the biggest media events of this century in terms of the sheer number of correspondents sent from media organizations all over the globe sent to report on them and the amount of coverage they received internationally, the three newspapers showed distinct differences not only in bias but also in terms of journalistic professionalism.

*The Times* of London was the most conservative paper of the three, portraying and its leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi and his Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) in the most positive light. At the same time, the paper was most ambivalent of the three towards Mandela and the ANC. *The Times* cast them in a negative light slightly more often than in a positive light, as opposed to *The Star* and *The New York Times*, which were both clearly pro-Mandela, especially in the case of *The New York Times*.

*The Times* was also clearly more pro-white than the other two papers, and it concentrated far, far more on the threat that white extremists posed to the poll than did *The Star* or *The New York Times*. Richard Owen, who was then foreign editor of *The Times*, said, "I'm not aware of any bias... We were as cold-eyed about Inkatha as we were about the ANC...The American press is probably a little more heavy-handed about this (portraying political parties objectively) than we are..." But, he added, "There's nothing that can't be improved — perhaps we should have had more South Africans on the team (they didn't have any)."

*The New York Times*, like *The Times*, invested considerable time, effort and resources into covering the election. For the most part, it was difficult to criticize the paper's journalists, led by Pulitzer Prize-winning Bill Keller, except perhaps, that they so overwhelmingly embraced Mandela as the future president, often using religious imagery to describe him.

*The New York Times* correspondents were far more critical of De Klerk and the NP — the party that had governed South Africa for close to 40 years — than *The Times* and *The Star's* writers.

*The New York Times* was also the most critical of Buththelezi and the IFP of the three papers.

Veteran South African journalist Allister Sparks pointed out in an interview that the executive editor of *The New York Times*, Joseph Lelyveld, was a correspondent for the paper in South Africa in the 1980s, which may have had an impact on *The New York Times* special interest in the South African election. (Lelyveld himself won a Pulitzer for his book, “Move Your Shadow,” about South Africa.)

*The New York Times* covered the election in a comprehensive manner, making sure that reporters covered South Africa's most important areas and issues, and that their pieces complemented one another in a cohesive manner.

(continued on p. 52)
Eco-pendulum

Environmental journalism has moved from puff pieces in the ’80s to Wise Use jargon in the ’90s

By Marc Peruzzi

The issue was grizzly bear reintroduction and management in the Bitterroot Mountains. When the US Fish and Wildlife Service called for comments, three groups submitted a joint proposal: The Defenders of Wildlife, the National Wildlife Federation and ROOTS. Although the acronym suggests environmentalism, it actually represents timber interests: Resource Organization On Timber Supply.

Does the timber industry want grizzly bears reintroduced into the Bitterroots? And if so, why does it pose as a grassroots organization? Dan Johnson, ROOTS’ spokesman was blunt about what the timber industry thinks of grizzly recovery, “They don’t want the damn bear. Grizzlies don’t eat trees, they don’t bother us. But the people who use the lands are concerned with regulations.” It was an honest answer; the timber industry wanted a say in how many grizzlies would be reintroduced and where, in order to control the regulations. The subterfuge, however, can only be explained in a larger context.

A backlash is occurring in the field of environmental journalism. Reporters who cover the environmental beat increasingly find themselves pressured to produced “balanced” stories. Those who don’t can find themselves bumped from the beat or out of a job entirely. Some media critics believe this shift is a direct counter to the often pro-environmental, poorly researched reporting of the late 80s and early 90s. Others contend that as newspapers fight for a shrinking market share of readers, editors are unwilling to alienate any portion of their audience. As news organizations wrangle over how the environment should be covered, another player has emerged and contributed to the backlash — the Wise Use movement.

Environmental journalism boomed in the 80s and early 90s, as did environmental activism. According to information compiled by David Helvarg in his book, “The War Against the Greens,” by 1992 seven million Americans belonged to environmental groups, and 76 percent of the population characterized themselves as environmentalists. Environmental groups had acquired $500 million in assets. The public was inundated with environmental information, either directly through advocacy magazines and newsletters published by the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club, or indirectly through the news media.

While many stories exposed gaping inadequacies in environmental policies and protection, some journalists tended
to simplify their stories into good versus evil. This may have worked adequately in situations like the Exxon Valdez oil spill, but most environmental stories are complex; they require journalistic excellence, not puff.

As more reporters were pulled from other beats to cover the environment, the number of puff pieces increased. The coverage of the 1988 Yellowstone fires is perhaps the quintessential example. The national news media, relying upon reports filed by reporters in the field, immediately jumped to two conclusions: the entire park was burning, and the “let it burn” policy was responsible. Both conclusions were wrong. Much of the park was relatively untouched by fire, and other areas suffered only low intensity burns.

UM School of Forestry professor Ronald Wakimoto says many reporters simply misread the maps provided by land managers and assumed that all affected areas were either burned or still burning. And, according to Conrad Smith of Ohio State University’s School of Journalism, most major news organizations never bothered to understand or to explain how the “prescribed natural fire policy” was administered. “The New York Times and the three television networks said authorities were allowing Yellowstone-area fires to burn more than a month after they had been declared wildfires and were subject to suppression. These mistakes were never corrected,” Smith argues.

When the Bush Administration began enforcing the Endangered Species Act after a decade of unregulated clear cutting in the Pacific Northwest — effectively freezing timber operations — extractive industries across the West began looking for recourse. They found it in Wise Use. The latter refers to itself as a conservation group, although it actively lobbies for timber interests and represents loggers, union workers and the timber industry. Dan Johnson vehemently denies that ROOTS is a Wise Use group. Perhaps the term Wise Use has picked up negative associations from the far right, much as the term “conservationist” lost favor after it was associated with the far left.

What the groups do have in common is a knowledge of the media’s importance in achieving their goals. The strength of the Wise Use movement is not in membership rolls but in its ability to create a perception of power. Arnold and colleagues have learned a lesson from their enviro opponents. Relying heavily upon exaggeration, Arnold throws out what Helvarg describes as “little prepackaged sound bites as if chumming for media sharks.” But Arnold’s colleagues are also adept at sounding the alarm. Here are some examples of Wise Use rhetoric: “The Nature Conservancy is a capitalist institution designed to promote socialism,” says Grant Gerber. “Although your water is perfectly safe, I-122 requirements are so extreme that everyday drinking water would violate its laws,” says Montanan’s for Common Sense Water Laws literature.
When sound bites don't work, Wise Use leaders resort to guerrilla tactics. In 1991, under the leadership of Chuck Cushman, a mercenary-style organizer who flies into trouble spots and sets up Wise Use groups, a group opposed to the government's Greater Yellowstone Vision Plan mailed off 20,000 letters to every person at the door. The media assumed there was overwhelming opposition to the plan. Sensing defeat, the government eventually withdrew the plan.

But the dirty tricks and media manipulation, the propaganda and spin control of the Wise Use movement may no longer be needed. Mainstream news organizations are increasingly seeking contrarian spins on environmental stories.

Keith Schneider, formerly of The New York Times, was one of the first to question the environmental agenda. After years of covering the beat from the environmentalist's viewpoint, Schneider began questioning environmental assertions. In one story about the dangers of dioxin, Schneider wrote that exposure to dioxin "is now considered by some experts to be no more risky than spending a week sunbathing." But "Schneider's conclusions about dioxin's risks have a major flaw: they're wrong," Vicki Monks wrote in an American Journalism Review article. Schneider claimed his information came from Vernon Houk of the Centers for Disease Control. Houk, however, did not, and claimed he had been misrepresented.

Major magazines like The Economist and The New Yorker have also joined the trend. Many of their stories — like some of the environmental pieces of the late 80s and early 90s — rely upon information provided by questionable sources and tend to simplify issues. As Timothy Noah of The Wall Street Journal explains in the Columbia Journalism Review, "Journalists were faddish and unthinking in their coverage of some stories. Now there is a faddish, unthinking knee-jerk reaction in the other direction. The truth is in neither extreme."

Environmental reporters, especially in the West, are feeling the effects of the contrarian shift. Bruce Selcraig, in a Sierra article titled "Print no evil," lists several examples of reporters stifled from chasing environmental stories: "From Palm Beach to Portland, editors are rethinking and redesigning newspapers. That's fine as long as it's not at the expense of reporting that holds powerful interests accountable.

"(Kathy) Durbin's departure (From the Oregonian) after those of reporters such as Richard Manning of the Missoulian [in 1990], ... Steve Steubner of the Idaho-Statesman in Boise, and at least a dozen others in the West who were reassigned or simply made so miserable they left. ... " Virtually every veteran environmental writer I know," says Jim Detjen, a Philadelphia Inquirer reporter and president of the Society of Environmental Journalists, "has been threatened with the loss of his or her job at one time or another."

Although the Sierra article implies that the reporters were removed because they refused to stop tackling tough environmental stories that threatened local industries, that conclusion might not be entirely accurate. A few of the reporters may have crossed the line to advocacy and therefore were pressured to leave. And some may have been forced out because environmental stories have lost popularity among the nation's editors.

As always, the future of environmental journalism rests in balanced, knowledgeable reporting. Reporters will always have their own reasons for writing environmental stories. Many are, and will remain, closet environmentalists. Balanced stories eventually reach more people than advocacy pieces — which ultimately only preach to the choir. In a news story, the truth is usually found somewhere in the middle between extreme left and extreme right. Environmental reporters need to spend more time there.

Whether you are a source, a subject or a consumer of news, what is most important is that news coverage is accurate.

We pledge our continued efforts to helping reporters get accurate information.

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Breathing life into KUFM-TV

Western Montana-based public television overcame debates over federal funding, tribal sovereignty

By WILLIAM MARCUS

EVEN YEARS AGO, WHEN THE DRIVE TO BRING PUBLIC TELEVISION to The University of Montana got underway, “Barney and Friends” was still on the drawing board, Robert MacNeil was only dreaming of retiring from the “News Hour” desk and Alistair Cooke was host of “Masterpiece Theatre.” By the time KUFM-TV signed on the air this past January, “Barney” had become a mesmerizing hero to millions of young children, Robert MacNeil was writing novels full-time and Russell Baker was doing his best to explain British wit and idioms as the new host of the venerable BBC import, now called “MOBIL Masterpiece Theatre.”

KUFM is an honorable name. For 32 years, KUFM Radio has been an essential service to listeners in western and central Montana. While KUFM radio has had smooth growth since Phil Hess placed it on the air in 1965, the television station struggled up a lengthy, convoluted path to sign-on.

Some of the twists and turns that slowed the progress of KUFM-TV are national in scope, such as the debate over congressional funding of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

William Marcus sees KUFM-TV as a testing ground of the future of public broadcasting.

WILLIAM W. MARCUS
is Director of the Broadcast Media Center at The University of Montana
CPB is the federally funded corporation that administers public radio and television in the United States. There have also been local issues of service duplication, tribal sovereignty, and Board of Regent policies and directives.

The Board of Regents authorized a unified approach to public television in Montana in 1990, asking the two universities to combine their resources and expertise to develop a state-wide public television service. Montana State University had placed KUSM-TV on the air in 1985. The station reaches most of the state's population east of the continental divide via cable. Western Montana was mostly unserved by a Montana-based service.

The Regents authorized university personnel to draw up a funding request for the 1991 legislature. The resulting bill died in committee but the dollars requested were returned in last-minute budget negotiations.

The University of Montana used the money, in part, to match a $1.6 million federal grant awarded in 1992 to build a transmitter in Missoula and a station interconnect between KUSM-TV in Bozeman and KUFM-TV in Missoula. The KUFM-TV coverage area was predicted to cover western Montana from Polson to Darby.

The broad scope of the plan brought objections from three low-power television stations in western Montana that were providing public television service to areas of the Flathead, Bitterroot and Lower Clark Fork valleys. SKC-TV, BVT, and Plains Public TV feared the new service would overwhelm their efforts and draw away their small but supportive audience.

Low-power television organizers made repeated demands that the KUFM-TV project be scaled back. One of the stations, licensed to Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, insisted that their tribal sovereignty and cultural identity was threatened by KUFM-TV. They reasoned that SKC-TV was a cultural bridge across the racial divide of the reservation and KUFM-TV would destroy the station's effectiveness.

The group organized a protest at a Montana Board of Regents meeting in January, 1995, and won a moratorium on KUFM-TV's progress. When repeated negotiations between the three stations and KUFM-TV failed to resolve the impasse, the Regents voted to scale back UM's effort, limiting the KUFM-TV signal to the Missoula and northern Bitterroot valleys.

While this drama played out in Montana, a larger threat was emerging in Congress. The Republican majority, elected in 1994, targeted CPB for elimination, calling it a bastion of liberal politics and a waste of taxpayers' money. But public television and radio stations organized a response and generated thousands of letters and calls to Washington. Several senators and representatives admitted that they were stunned by the response. They'd expected public broadcasting to sink without a ripple.

What surfaced was a plan to carry CPB into the next century albeit with a dramatically reduced level of funding. The plan calls for the establishment of a public trust to fund the system at the end of current allocation in 2000.

Public broadcasting was forced to reconsider its role and mission. Some stations are pushing for a more liberal policy toward underwriting and recognizing corporate sponsorship. Mobil's brand on the “Masterpiece Theatre” logo is one of the results of this new thinking. Others fear that such commercialism will destroy the fundamental tenets of PBS and NPR.

Though the long-term viability of public broadcasting in the US has been weakened, KUFM-TV has established a strong partnership with its sister station KUSM-TV.

The Missoula station has been identified as the Montana Public Television network production center for news and public affairs programming. This mission is a natural extension of UM's strength in journalism and radio-television education. After all, most of KUFM-TV's staff are graduates of the R-TV program. The station hopes to attract the participation of faculty in a broad variety of disciplines in addition to the School of Journalism.

There is no reason why Montana Public Television can't be the proving ground for the next Robert MacNeil or for an adorable character who'll rival the influence of that big purple dinosaur.

__MJR__
The New York Times' journalists on average interviewed more people per story than either The Times' or The Star's reporters, and made a more concerted effort than the other two papers to gather the views of ordinary citizens. Steve Weisman, deputy foreign editor for The New York Times at the time of the elections, said, "It was a very emotional story and every reporter poured his and her heart into it."

Like the other papers, however, The New York Times interviewed far more men than women, even when talking to civilians where they had the opportunity to interview more women.

Unlike The New York Times and The Times which were reporting the events unfolding in South Africa in a more detached manner and for foreign audiences, the editorial staff at The Star felt integrally caught up in the birth of democracy in South Africa.

The paper's editors and reporters found it impossible for The Star to be coldly objective, and formulated a series of policies which deliberately tried to help the "miracle" of South Africa's transition from apartheid come to pass. This meant that they continuously emphasized the positive aspects of society and events and downplayed issues such as political violence and racism which they perceived to be threatening to democracy.

The Star's standards of professionalism were inferior compared to The New York Times'. The paper's reporters interviewed on average half the people per story that The New York Times' reporters interviewed. Reporters frequently failed to identify sources. Stories were kept short and very, very few in-depth or investigative pieces were published.

Unlike The Times and even more so The New York Times, The Star did not appear to have a comprehensive plan for covering the election on a national scale. It saw itself as a metropolitan paper that prioritized focusing on its readership area over portraying a balanced account of what was happening across the country.

While The Star had the advantage of being based in South Africa, its reporters were not as productive as either The New York Times' or The Times' correspondents, writing on average far fewer words.

But where The Star did shine was in providing readers with the logistical details of the election.

The paper was also in the position to run a headline on Wednesday, April 27, 1994 on page one:

Vote, the Beloved Country

This was an ironic play on a classic South African novel by Alan Paton which highlighted the poverty and pain caused by racism, called "Cry, the Beloved Country." And under this headline, The Star published a more poignant testimony to South Africa's "miracle" than ever published by a foreign newspaper:

"Apartheid dies today. Millions of South Africans of all races go together to the polls for the first time in the country's history, to elect a government of national unity."
The Spokesman-Review has long been recognized as the Inland Northwest’s most respected information source. Our readers have come to depend on us for not only hard facts on hard issues, but an independent, balanced viewpoint as well. Along the way, we’ve won more than just the trust of our readers.

Recently The Spokesman-Review was named one of 22 Best Designed Newspapers in the World by the Society of Newspaper Design. The Associated Press Sports Editors named the Spokesman-Review’s Sports Section as one of the top 20 for both daily and Sunday in Circulation 50,000 to 175,000. In addition, the Idaho Press Club presented Jim Meehan a first place award for Sports News Coverage: “Cravens Fired After ‘So-So’ Stint”. They also awarded Julie Titone with first place in Education: “Children the Captive Audience”. Another prestigious award given by the Society of Professional Journalists Pacific Northwest Excellence in Journalism was awarded first place in Comprehensive Coverage to Julie Sullivan for “Romania Package”. These are just a few of the awards the Spokesman-Review was honored to receive.

At the Spokesman-Review, our commitment doesn’t stop at providing complete coverage for our readers. We remain devoted to the needs of the area and a changing world. You be the judge.

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