Montana Journalism Review

Volume 1
Issue 34 Issue 34, 2005

2005

Montana Journalism Review, 2005

University of Montana–Missoula. School of Journalism

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mjr

Part of the Journalism Studies Commons

Recommended Citation


Available at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mjr/vol1/iss34/1

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Montana Journalism Review by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.
Freebies and Over-Exposure: The Ethics of Outdoor Writing

Women's Magazines
Journalism or Junk?

Anne Marie Squeo questions indecency regulation

Q&A with a Middle Eastern scholar

Victor Merina on race and the press
For great reporting, read us every week

Society of Professional Journalists Inland Northwest Chapter
2003 Excellence in Journalism Awards

Mike Keefe-Feldman
1st Place: Government and Politics
'Brave new elections'
1st Place: Criminal Justice
'An unsolved death'
2nd Place: Government and Politics
'Invasion of the Libertarians?'

Montana Newspaper Association
2003 Better Newspaper Contest

1st Place: Best Feature Story
'An Unsolved Death'
1st Place: Best Agricultural Reporting
'Watching the inspectors'
2nd Place: Best Government Reporting
'Brave new elections'
2nd Place: Best Educational Reporting
'The revolution will not be proselytized'

Brad Tyer
1st Place: Personality Profiles
'The last best liberal'

Andy Smetanka
1st Place: Arts and Criticism
'Pen to paper'
1st Place: Science and Health
'It's a gas'
3rd Place: Arts and Criticism
'A song to end all wars'

3rd Place: Best Feature Story
'The last best liberal'

Chad Harder
1st Place: Sports
'Powder to the people'

Jed Gottleb
2nd Place: Science and Health
'Containment area'

Joe Weston
3rd Place: Page Design: Graphics
'Code name: Arthur Durham'

Stefanie Newton
1st Place: Best Educational Reporting
'Deaths in the Family'

Rob Rusignola (w/ Joe Weston)
1st Place: Page Design: Graphics
'De-reg: The Board game'

3rd Place: Best Feature Story
'The last best liberal'

Susanna Sonnenberg
2nd Place: Features
'Boxing night at the Wilma!'

David Madison
1st Place: Best Sports Feature Story
'Air Apparent'
3rd Place: Best Business/Financial Reporting
'You're Fired!'

3rd Place: Science and Health
'Containment area'

George Ochenski
2nd Place: Best Column Writing

Nick Davis
3rd Place: Personality Profiles
'Wrote hard, put away wet'

Independent Staff
1st Place: Special Sections
Explorer
2nd Place: Special Sections
Fresh Facts
3rd Place: Energy and Environmental Affairs
'Burn this issue'

1st Place: Best Freedom
of Information Effort
2nd Place: Best Single Ad (Process Color)
Letter from THE EDITOR

The first issue of the Montana Journalism Review came out in 1958, making it the oldest journalism review in the country.

In its first incarnation, MJR was a faculty-run journal with articles penned by academics, a few Pulitzer Prize winners and the occasional student, until it faded away in the late 1970s.

Professor Clem Work revived it as a student-run publication in 1993, holding the reins as editor-in-chief with a competent student staff.

The issue you’re reading today is MJR’s third incarnation, and we’ve allowed ourselves a complete makeover.

Work assumed the role of faculty advisor and graciously let the student staff run loose with new ideas. The results are telling: a fresh design, pages swathed in color, a new logo and a cover illustration instead of the usual photo. We hope you like it.

These are weird times for our profession. Instead of simply covering the news, journalists are more often becoming news. It’s a paradox that our profession seeks truth, ethics and transparency, yet when the blinding flashes are turned inward, they expose many ethical problems. Prominent columnists are caught with tainted hands in the pockets of the administration, greedily clinching tax dollars and pleading innocent from breaching ethical standards. Media personalities who make mistakes and stand by them become blogger fodder. Almost daily, journalists are disciplined for ethical lapses. But many of these issues have been analyzed, documented, opined, blogged, cursed and hailed up to the eyeballs.

We decided to devote this issue to ethics, but to avoid being another fly attracted to the light, we’re exposing some of the murkier corners of journalism, such as outdoor writers and freebies, borderline techniques in the digital dark room, “Best-Of” journalism and women’s magazines. In addition, we’re proud to feature commentaries from Pulitzer Prize winner Victor Merina, Anne Marie Squeo of The Wall Street Journal and former Montana Rep. Pat Williams.

It’s summer; so be sure to enjoy MJR in the sun—the glare from the monitor will still be there when you get back.

–Eric V. Segalstad
Managing Editor
RSS: News in the Present Tense

By Staci D. Kramer

An online distribution format known as RSS (Really Simple Syndication) may be causing the greatest change in the way we deliver and get news since the Internet became a mass medium.

Take a story I wrote the other day about the dissolution of a heavily promoted deal between Major League Baseball’s new media arm and Microsoft’s MSN portal. A decade ago, even five years ago, if I wrote that story for a newspaper it would have appeared in print, been stashed in a database or two, and possibly sent to other newspapers through a syndicate. The news cycle would have been very short.

But the story mentioned above was posted on paidContent.org on a Friday afternoon and was immediately sent to more than 1,000 subscribers through our RSS feed. Another 5,000-plus got it the following Monday via a regular morning e-mail newsletter. Others saw it on the site.

In the interim, the story started to make its way beyond the site’s control. Anyone could link to it or include references to it on their own site or blog; in turn, those links and references became part of other sites’ RSS feeds rippling out. When it was picked up by other news organizations, which attributed the initial reporting to us, it became part of those RSS feeds, too, going to thousands more. In turn, more information was dropping into my newsreader as other reporters worked the story.

The result for our site: more exposure than we could have accomplished on our own and a much longer cycle. The result for readers—well, that’s a different story. RSS allows readers to pick and choose the way they get news: they can get feeds of front pages, sections, authors or specific topics. They can scan through dozens of sources organized by folders or interests at once on their own time. Those of us who track news in real time quickly can tell when new stories have been posted via alerts or formatting.

It also changes, or should change, the way we present news. In an RSS feed, everything is equal. No 72-point heads or triple-decks as alerts. No fancy layouts to draw attention. Articles get attention purely on the merits of the topic, the way a headline is written and the lede or a blurb. Some news outlets—usually online-only sites, more rarely those with print versions—offer full-text feeds. Some feeds include images.

And it changes advertising. News organizations implementing RSS must make sure it doesn’t cannibalize the site or disturb advertising revenue. While some people I know pride themselves on reading only through RSS, I think syndication done right brings people to sites—for instance, by including reminders of content found only on the site like photo galleries or interactive elements. Ditto for advertising, which can be folded into an RSS feed and can still lure people to an advertiser’s message.

The number of feeds being offered by mainstream publications, like The Wall Street Journal, has exploded since I wrote about the subject for the Online Journalism Review last summer and could only produce a short list. News organizations willing to embrace the opportunity are expanding their audience and their own lifespan.

Staci D. Kramer is a freelance writer based in University City, Mo. She is a contributing editor for Online Journalism Review and executive editor for paidContent.org. Formerly a contributing editor at Inside.com and an editor at large for CableWorld, Kramer has written for Time, Life, the Detroit Free Press, the Chicago Tribune, The New York Times, Editor & Publisher, St. Louis magazine and others.
THANK YOU UM

From the classroom to the newsroom, the University of Montana played a key role in these Great Falls Tribune employees’ careers:

Michael Babcock
Dennis Baran
Amber (Underhill) Beckner
Linda Caricaburu
Mike Dennison
Rich Ecke
Cathy (Kauffman) Gretch
Liz Hahn
Stacy (Byrne) Haslem
Carrie (Hahn) Kappy
Dan Hollow
Peter Johnson
Butch Larcombe
Sonja Lee
Leon Lenz

Jared Miller
Barbara Mittal
Chelsi Moi
Gary Moseman
Pete Nowakowski
Matt Ochsner
Katie Oyan
Jackie (Galt) Rice
Kim Skornogoski
Keila Szpaller
Scott Thompson
Take Uda
Paula (Latham) Wilmot
Larry Winslow

"The University of Montana School of Journalism laid the foundation for my career as a visual journalist. The professors taught me many of the writing, reporting, editing and design skills that would later be instrumental in my success as graphics artist and page designer. Most of all, designing, editing and reporting for the Montana Kaimin left me ready to hit the ground running in my first newspaper job."

— Také Uda, design editor, 1994 UM journalism graduate

GREAT FALLS TRIBUNE

"I practice the reporting and writing skills I learned at the University of Montana School of Journalism each time I tackle a new story. The experienced professors taught me to be fair, thorough and daring as a writer. These skills, especially how to write with panache, are invaluable in my career as a journalist."

— Stacy (Byrne) Haslem, features writer, 2003 UM journalism graduate

MontanaGrizzlies.com
Get in the game with the Griz

MontanaGrizzlies.com
The Official Site of Grizzly Athletics

Scores • Stats • Rosters • Multimedia • Prizes • Griz Shop

Published by ScholarWorks at University of Montana, 2015
**Penny & pinchers, deep pockets**

Independent alt-weeklies compete against corporate-run dailies

**By Matt Gibson**

Exceptional reporting has less to do with money than commitment. It’s not especially surprising, then, that the Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting this year went to *Willamette Week* in Portland, Ore.—a very strong locally-owned weekly newspaper, to be sure, but commercially miniscule compared to its daily rival, *The Oregonian* (part of the Newhouse family’s Advance Publications conglomerate).

Despite huge commercial disadvantages, pound-for-pound, America’s alt-weeklies constitute some of the finest newspapers in the world. The best of them are enterprising and free-spirited, aggressively reporting the news while affirming the vitality of their readers and the communities they’re building.

In virtually every city of consequential size, nimble, risk-inclined entrepreneurs publish free weeklies that nibble around the edges of the advertising market, picking off the crumbs discarded by the corporate heavyweights. Montana is no exception.

With an estimated 46,500 readers every week, the *Missoula Independent* is far and away Montana’s largest locally owned newspaper, and probably the largest locally owned media outlet of any kind in the state. But measured commercially on a national scale, it’s practically microscopic.

Nevertheless, we compete against giants. Lee Enterprises, owner of four of the seven largest dailies in the state, including the *Missoulian*, is our most direct rival. With its acquisi-

Matt Gibson, publisher of the *Missoula Independent*. Photo by Chad Harder

tion of Pulitzer newspapers this spring, Lee anticipates that its operating profit will reach $300 million annually. At that size, their lunch budget conceivably exceeds the size of our entire business.

Clear Channel Communications, with revenues of $9.4 billion in 2004, owns six radio stations in Missoula and 19 in Montana overall. They throw their weight around, too. Earlier this year, when the *Independent* published a story on the remarkable popularity of public radio in Missoula, local Clear Channel managers severed all promotional ties with the paper.

On the television front, we’re contending with Max Media, a private company based in Virginia that operates three affiliates in Missoula and eight other Montana stations blanket-ing every city in the state.

In our corner we’ve got 24 full- and part-time employees, 3,800 square feet of office space, including two bathrooms and two copiers, and a nifty little red pickup truck—modest...
resources when you’re stepping into the ring with the business equivalents of King Kong.

Challenged by a difficult advertising economy and declining readership, the giants of newspaper publishing are counter-punching harder than ever, launching their own free papers in an effort to capture young readers and forestall their decline. It’s not just the major metro daily publishers that are fighting back. There are corporate faux-alternatives in ordinary places like Boise, Idaho, Lansing and Allentown. When the Goliaths start building slingshots to neutralize the Davids, that’s nasty business.

You’d think the independent free weeklies were looting the vault to incite that kind of response, but in fact, advertising sales for weekly news and entertainment tabloids like the Indy account for less than two percent of all newspaper ad revenue nationally.

Ultimately, the tendency to sterilize the human voice, reducing character to sound bites and boring clichés—attenuating the sensory detail, ragged pathos and drama of our real lives—will relegate the corporate approach to mere background chatter. As long as massive media makes life conspicuously less interesting to read about or watch than it is to actually live it, people will naturally seek more rewarding sources of information about their neighbors. Our compulsion to find out about one another, and to be known in the fullness of our own humanity, must be satisfied.

Matt Gibson is the owner and publisher of the Missoula Independent. He currently serves on the board of directors of the Montana Newspaper Association and has previously served as a director of the Washington, D.C.-based Association of Alternative Newsweeklies.
Q&A with Mehrdad Kia

Exploring the strengths and weaknesses of American reporting on the Middle East

INTerview and photos by luke george

When he was 17 years old, University of Montana Professor Mehrdad Kia left his hometown of Tehran—Iran's capital—to study in the United States. Kia has a doctorate in Middle Eastern and North African History. He is also director of the Office of International Programs, assistant vice president for research at the University of Montana and a popular lecturer in modern Islamic civilization. He helped form UM's new Central Asia and Caspian Basin Program, which draws from scholars with expertise in the area and allows students to earn a minor in Central and Southwest Asian Studies from the Department of Geography.

Q: How does the media represent the relationships between the people of the Middle East and the so-called first world?

A: The people of the Middle East have always been portrayed as a monolith. The irony is that the Middle East is probably one of the least monolithic and one of the most ethnically, culturally, religiously and politically diverse regions of the world. But, there's almost this stubborn insistence to basically reduce all the peoples of the Middle East to a homogeneous group—usually referred to as Arabs. So, non-Arabs such as Turks, Iranians,
"I rarely mention print media as a target of criticism—it is popular TV and radio. These shows, they sort of perpetuate the so-called conventional wisdom, which is pretty narrow-minded."

Kurds, Afghans, Pakistanis—all those are almost ignored.

It’s also portrayed as religiously homogeneous—as a monolith of Muslims who are overwhelmingly anti-American and against the values held here by people of western societies.

**Q: Which is worst—broadcast, print, photo or radio?**

**A:** I make a very clear distinction between print media and TV media. I find the print media still have a great deal of good work, patient work—people who care for the issues that they cover and analyze. I rarely mention print media as a target of criticism—it is popular TV and radio. These shows, they sort of perpetuate the so-called conventional wisdom, which is pretty narrow-minded.

I would say part of the problem is lack of knowledge and part of the problem is lack of understanding the complexity of histories, cultures and religious traditions. Part of it is also TV itself. [The format] imposes a certain structure, which is almost against the principle of having anything in depth. Its quick, marketable, sensationalist sort of pieces cannot be conducive to learning. And right there, you’re [separating] news from history and background. And the moment you do that, reality looks much smaller, simpler and one-dimensional.

**Q: What do you think about the Muslim communities in America and how they have been viewed differently and represented differently after September 11?**

**A:** The Muslim community in the United States is a very diverse community. But, for the most part it is highly professional and highly educated religious and multi-ethnic group. The Muslim community can be Arabs, they can be Iranians, they can be Turks, they can be Indonesians, African Muslims and so on. As soon as something happens relating to terrorism, the members of this community become targets of attacks or some forms of insulting remarks or articles—"Are we safe having this community among us?" Had it not been for that external threat or an attack on New York or Washington, the Muslim community would be probably like any other community. They are as American as apple pie. They do not speak English with any accent, they’re just Muslims. Just like we have our Jewish brothers and sisters and Christian brothers and sisters and Hindu and Buddhist.
Whenever we talk about Islam we are not talking necessarily about the Arab world—we are talking about a very diverse civilization.

Q: What are the most common errors made by the media when covering the Arabic world/Muslim world?

A: Your question is a good one because the Arab world and the Islamic world are always equated in the eyes of the media. The Arab world is not a religiously homogeneous world because there are Christian Arabs. Most of the time when you talk about the Islamic world, people think about Arabs. We accept this over and over.

Arabs only constitute a minority in the Islamic world—150 to 200 million at the most. Yet, the overwhelming majority of followers of Islam are non-Arabs—they don’t speak Arabic. That is one of the issues [journalists] need to clarify. Whenever we talk about Islam we are not talking necessarily about the Arab world—we are talking about a very diverse civilization.

We are dehumanizing them by putting them all in one bag. I think people in the rest of the Islamic world also want their culture, history and identity to be appreciated as a separate entity.

Q: Is the misinformation and inadequate coverage due to insufficient knowledge or bias?

A: I think bias itself comes from insufficient knowledge, from oversimplification and inherited values. Because something has been repeated over and over it’s taken as a fact and it becomes part of the society’s conventional wisdom. So, bias is partly lack of knowledge. I always said that I think part of the reason racism, bias, [and] stereotypes persist is ignorance, really.

If we knew that person’s culture, we would have a very different perception of who he or she is and not put him or her in a group and stereotype him or her with a larger group of people. We [appreciate individuality] when it comes to American people. When we come to other cultures and regions of the world, we suddenly say, “Oh, it’s too complicated; let’s just talk about them, rather than he [or] she as individuals.”

Q: Could you offer some examples where a particular paper, particular writer or broadcast has consistently presented accurate and fair coverage?

A: I often read The Christian Science Monitor and I am absolutely impressed by the care and sensitivity...in terms of a real genuine attempt to understand issues...the reporter/journalist has done [quality] research before writing the piece. There are a lot of competent people in the media, especially in print media.
"I do not agree with people who say the role of the media is to educate us. The role of educating us is a personal responsibility. Media will never educate us. Media will only provide basic information."

I think the problem is usually in the TV media where the news is processed very quickly and it becomes highlighted abstractions.

Q: What can the media do to learn from their mistakes?

A: The popular media has already taken the wrong road to disseminating information. I think it’s already too late. The rush to just cover the news and to compete with the other channels is so intense.

Gigantic corporations have reporters around the world to inform the American public about what’s going on and then they focus on the shootings in Atlanta and Michael Jackson’s trial.

What is the difference then between news broadcasting corporations and entertainment channels? What I’m seeing is that the media is turning itself into entertainment basically; keeping us happy and preoccupied with the latest scandal in Hollywood or with the latest murder in some big city. It’s pretty pathetic when you think about it.

Q: Do you feel that corporations are at fault for demanding the competitive nature be so high or that journalists don’t demand enough time for coverage?

A: Both. It originates from the fundamental fact that news media, the popular TV media, is a business and the motive is the bottom line.

So, you have to produce products that sell, which are marketable and which are competitive with other channels and corporations. That’s why it’s more about generating money and profit than about informing the public. I think that’s the tragedy of popular media today.

Having said that, I do not agree with people who say the role of the media is to educate us. The role of educating us is a personal responsibility. Media will never educate us. Media will only provide basic information.

Every time the media reports on the Arab-Israeli conflict, they cannot cover the history of Zionism or Arab nationalism since the second half of the nineteenth century. That would be impossible. We as citizens of a democratic society, we need to educate ourselves.

My problem with media today is not that they fail to educate—it’s that they fail to inform us properly.
A Grand Failure

Reporter reflects on the coverage of tsunami-ravished Asia

By Karen J. Coates
Photos by Jerry Redfern
Days after a tsunami killed more than 270,000 in Asia, my husband, photographer Jerry Redfem, and I flew into Phuket, an island on Thailand’s southwest coast, on New Year’s Day 2005 to cover the tsunami for a variety of publications in the United States and Europe.

It was horrid. We traipsed through third-floor hotel rooms, finding life as it had been left—clothes, photos, Christmas gifts and bottles of lotion on bathroom counters. We found a once-boisterous beach known for its red lights and free-flowing beer suddenly dark and silent. We cringed at the stench of 1,200 unidentifiable corpses rotting around a Buddhist temple.

But in truth, our Thailand experiences did not entirely reflect the disaster. We went to the most accessible tsunami-hit areas, days after roads had been cleared. We stayed at a high-end resort atop a hill, and didn’t venture into war-plagued areas. We, like many journalists, returned home by the week’s end. Yet three months later, many victims still suffer. When another quake with a magnitude of 8.7, hit Sumatra in March, thousands fled to the hills, their memories fresh, their worries substantiated. And many important tsunami stories were never properly told.

We read in the San Jose Mercury News about Indonesia’s Acehnese people and the strong religious beliefs that have helped them through rocky times. There is no mention of the separatist war that has divided that region for generations, nor of government death squads, continued fighting with relief workers and extensive allegations of government corruption hampering aid and jeopardizing lives.

In February, The New Yorker reported that Dan Rather and CBS news executives opted not to air a January story on Indonesia’s separatist rebels because they had no pictures.

“It’s a tough story for television,” Rather said.

Jerry and I watch a National Geographic documentary on post-tsunami Sri Lanka and tourists speak of resilient people helping themselves to recover, to build anew. With foreign aid, they will have concrete homes, better than the shacks they had before. But there is no mention of why their homes were so appalling in the past. There is no mention of widespread accusations that Sri Lanka’s government has long neglected its people while politicians have profited from a civil war they don’t want to end.

Jerry and I spent a month working in Sri Lanka in November and December 2004. We returned to our home in Thailand three days before the tsunami hit. While in Sri Lanka, a single father named Raju showed us his home. He was lucky to have brick walls and a sheet-metal roof, but water was a 10-minute walk away. Raju could not afford to provide a toilet for his daughter. He took us through the neighborhood of cornfields and dirt paths and pointed to people clustered under tarps. He blamed...
his government for keeping its people so poor.
“Look how they live,” he barked.

Since the tsunami, tension has grown between the minority Hindu Tamils and governing Buddhist Sinhalese; they fought a brutal 20-year civil war that came to a ceasefire in 2002. The Tamil Tigers call themselves “freedom fighters” and hope to reclaim their ancient territory in northern Sri Lanka. Sinhalese call the Tigers separatist terrorists. Both sides agree it’s only a matter of time before fighting begins again.

When Kofi Annan toured Sri Lanka after the tsunami hit, the Sinhalese-controlled government in Colombo refused to allow him access to the Tamil-controlled north. Since then, Sri Lankan army soldiers have reportedly attacked Tamils in tsunami refugee camps, and the government reportedly used tsunami aid to strengthen its military.

For decades, the world has heard of Tamil terrorists, but if you visit Jaffna you will see the story is more complicated. You will see a Sri Lankan city bombed to bits by the Sri Lankan government. You will see roads, schools, hospitals and houses reduced to rubble; you will hear stories of bombs that killed civilians hiding in their homes. The Sri Lankan army is stationed on nearly every street corner, bunkers everywhere, beaches and causeways mined. When the tsunami hit, our friend, Mr. K, a taxi driver and ex-Tamil fighter from Jaffna, wrote to say many people had died, many were left homeless, and the Tamils were working to save themselves.

Three months after the tsunami, more Americans can pinpoint Sri Lanka, Aceh, Phuket, Tamil Nadu and the Andaman Islands on a map. That is good. But I wonder: do Americans have a greater understanding of the ways war, politics and government corruption have exacerbated the tsunami’s effects? I doubt it, and if that’s true, I think journalism has failed.

It is ironic that Jerry and I watch that Sri Lanka documentary while covering other stories in Laos. Many Americans have never heard of Xieng Khouang, but every Laotian in this province lives with the remnants of America’s brutal bombing campaign during 1964-1973. Xieng Khouang is one of the most heavily bombed
places on earth, its ground still littered with unexploded ordnance. The United States dumped two tons of explosives for every person in the region. Thirty percent of those bombs didn’t explode, and they remain deadly today. When a child stakes his buffalo, when a farmer digs into his field, when villagers go to the toilet in the woods it is dangerous. Every week in Xieng Khouang, American bombs kill and maim civilians.

What does that have to do with tsunamis?

Karen J. Coates is a freelance journalist whose work has appeared in publications around the world. She is a correspondent for Gourmet Magazine. Her book, "Cambodia Now: Life in the Wake of War," has just been published by McFarland & Company.

Jerry Redfern is a member of OnAsia Images in Bangkok and his work has also appeared in publications around the world.

Life after land mines

The product of years of on-the-scene reporting, Karen Coates’ "Cambodia Now: Life in the Wake of War" tells the story of Cambodia’s people since its horrific civil war ended in 1991. In human and intimate terms, Coates documents Cambodians’ slow and unsteady struggle to escape the ravages of poverty, corruption and violence. One story is that of Bun Na, a former soldier who lost a leg and part of his face when a landmine exploded. After several years of begging in Phnom Penh, accompanied by a dog named Leak, Bun Na and his wife, Poeun, are able to make a new start in a rural village built by disabled veterans. In this excerpt, Karen and Jerry catch up with Bun Na and Poeun.

Nothing. And everything. So few Americans hear these stories or understand their complexity, yet it is our job to report them.

The politics of war and disaster imperil innocent lives every day. The fact that Americans don’t know about Xieng Khouang is a grand failure of American journalism. It is our duty to see that Asia’s tsunami doesn’t turn out the same way.

An excerpt

Jerry and I go to Veal Thom with photos and donations in hand, the gifts of family and friends in the United States. The truck pulls up to a small house on the edge of the village. We hop out, and in a minute there is yelling and chattering and a man running—running!—toward us on one leg and a crutch. It is Bun Na, with Poeun at his heels. He is spewing words in Khmer so quickly we understand nothing of what he says. He wears no shirt. They both wear scratches and bruises across their bodies and big, passionate smiles.

Come, they say. Come this way! They are eager to show us their house, behind this one and up a small path. It’s a grass hut on stilts, its walls erected three days before. For four months, they lived in this house with no walls. It is their house, made by their hands, with logs and grasses they cut and hauled on their own. “I climbed up a tree to cut wood for the house, but it was very difficult, and I always fell down,” Bun Na says, still grinning.

They’ve started a small garden next to the house, growing cassava, jackfruit and papaya. “But we don’t have water yet,” Poeun says. For now, they use a neighbor’s well until they can gather the money and cement to dig and make their own.

They want to invite us inside their house—because they can. So we remove our shoes, climb the ladder and sit upon its new slat floor. It smells of grass and wood and fresh air. It smells wonderful. They’re still smiling. They have a small white cat with a bell around its neck. Its name is Swat, meaning skinny. It just appeared one day, very small and bedraggled. Now it keeps them company.

The Outdoor Writer’s Handshake

Hand Out, Palm Up:
The ethics of accepting freebies

By Jesse Nation-Ames

Radio host Bob Hirsch loves to tell the story about an insurance man turned outdoor columnist whose obsession for free gear got him fired from a local weekly paper and kicked out of the Outdoor Writers Association of America (OWAA).

“He told me one day, ‘The only reason I belong to the Outdoor Writers Association of America is to see how much free stuff I can get,”’ Hirsch says. “All his articles were about the different gear he got, and this guy just got so outrageous, the paper finally just said, ‘OK, you’re done.’”

When Hirsch reported the man for profiting off gear donated to the local Boy Scout troop, the OWAA took notice.

“He would write everybody who makes anything for the outdoors and say ‘You know the Boy Scouts have a hard time making money, and could you send some tackle boxes or 500 worms,”’ says Hirsch.

When the companies obliged, willing to help out a good cause, they sent extra gear.

“He couldn’t get rid of all the stuff,” says Hirsch.

With a blind eye to ethics, the man found a way to get rid of the donated goods.

“When he got done, he took it home and had a garage sale. I finally reported him to OWAA and they yanked him,” says Hirsch.

Increasingly, outdoor writing is becoming product-driven. Few national outdoor magazines reserve space for literary articles, and the how-to article reigns supreme.

Part of a how-to is the what-to. That is, what gear to use. Good writers give their readers a number of options according to price, quality and use. But when, in the course of a narrative, writers drop the names of the products or services they used, it influences the reader and can often display a bias.

A journalist’s credibility relies on objective reporting. Mentioning manufacturers or service providers unnecessary to the story is an underhanded way to treat a reader, but there is also the desire for the free gear and trips. And story mentions are often the best way to get them.

There are certain circumstances, however, when mentioning a product does serve the reader. Mark Taylor, outdoors editor of the Roanoke Times, uses the example of a story he wrote where a young boy killed his first deer with a 120-yard shot.

“Part of that story is going to be the exact equipment he used to do it. That’s just basic reporting and good journalism,” says Taylor.

Other hunters reading the story will want to know what caliber the hunter used so that they can judge for themselves the difficulty of the shot.

Products also appear in straight-news stories when the writer is describing a scene like a boating accident. It’s valid to name the manufacturer and type of the life preserver the surviving boaters were wearing. It serves readers to know the details of how someone survived a situation they could find themselves in one day.

Mike Walker, freelance writer and producer and editor of “The World of Ducks Unlimited Radio,” says product mentions often occur in narrative because hunters, anglers and other outdoor enthusiasts are gadget crazy.

“The product in so many stories has taken over the role of the experience because writers are driven to include product in their features,” Walker says. Manufacturers focus on the link between product sale and editorial mention, forgetting...
the original message for the outdoorsman—the experience, he says.

While everyone wants to make money writing about the things they love to do, the outdoor field typically doesn't pay well. Freelance writer Dusty Routh says he has to sell four or five fishing stories to equal the pay of one business story. Some writers see comp as a supplement to the payment they get for the piece.

But there is a gray area. Freelance travel writer Peter Schroeder explains that he is unable to write international travel stories without comps because of the enormous costs of air travel and hotels.

“When I began doing national articles, I had a whole lot of fun, and I didn’t make any money,” Schroeder says. Paying for overnight trips and meals wiped out any profits he could have made on the story.

Schroeder advises journalists to call the media relations employee at an airline or hotel and tell him about the assignment. Then, write a formal request to this person with a sort of business plan for how the airline will benefit.

“What they don’t want is a comment at the end of the article saying travel support was provided by Lufthansa Airlines,” says Schroeder.

They want to be worked into the story, with a name mention, like “As we circled Sydney harbor in our Quanza jet, I could see the boat I would soon be sailing,” he says. While this type of product mention is just the thing many writers see as unethical, there is another way to do it.

Sidebars can be a good way to incorporate them without tainting the story’s integrity. We flew on this airline, used this gear and stayed at this hotel. But even sidebars can convey a bias.

In the February/March issue of Sports Afield, writer and editor Diana Rupp wrote a sidebar called the “Ultimate Elk Rig” where she described the gun, scope and binoculars she used on an elk hunt in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area. She listed and praised the features of each piece of equipment without offering the reader an alternate choice of equipment or any insight as to why they might choose the caliber, brand or type of equipment she listed in her article over other options.

But in the April 2005 issue of Field & Stream, a sidebar accompanying a fishing-destination article listed choices, prices and alternate sources of information for lodging, guides and gear without preferential mention. The result was an informative sidebar instead of a persuasive one.

When it comes to product reviews, it’s necessary to mention product names when reviewing them. Because many of these products are expensive, an outdoor writer can’t possibly buy them all for retail prices.

“We all know there are a lot of products out there,” says Taylor. “We don’t make a lot of money, and to really keep our fingers on the proverbial pulse of the outdoor world, we gotta test this stuff.”

Freelance writer with Primedia publications and former editor of Mule Deer Magazine, Wayne van Zwoll, specializes in rifles and cartridges. Purchasing the products for one rifle review would

Some writers are so ingrained in their habits that they don’t even notice when they slip in a line like, “I trembled in my Browning boots.”
"We all know there are a lot of products out there. We don’t make a lot of money, and to really keep our fingers on the proverbial pulse of the outdoor world, we gotta test this stuff."

cost roughly $10,000—several times more than the pay he receives for his stories.

To remove himself from an ethical tight spot, he asks the manufacturer to send him the product with an invoice and return postage. He tests the product and returns it promptly. Some of the products he reviews aren’t worth the postage to send them back, and he donates them to youth programs and law enforcement agencies.

On the other side of the coin is Allan Tarvid, a fishing electronics specialist with Bass & Walleye Boats. When he reviews a product, he considers the magazine’s major advertisers. He gives preference to those products when choosing what to review.

Tarvid’s deference to advertisers may come from working first for the industry, and then as a writer with no formal journalism training. By entering the field as a freelancer, Tarvid has made his own judgments according to what he is familiar with—the product.

“Some of us have strict ethical guidelines that we have to work under, especially in the newspaper world,” Taylor says. However, for many independent outdoors writers it is a personal judgment call, he says.

Taylor says to ask: are you taking it for yourself or your readers? Recognize when you drop a mention. Some writers are so ingrained in their habits that they don’t even notice when they slip in a line like, “I trembled in my Browning boots.” Make a conscious decision whether or not what you write serves the reader. The mention should be germane to a scene you are trying to set or relay information valuable to the reader.

Van Zwoll remembers when he began writing about rifles, optics and cartridges for national magazines, and companies regularly sent him free equipment to review in his stories.

“It used to be something I really wrestled with,” he says. “Because I didn’t think it was right and I didn’t want to sacrifice my credibility.”

Ultimately, ethics are ideals. Each writer must develop his or her own ethics in accordance with the goals they set for their reputation and career. Credibility is only valuable to those who wish to be believed, and they are the writers and journalists who try to serve their audience, not themselves.

“If you’re an ethical person, you will make the right decisions when you write or broadcast,” Hirsch says. “When a reporter is just in it for his or her own benefit, they are going to lose credibility with their audience.”

Jesse Nation-Ames is a freelance outdoor writer and a senior in journalism at the University of Montana. He enjoys skiing, fishing, hunting, biking, canoeing and backpacking with the gear he bought himself.
Are Women’s Magazines Journalism or Junk?

BY BROOKE HEWES

Marketing values distort—and sometimes destroy—the truth in women’s glossies

Last fall, my boyfriend and I had another couple over for dinner. Three out of the four diners were aspiring journalists; it was only a matter of time until the conversation turned to the media’s coverage of the war in Iraq, Dan Rather or FOX News. It was a Friday night, however, and we were tired of talking politics. So we talked People.

An immediate consensus was reached: the magazine was junk, as were most of its pop-culture-obsessed, newsstand neighbors. Women’s magazines, we decided, were among the worst offenders.

Women’s magazines cover the spectrum—from family to fitness to fashion. Popular titles include Glamour, Redbook, Good Housekeeping and Ladies’ Home Journal. Women want to read about women—as reflections of themselves and as a barometer for society’s ever-evolving perceptions of femininity. In fact, in 2003, the top 25 women’s magazines had a combined circulation of more than 91 million.

I have always publicly denounced such journals as sensationalism that, by focusing on faux female figures and fashion, make women feel inferior to the “perfect people” they read about. However, even I—admittedly aghast—sneak the occasional supermarket peak at Glamour and Cosmo.


OK, so they’re alluring. But are they journalism?

Is their content truthful? Do advertisements overshadow sound suggestions? In terms of the professional and reputable conduct of journalists, are these magazines ethical?

Are women’s magazine’s journalism or junk?

Putting women’s glossies to the test

According to the Society of Professional Journalists, ethical journalists are thorough, honest and professional. Readers’ trust hinges on credible research and transparent reporting. So in an attempt to sort the junk from journalism, I held a dozen assorted women’s glossies to the ultimate test: the SPJ Code of Ethics.

STRIKE 1

CODE: Make certain that headlines, news teases, promotional material and quotations do not misrepresent.

Details, in other words, should not be omitted to fashion an argument or purport a particular agenda. One offender—and arguably the most covered subject by women’s magazines—is the issue of weight loss.

“Studies show that women’s magazines are the number one place where women get information on health,” says Stacy Morrison, editor-in-chief of Redbook magazine, from her office in Manhattan.

In fact, says Morrison, women often turn to their favorite glossies in lieu of their doctor for diet dos and don’ts. It’s no wonder that of the 12 magazines stacked on my desk, most cover stories suggest shedding pounds and at least half a dozen different ways to do it. The magazines sell weight-loss secrets, and through the power of suggestion and association, promise success with the slim bodies decorating their covers.

For the sake of argument, let’s say it is 4 p.m. on Friday. Jane has a cocktail party at 7 p.m. Passing a newsstand on her way home, the April 2003 edition of Glamour catches her eye. “A toned body by tonight: No joke—this celeb workout works.” She buys it, races home and turns to page 128. Her stomach drops after reading the first sentence: “Can you transform your body in a day? No.” Shoot! Still, holding out for at least a little tone, she reads on, does the exercises, looks in the mirror, and...and...

And she looks the same. The cover touted more tone and all Jane feels is frustration. Strike One.

Frustration, perhaps, but according
thin thighs in 15 seconds no kidding!

SEDUCTION 101 how to get any man you want even if he’s taken!

Fountain of Youth SECRET SERUMS FROM EUROPE

couch crunches 5 moves you can do while barely moving

cuter noses NOW it’s only plastic surgery!

200 swimsuits for YOUR body (unless you’re over 110 lbs.)

photo illustration by Liz Grauman
to Morrison, that is not the magazine’s intention.

“The headline doesn’t stretch too far from the truth. It is part of the packaging,” says Morrison. “We are journalism and marketing, but that is what journalism is.”

Indeed, editors must keep their eyes on the prize of readers’ pockets, but when women read nutritional tidbits and teasers, marketing scheme or not, they should be told if they are not getting the whole story.

The lack of information, according to Marya Bruning, a dietician at the University of Montana in Missoula, is just as deceptive and dangerous, as the content itself.

“I have noticed nutritional information is often incomplete,” says Bruning. “Without including a broader perspective of health, they only give a snapshot. They don’t address all the whys and hows necessary for real change.”

**STRIKE 2**

**CODE:** Journalists and the graphics they use should not confuse readers.

One technique often employed by women’s magazines is the juxtaposition of images, articles and headlines to bolster associations. In a 1999 article, “Women and Weight: gendered messages on magazine articles” (Sex Roles: A Journal of Research), Amy Malkin writes that magazine covers often have weight-loss related headlines placed next to headlines about how to achieve happiness.

“By their positioning of messages on magazine covers, magazines may imply that losing weight or changing the shape of one’s body will lead to a better life,” she writes. These messages “give women the false idea that changing the appearance of their bodies will lead to better relationships, stronger friendships and happier lives,” Malkin says.

Sure enough, a glance at my own stack reveals similar suggestions: “Can this marriage be saved?” beside “Try-at-home” hair tips from pros (Ladies’ Home Journal, January 2004); and “Live your happiest Life” below “Be bikini-sleek in just 3 crunch-free weeks” (Self, July 2004).

The headlines are in boldface and are not discrete. The implied connections between happiness, relationship security and weight loss, however, are.

“If designers are laying out content to intentionally confuse readers,” says Kelley McBride, the Ethical Group Leader at the Poynter Institute, “then I have a problem with that because it ultimately undermines the truth.” Strike Two.

Deceptive perhaps, but it is what women want, says Morrison.

“There is a very successful magazine that you can only buy at the check-out line in a grocery store,” she says. “It’s called First For Women. Without fail, every month there is a cover article about how to lose 100 pounds in five minutes, and at the bottom, there is a picture of a chocolate cake saying ‘see recipe inside.’”

“People are in conflict,” she continues. “They want to be thin, but they want to eat everything.”

Therefore, according to Morrison, what seem like contradictions are not; they speak to an honest conflict that most women feel—they are addressing what women want to read about.

**STRIKE 3**

**CODE:** Ethical Journalists distinguish news from advertising and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two.

In many ways, women’s magazines are the perfect playground for product tie-ins. On page 96 of the January 2004 Ladies’ Home Journal, tip number five on how to be your best is “bring on breakfast.” On the opposite page there is an advertisement for “Post Selects Maple Pecan Crunch” cereal.

Another example appears on page 64 of New Women’s Day, May 23, 2003, where Febreeze teams up with the magazine (at the top in large letters the two names are printed together) to promote Febreeze’s allergen reducer. The question and answer format gives the appearance of an authentic interview. It isn’t. Strike three.

Again, Morrison argues strength, or at least not strike.

“Every editor will tell you about this struggle, but because of the separation between church and state, that is the trade-off,” she says, referring to magazines’ sales and editorial departments. “The advertisers don’t tell us what to do, so we can’t really tell them what to do.”

However, it seems that in some cases, by a lack of attribution and other tools of transparency, these lines are crossed anyway.

Three strikes and you’re out!

Must all professional journals be ethical and truthful to be called journalism? Yes.

“In a journalistic magazine, it is pretty clear to me that content is reported by a staff or freelance writer who fol-
allows strict ethical standards,” says McBride. “A journalistic enterprise has a mission to tell the truth as much as possible.”

“But in most cases,” McBride continues, “with women’s magazines, their mission is not to tell the truth. It’s to entertain and make people feel good about themselves. That is the biggest, single factor that separates them from journalism.”

Truth can be entertaining, and entertainment can be truthful, but to be journalistic, McBride says, truth must come first.

As influential as women’s magazines are, in most cases, and certainly in the cases of the 12 magazines I examined, they are not journalism.

When these magazines don’t explicitly make distinctions about what the truth is, according to Gary Hill—the chair of the Ethics Committee at SPJ—both readers and magazines lose.

“Some of these magazines may routinely have one sort of ethical lapse while carefully avoiding others,” he says. “One article may meet the highest standards while the one sitting next to it is an unmarked advertorial. Therein lies at least part of the problem…and the magazine’s overall credibility will suffer.”

So, should we trash ‘em?

Perhaps the content of contemporary women’s magazines, which appeals to the stereotypical girly girl, is fine. Fine, that is, when readers buy the glossies for entertainment and eyebrow-plucking advice. When they purchase these magazines as a primary source of news and nutritional information, it is not OK.

The junk must be separated from the journalism by critical readers. But until magazine editors, publishers and journalists offer this information themselves — when they become transparent—the junk will overshadow the journalism, and the misinformed, deceived readers will suffer as they continue to define their self-worth by the artificial standards that are set by women’s glossies.

Brooke Hewes will start her second year of graduate work in journalism at UM this fall. She has recently contributed to Camas, Missoulian and Newwest.net and is interning with Bugle magazine this summer.

We congratulate the winners of the first UM School of Journalism ethics competition:

**Photo Division**
Rebekah McDonald
Louis Montclair
Michelle Gomes

**Print Division**
Tim Ratte
Allison Squires
Garrett Smith
Devin Wagner

**Broadcast Division**
Angela Marshall
Max Calise

**Judges**
Ian Marquand, KPAX; Ginny Merriam, Missoulian; Mark Hanson, UM Center for Ethics

*Do the right thing. It will gratify some people and astound the rest.*

- Mark Twain
Free speech freedoms are fragile in a sputtering democracy

When Nepal’s King Gyanendra declared his own war on terrorism on Feb. 1 to put down the mounting Maoist insurrection, he said he had no choice. Only two forces were left in Nepal, he said—those who practice terrorism and those who believe in peace.

The king’s strategy to pursue peace includes taking absolute power for three years, suspending civil liberties and imposing media censorship. It’s too early to predict the results, but the effect of his actions on the nation’s news media immediately became apparent.

Not only did reporters, editors and producers have to cope with the broad censorship, but more than 2,000 journalists lost work, according to the Federation of Nepalese Journalists, in part because half of the country’s newspapers have not resumed operations. Many other journalists have been arrested or held for questioning.

As in other developing countries, news media in Nepal have also struggled with authoritarian governments and colonial powers to help establish democracy. Even after the restoration of democracy in 1990 the media has been facing challenges of political hypocrisy, terrorism, corrupt power brokers and new autocracies.

The plight of Nepal’s journalists and their fight to bring out the truth in a developing democracy should be every journalist’s concern.

With a population of 25 million, Nepal is a small Himalayan country sandwiched between two giants, China to the north and India to the south. It is home to Mount Everest and the birthplace of Buddha.

Nepal is a friendly country, but its inhospitable topography and the nationalist nature of its people have protected the country from outside invaders. It is the only official Hindu kingdom in the world that has never been colonized.

After autocratic rule for more than 100 years, democracy was introduced in 1950 but floundered for decades. A popular movement restored democracy in 1990, followed by a new constitution with provisions for multi-party governments, freedom of the press and a constitutional monarchy.

But power conflicts continued to plague the coun-
try, leading to political instability, economic poverty, rampant corruption and social discrimination. Presently, Nepal is experiencing its 15th government in 15 years.

In June 2001, King Birendra's son turned on his father and murdered his family. His only surviving sibling, his middle brother, Prince Gyanendra, became the new king.

In 1995 the Maoists began an insurrection in rural areas of the country with the goal of overthrowing the monarchy and holding a constitutional assembly to replace the existing democratic constitution with a people's republic.

In the past decade, more than 11,000 people have been killed in the insurgency and the Maoists now control more than half of the country, chiefly the western half.

The media boomed in the 1990s. In 1991 there were approximately 456 Nepalese newspapers and periodicals, including a dozen national dailies with a combined circulation of close to 500,000. The number of newspapers quadrupled to 1,756 by 2002. AM radio has had a six-decade history, whereas TV broadcasting began in 1985.

The Maoist rebellion in Nepal, and efforts to suppress it, has had a profound impact. Visiting Nepal after the king's crackdown, Amnesty International's General Secretary Irene Khan said, "The human rights crisis in Nepal did not start on February 1. It is an ongoing cycle, which is being aggravated and complicated by the state of emergency."

According to a report from the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Journalists, like many ordinary Nepalese, are caught between both sides in the conflict and many have been abducted, beaten up and even killed by the Maoists."

The report added, however, that the news media "have played a major role in keeping the public informed about the violent insurgency, including individual killings, torture of civilians, abductions, extortion, bombing of schools and human rights abuses. Such news coverage went some way towards explaining the loss of popular support for the rebels in recent years."

The king has said he needs three years to restore peace, put democracy back on track and hold fresh elections. He justified his takeover by saying that the political parties had misgoverned the country since the restoration of democracy and were responsible for the Maoist uprising. He said it is necessary to suspend civil liberties to focus the fight against terrorism. However, he did lift the state of emergency on April 30 and media censorship seemed to ease.

The government banned media from publishing anything critical of the state for six months. Nepal's media is not allowed to write about the Maoist insurgents unless the information comes from the army. Privately owned FM radio stations were ordered to cancel news programs, causing about 600 broadcasters to lose their jobs. Now they only play music. The military has the authority to monitor and control communications.

Dozens of politicians and journalist have been arrested and many others have gone into hiding. Reporters working outside of the capital, Kathmandu, face greater pressure from local authorities. On March 22 government officials in the Bara district, 100 kilometers south of Kathmandu, issued 21 rules for the media, including a ban on reports critical of civil servants, according to the Kathmandu Post.

According to Reporters Without Borders, at least 45 journalists have been detained for questioning or arrested by the security forces, while 10 of the 15 journalists currently in prison were arrested in the past two months.

A new report by the Federation of Nepali Journalists notes that dozens of qualified, experienced media employees have given up the profession and are now working as teachers, grocers, retailers or are involved in farming.

"In Banepa, 20 kilometers east of Kathmandu, a local radio journalist has switched to collecting milk and moving it to the processing centre," said the report.

Another journalist with seven years of experience bought a buffalo and started a dairy farm at his home-
Solider on duty at Radio Sagarmatha 102.4 FM in Kathmandu on Feb. 3 to enforce the ban on all news and current affairs through the FM network.

Several media houses are attempting further layoffs. Since they haven't been allowed to write freely and there is a sudden decrease in their circulation, advertisers aren't willing to buy space at the same rate. This has significantly affected the earnings of newspapers, privately owned FM stations and TV networks. FM advertising revenues were down 80 percent, a manager said in late April.

There are 56 FM stations in Nepal. Liberalized broadcast media laws in 1993 opened the door to private investment in commercial FM radio for entertainment. But lawmakers were hesitant to allow FM stations to broadcast their own news because the politicians' own interests might have been at risk.

Nonetheless, they kept silent while FM stations did exactly that—until the recent emergency, when all news programming was banned.

"It's a very sad situation for us," says journalist Bharat Dutta Koirala. "Independent radio broadcasters were serving the nation so well and better than any form of media, given the level of literacy. How can they be accused of boosting the morale of Maoists and undermining the state?"

Reporters Without Borders has proposed 11 measures to safeguard press freedom, including lifting censorship on all media, unblocking signals from private and international TV stations, reopening all provincial media and community radio stations and releasing imprisoned journalists.

"Press freedom, like other fundamental freedoms, is indispensable for a properly functioning society," the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization recently commented. "Nepal will not be able to live in peace without respecting these fundamental rights, democracy and the multi-party system."

In various ways, Nepalese journalists are protesting the loss of their freedoms. Recently, hundreds of Nepalese journalists marched through the capital demanding the restoration of press freedom. Police closely monitored the march, but unlike in previous protests, they did not intervene or arrest any participants.

To protest censorship, some newspapers kept editorial pages blank while some have satirized the situation more subtly. For example, the king's emergency declaration, one newspaper used its lead editorial to bemoan the cutting down of trees in the capital: "The sudden epidemic of tree-felling along Kathmandu's streets is drastic, misguided and not consonant with the needs of the population." The subtext was not lost on its readers.

For the first time bloggers have become Nepal's new watchdogs, regularly linking to outside media articles about the situation, and publishing commentary by Nepali journalists, often anonymously.

On the blog, Radio Free Nepal, for example, it was reported that when three reporters wrote that rebels had
Maoist rebels control much of rural Nepal, predominantly in the western part of the country.

Maoist rebels torched seven vehicles, they were summoned for questioning, even though the government had already decided to compensate the vehicle owners.

On United We Blog!, one Nepali journalist pointed out that Maoist FM stations are benefiting from the news ban, attracting large numbers of listeners—including government officials—who are unable to get news from law-abiding stations.

Many Nepali journalists are skeptical about some media protests, although they are against censorship. Partisan interests do not represent the independent voices within Nepalese media, nor do the international organizations that have been issuing critical reports.

Intellectuals in Nepal are also divided over the king’s crack-down and the need for censorship. Some believe constitutional ideals have been totally violated, the future of democracy is uncertain, the level of human rights is sharply going down, parties are humiliated and extremists are gaining more energy.

Others believe that someone had to rescue the nation from the quagmire of violence and terrorism, liberate people from corruption and nepotism and relieve them from exploitation and injustice. In the name of democracy, they say, corrupt and confused leaders have not only invited violence but have bankrupted the nation and made democracy unsuccessful. Since politicians were unable to do so, the king acted.

Despite these contradictory opinions, reflected in the Nepali press, there is a consensus that the derailed multiparty democracy, the constitutional monarchy and national integrity must be revived.

Rajendra Dev Acharya is a Nepali television journalist with nearly 30 years of experience. He is currently completing his master’s degree at UM School of Journalism.
The University of Montana School of Journalism is proud to announce:

37th ROBERT F. KENNEDY JOURNALISM AWARD for BEST COLLEGE REPORTING:
The 2004 Native News Honors Project, "Sovereignty"

Reporters
Sadie Craig
Joe Friedrichs
Fred Miller
Natalie Storey
Jessica Wambach
Adam Weinacker
Alisha Wyman

Photographers
Meghan Brown
Adam Bystrom
Mike Cohea
Lisa Hornstein
Chandler Melton
Heather Telesca
Noelle Teixeira

Photo Editor
Kate Medley

Design Editor
Liz Grauman

Design Consultant
Yogesh Simpson

Professors
Carol Van Valkenburg (print)
Teresa Tamura (photo and design)

COLLEGE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR
Gold: Lisa Hornstein, 2004 graduate.

THE HEARST JOURNALISM AWARDS
6th, picture story: Lee Tortorelli, photojournalism.
8th, feature/portrait: Mike Cohea, photojournalism.
15th, sports writing: Alisha Wyman, print.
16th, spot news: Brad Fjeldheim, print.
19th, feature writing: Joe Friedrichs, print.

SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
NATIONAL MARK OF EXCELLENCE
National finalists, television: Michael Sternoff, Ashley Terry and the Student Documentary Unit

SOCIETY FOR NEWS DESIGN
2nd: Liz Grauman, photojournalism.

NATIONAL PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS ASSOCIATION
1st, unaffiliated online feature picture story: Matthew Hayes, 2005.

BROADCAST EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
3rd, Sports Reporting-Television: Sarah Lenoch and Dustin Blanchet
2nd, Sports Reporting-Radio: Courtney Hanson
3rd, Sports Reporting-Radio: Derek Buerkle

RADIO-TELEVISION NEWS DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION
Edward R. Murrow Regional Award, Sports: Sally Mauk, news director, KUFM

AEJMC MOST PROMISING PROFESSOR, 2005
Denise Dowling, Assistant Professor

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY FACULTY FELLOWSHIP, 2005
Teresa Tamura, Assistant Professor

T. ANTHONY POLLNER DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR, 2004
Nancy Szokan, The Washington Post

T. ANTHONY POLLNER DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR, 2005
Chris Boese, CNN Headline News.
Outdoor writers such as Jeff Hull encounter dilemmas when writing about hidden gems.

The ramifications of “Best-of” journalism in national magazines

BY ALAN PANEBAKER
PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY LUKE GEORGE

In March 2002, Men’s Journal magazine published an article titled “The 50 Best Places to Live.” It was geared towards the young professional who enjoys outdoor recreation. The town topping the list was Driggs, Idaho—a small but growing nook across the Teton Pass from Jackson, Wyoming.
Rob Marin, a freelance writer living in Driggs, saw the article and promptly wrote his own reaction to the story in the environmental news source High Country News.

Marin reamed Men’s Journal for doing what it does best: selling the dream of rugged, adventurous living. While others may have appreciated the publicity, he saw the exposure as an irresponsible publicity act to sell more issues.

Thus the dilemma: how do publications maintain solid, credible journalism without exploiting sensitive places?

“Our region needs exposure in upscale national magazines like it needs a collective hole in the head,” Marin writes. “This type of publicity can only exacerbate the usual Old West/New West growing pains, and we seem to have ‘em all in Teton Valley.”

So what’s the big deal, and what ever happened to that little town on the Idaho/Wyoming border? According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Teton County (where Driggs is located) grew 7 percent between 2000 and 2001—making it the fastest growing county nationwide with a population of less than 10,000. This was shortly before Men’s Journal published its “The 50 Best Places to Live” article.

Between 2000 and 2003, Teton County’s population increased 17.7 percent, according to the Census Bureau’s most recent statistics.

It’s hard to say exactly what causes this growth, besides the fact that Driggs is a nice place to live. The only sure thing, as anyone who visited the town this winter knows, is that Teton County’s population is growing fast.

Marin is not the only Westerner frustrated about the “exploitation” of the outdoors for journalism’s sake.

While many articles in outdoor magazines like Men’s Journal may appear to have no concrete repercussions, Jeff Hull, a freelancer based in Missoula, Mont., has seen first-hand the human consumption that can result from a few quick strokes of the pen. An accomplished writer who has been published in the likes of Outside (which he refuses to write for now), National Geographic Explorer and The Atlantic Monthly, Hull knows the best and the worst of destination articles.

Earlier in his career, he had the opportunity to write about the St. Joe River in Idaho’s panhandle for Men’s Journal. The St. Joe is now a hugely popular fishing and floating destination, and according to Hull, it’s overused.

Perhaps by writing a story for the masses about a little known river, Hull added to the problem himself.

“I’m not saying my stories made people want to go there,” Hull says. However, these stories, in part, have added to the mass of people now fishing the river, he says.

Hull thinks all places are fair game for destination magazine articles, but the angle of the story can make all the difference. Media attention can raise environmental awareness instead of creating overuse.

The dilemma for freelancers is maintaining a living through writing while keeping their focus on solid, environmental issues. The problem for editors is that conservation articles often bore readers.

In the constant struggle for advertising money, it seems magazines are leaning more and more toward the simplified approach of the “Top-10” articles and “Best This” or “Most Extreme That,” publishing articles that attract more readers, are easier to write than in-depth reporting and sell more ads.

“‘Top-10’ articles sell magazines,” says Hull.

Samir A. Husni, a journalism professor at the University of Mississippi, echoes Hull’s sentiments. As the head of the university’s magazine service journalism program and the academic authority in the field, Husni knows how magazines work.

“Mr. Magazine,” as Husni is known, says, “It’s a rule of
thum in our business that if you put something into a list it will sell better.”

List articles are more conducive to short attention spans because they have more organization and have easily accessible information, says Husni.

But to some, this easy access, simplified approach to outdoor magazine writing is killing the very places it advertises.

In 1995, Elizabeth Manning wrote an article called “The Road to Wilderness is Paved With Outdoor Magazines.” She scrutinized outdoor magazines for objectifying wilderness in a nearly pornographic way.

Her article states: “Anger directed at magazines like Outside may spring from a sense that its reader—mostly young urban professionals—don’t recreate in the West so much as they ‘buy’ outdoor experiences.”

So what’s so wrong with “buying” outdoor experiences when people generally don’t go to the places they are reading about?

The problem, according to Manning’s article, is more about the mindset these articles create than the actual number of people who recreate, or even move, to the places they read about.

“Between the lines the message is: This land is for human consumption,” Manning writes.

Another example of a “Top-10” article appeared in Skiing magazine, a publication read by about 1.2 million people, in its September 2004 issue titled “Move Here Now.”

With information based on size, proximity to a ski area, economics and quality of snowfall, Skiing rated Jackson Hole, Wyo., the number one ski town in the country—no surprise there.

Ranking number two on the nationally circulated magazine’s list was the lesser-known Steamboat Springs, Colo.

Jason Daley, the author of the article, writes of Steamboat, “The bovines and ranch hands are mostly gone, but they’ve left behind a place with a sturdy spine—Steamboat the town hasn’t been sacrificed for the sake of the resort.”

Scott Sanford, editor of Steamboat’s local newspaper, the Steamboat Pilot and Today, says he has no problems with this type of journalism.

“Such articles may lack news value, but I don’t think there is anything remotely unethical or sensationalistic about them,” Sanford says. “And blaming journalists for changes in your community that you don’t like is naive and misguided.”

His theory: growth will happen regardless of whether people write about it.

Sanford places the blame on a different culprit.

“The singular driving force behind the growth of resort communities like Steamboat is the baby boomer genera-

tion: the largest and wealthiest group of people in United States history moving into the retirement stage of life where they can choose to move from an urban destination to a resort,” says Sanford.

With this recent influx of outsiders and the help of the Internet, perhaps there are no secrets left. As the baby boomers settle, and their children thrust deeper into the wilderness, truly wild places get harder to find.

Tom Bie, editor of Powder magazine and former Jackson local, calls these places that have been discovered and overused “sacrificial lambs.” He thinks Teton Pass near Jackson, a destination for backcountry skiing, is one of these unfortunate places that got caught like a wounded deer trying to escape the American lust for the outdoors, adventure and experiences.

Because of the exploding popularity of outdoor sports and the plethora of information in cyberspace to accompany it, Bie says he doesn’t even publish specific information about backcountry areas.

“Magazines give too much away,” he says.

Even with magazines covering lesser-known outdoor sports, there is the threat of over-exposure.

Ian Merringer, editor of the Canadian kayaking magazine Rapid, says surf waves and river runs are usually well-known by the time the magazine could get its hands on them anyway.

“There aren’t many secrets left,” he says. “We rarely factor in worries about overexposure or over-popularity.”

With extremes on both ends, is it possible to find a common ground? Will outdoor writing fade into sensationalism or secrecy? This is as difficult to tell as the effects of magazine articles on small, mountain communities.

Merringer gets at the heart of the issue of any sport when he says of rivers, kayaking and literature: “to keep it as a secret would be selfish, and I have to trust that there is another such river in the next watershed that I can get to the next time around. Unless I feel there is something wrong with me being there, I can’t really consider it off limits to other people.”
I walked across the Higgins Bridge towards the crowd’s lingering summer laughter. The air, once filled with thunderstorms and balloons had aged, thin and crisp, and it was now fall.

At the end of the bridge, next to the river, where the light breaks perfectly through the trees and the water whispers something in the distance, is a haven for troubled teens, transients and drug dealers called Caras Park. From a distance or slight glance, their appearance isn’t too different than that of your average American youth. They scatter the park with the innocence of the living—sharing their laughs, cigarettes and joints while always hinting of things much worse.

It’s not the most inviting of places. In fact, local businessmen and women are escorted by security while walking to their cars after work. The cops do their best to keep the kids out of the park, but they always come back. They’re a tight-knit group, close and connected, and more by circumstance than friendship. They came from broken homes, abusive relationships and small, run-down towns offering little except drugs and alcohol.

I stood amongst them, watching and waiting, trying my hardest to go unnoticed as they floated around me, but it was obvious the two cameras draped across my chest weren’t making me any less visible. As I was debating whether to leave, a short, proud girl with long, dark hair tapped my shoulder. She held a newborn baby boy in her arms and I knew it was hers because they shared the same eyes, deep set and never ending.

"Will you take a picture of me and my baby?" she said.

It was a quick exchange, long enough for only two frames and a thank you before she told me her name was Heather and her baby’s Jadon. After I take someone’s photograph it’s often followed by the question of when, and if, they are going to see it. She asked neither, lit a cigarette and exhaled with the look of hope and despair clinging to her face and then vanished.
Most Caras locals acknowledged my presence the way you would a winter storm—annoyed and doing whatever possible to avoid it. Heather was different. I returned the following day and was surprised when she greeted me as a friend. She sat atop a bench smoking a cigarette, where the ugly noon light turned beautiful in the shadow. We talked of good things: her baby, the weather and her dreams to one day get back to California where her mother was. Although brief and vague, it was a good conversation, the sort to be thankful for, and she got up and left. That was the last time I saw her there.

A month went by, and with it, the long days and warm nights. I continued going down to Caras, taking more pictures and befriend the locals. I would ask about her, but the others either didn’t know or didn’t care. Eventually, they all left. Some jumped trains to warmer cities, the cops busted others and some tucked themselves away in other corners of Missoula for the winter.

It was in the remaining days of October when I finally saw Heather again. I was passing through a stale, dingy bar on Higgins Avenue to escape the wind and get coffee. She was playing pool with her friends while making baby faces at Jadon between shots. He looked older and so did she. I had been meaning to give her the photograph taken months earlier and happened to have it on me, buried away in my pack—you never know when you’re going to run into someone in Missoula. I pulled it out and handed it to her. She ecstatically thanked me over and over, and said it was the only photograph she had of her baby.

She talked of her new place, a small room in the corner of a motel off Broadway Avenue where she lived with Jadon’s father, Jeff, and his younger brother Jake. Jeff had recently been released from jail and was out on parole. He and Jake worked the graveyard shift cleaning a local bar in town seven days a week. Heather was unemployed and stayed home all day with the baby. She said I could come photograph there if I wanted to. I said yes.
After finishing his graveyard shift cleaning a local bar in Missoula, Jeff, 22, relaxes with his girlfriend and their three month old son, Jadon, in their room at the Sleepy Inn Motel. The couple moved into the motel shortly after Jeff's release from jail, and hope to save enough money to get a place of their own. Because Jeff works night and sleeps during the day, it hard for them to spend time together. Heather is unemployed and spends the day taking care of Jadon. With little money and no transportation they rarely leave the room except to go outside and smoke or get groceries. November 2004.
Heather leaves Jeff and the baby to get food stamps early one morning. Heather had picked up a few hours cleaning rooms at the Sleepy Inn, but was only earning enough for pocket change and cigarettes. February 2005.
They were all smokers, and you could tell by the grit on their fingernails. They always ate standing up in their kitchen, laughing, drinking and waking up with one another. February 2005.

Jeff greets Heather and Jadon after returning home from work on election night. November 2004.
Jeff's brother, Jake, 19, moved in with Jeff and Heather to help pay rent and take care of the baby. He and Jeff are best friends and share the same job cleaning a local bar in Missoula.
Matthew Hayes, a 2004 UM graduate, recently completed a documentary project and gallery exhibit titled “Lost on Route 93.” The online version won first place in the 2005 NPPA competition for best, unaffiliated feature picture story. He received three honorable mentions in the 2004 College Photographer of the Year competition and finished ninth in the 2004 Hearst Awards.
Exposing ethics in the digital darkroom:

When do common photo editing techniques become unethical?

By Rebecca Stumpf

After the Madrid train bombings in March 2004, newspapers worldwide ran an image by El Pais photographer Pablo Torres Guerrero. The image was quite graphic, depicting victims of the bombing and a bloody limb in the foreground. Few newspapers dared publishing the photograph in its original form. Some chose to gray out the limb, some put text over it, some cropped it and some digitally removed it. Roger Richards, photo editor at The Virginian Pilot first saw the image on Reuters.

“I tried cropping it (the limb) out to see if the overall image would have the same information,” Richards says. “It did, so I cropped it out.”

Like Richards, The Seattle Times would have dealt with the image by cropping it as well.

“We would never gray it out or put text over it,” says Barry Fitzsimmons, one of four photo editors at The Seattle Times. “We ask if the readers really need to see that and have a discussion over whether the information is relevant before we crop.”

All these options present an ethical question and leave many wondering—what is considered acceptable among the common photo editing techniques such as cropping and adjusting tones?

The long—misunderstood belief that photographs don’t lie is false—but people are deceived by false images every day. The myth of objectivity has been broken with years of unethical practice.

While most photographs are touched up or cropped in some way, the question becomes: when do these changes cross the line? Has the image been manipulated digitally to change the content or accuracy?

Fred Ritchin, former photo editor of The New York Times Magazine, once warned, “In order to contemplate its future role in society and the impact of new technologies, it is necessary to at least acknowledge that photography is highly interpretive, ambiguous, culturally specific and heavily dependent upon contextualization by text and layout.”

In journalism, news photographs are the window to the world and should function as purveyors of truth, providing readers with fair and accurate information.

The Los Angeles Times fired staff photographer Brian Walski after he combined and altered two photographs, creating one composite image. On March 31, 2003, the Times published an image of a soldier guarding Iraqi civilians. The image also appeared in the Chicago Tribune and the Hartford Courant. Each original photo had separate perfect images of the soldier and the civilians. The altered photograph shows a civilian holding a small child (from one image), approaching a soldier who is holding a gun with his arm extended (from the other image).

The Los Angeles Times clearly addresses the issue of manipulating photographs in its policy. For each type of manipulation, whether it is a photo illustration, composite photo or computer-altered photo, the byline must clearly indicate so. That way, there is less chance that readers will be misled.

Editors and publishers began labeling digitally altered photos to eliminate confusion for readers. But confusion still arises, as shown by a case involving Newsweek and Time magazines. In 1994, the magazines received a police mug shot of O.J. Simpson who was arrested for the murder of his ex-wife.

Both publications ran the image on the cover of the magazine. Newsweek ran the photo with no manipulations. Time, on the other hand, manipulated the photo, darkening it to make Simpson look more “black” and give it a more “sinister” quality. The magazine defended its actions, identifying it as a photo-illustration. While this may be ethical, the identification appeared in very small type on the inside cover—a place few readers
Madrid Train Blasts Kill at Least 190

10 Bombs Detonate Almost at Once; Nearly 1,500 Hurt

By Keith B. Richburg
Washington Post Foreign Service

MADRID, March 11—Ten nearly simultaneous explosions tore through four packed commuter trains in Madrid during rush hour Thursday morning, killing at least 190 people and wounding nearly 1,500 in the worst terrorist attack in modern Spanish history, three days before national elections.

The explosives were placed in backpacks and left aboard trains and on tracks at three stations. Witnesses describing the scenes of chaos and carnage said they heard multiple explosions at the city’s busy Atocha station, which sent passengers scrambling in a panic. A makeshift emergency hospital was set up alongside the tracks at the station, just south of the Prado Museum. Buses were hurriedly converted into ambulances. The walking wounded were asked to make it to hospitals on their own, and leave vehicles available for the more severely injured.

Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar called the attacks “a mass murder” and compared them to the attacks on the World Trade Center.

The Washington Post’s photo from the Madrid bombings was published in newspapers around the world. The Washington Post was one of few U.S. papers that didn’t crop, fade out or alter the bloody limb seen in the lower left corner.

Pablo Torres Guerro’s photo from the Madrid bombings was published in newspapers around the world. The Washington Post was one of few U.S. papers that didn’t crop, fade out or alter the bloody limb seen in the lower left corner.

would likely see it.

The alteration would perhaps have gone unnoticed, but because both magazines ran side-by-side on the newstand, it drew attention, damaging Time’s credibility.

The National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) Statement of Principle for photojournalists says accuracy is the guiding principle of the profession. Due to “emerging electronic technologies,” new challenges arise and the integrity of truthful images is at risk. Therefore, altering editorial content of an image would be a breach of ethics.

Some newspapers create their own policies for their photographers to follow, some default to the NPPA statement, and some follow AP policy, which promotes accuracy, integrity, independence and responsibility in news reporting.

Other newspapers, such as the Denver Post, do not have a written code of ethics. Larry Price, assistant managing editor for photography for the last five years at the Post, says the reason is that the policy is very basic and succinct.

“The theory is we present reality in a documentary fashion,” Price says. “The overriding idea is to present the image to the reader the way the photographer saw it.”

Price says manipulations at the Post don’t go beyond simple tonal adjustments. “We basically use Photoshop tools to depict the image the way the eye would see it.”

Cropping a photo can drastically change the meaning and content of a photo, which makes it a manipulation. Editors and photographers at The Seattle Times always discuss whether a crop alters the content or not before they make a decision.

“We look at the crop and decide if we truly have a
reason for doing it,” Fitzsimmons says. “We never crop or alter an image simply to make an editorial statement.”

Price at the Denver Post views cropping differently. He does not see it as a question of ethics.

“You’re cropping the real world with your camera when you simply take a photo, and you are simply refining the crop in front of the computer,” Price says. “Cropping is not an ethical decision, but an aesthetic decision.”

Richards says The Virginian Pilot “does not do manipulations for news photos or anything depicting reality.” Standard cropping, spotting and toning are a few of the acceptable methods at the Pilot.

“We try to be very diligent about our policy,” Richards says. “If you aren’t, you lose credibility, and if you lose credibility, you lose everything.”

Given the examples of unethical practices in photojournalism, one might wonder if the digital revolution has brought any good to journalism. John Long, the ethics chairman for the NPPA, believes the digital revolution has not changed the ethical universe of photojournalism.

“The advent of computers and digital photography has not created the need for a whole new set of ethical standards. We are not dealing with something brand new,” Long says. “We merely have a new way of processing images and the same principles that have guided us in traditional photojournalism should be the principles that guide us in the use of the computers.”

Rebecca Stumpf recently completed her first year of graduate school in photojournalism at the University of Montana. This summer she is interning at the Daily Times-Call in Longmont, Colo., where she will fully take the digital plunge.
Story Telling

BY JEB FOSTER

Most local Native American newspapers are funded by their tribe. Not surprisingly, the people controlling the purse strings—tribal officials—often want to tug the editorial strings, too.

This is called press interference. It’s a huge problem in Indian Country and has been for decades.

The good news is, editors—and an increasing number of readers—are demanding that the press be free of government control, and their demands are being heard and acted upon. The bad news is, there is still a lot of room for improvement. Teaching autocratic tribal officials that a free press is good for them is only one part of the puzzle; improving the quality of Native journalism is the other.

The term “press interference” is a nebulous one. The late Richard LaCourse, a renowned Native journalist and devoted agitator for freedom for the press, identified half a dozen or so varieties of press interference common in Indian Country. Among them were: “Political firings before or after tribal elections,” “political cutoff or selective reduction of funding for publication,” prior restraint (censorship), nepotism—installing friendly but unqualified reporters and editors—firings over editorials, denial of access to meetings and documents, death threats resulting from publication or in an attempt to prevent publication.

Years ago, Tom Arviso, editor and publisher of the Navajo Times in Window Rock, Ariz., endured regular threats of retaliation from tribal leadership—including the threat of a fire-bombing. These days, however, Arviso worries less over his own bottom and more over his paper’s bottom line. In a 2003 agreement with the Navajo Tribe, the Times won its independence.

“From an editorial and business standpoint, the nation has no say whatsoever anymore,” Arviso says. He says he spends more of his time trying to improve the paper, focusing on its Web site and distribution (now in Phoenix), than fighting press battles.

“Before I had to deal with a lot of politics, I had to deal with people’s personalities and attitudes and having to follow rules and regulations that really should not apply to a newspaper,” Arviso says. “Because we were under the umbrella of the government, there was a certain way we had to do things. And it was time-consuming to have to follow their rules and regulations. Just to get things done in a timely manner was just crazy.”

Independently owned papers take flack from tribal governments, too. Frank King, editor and publisher of the independent Native Voice, based in South Dakota, has received plenty of threats, including, once again, the threat of a fire-bombing.

“Once the council said they were going to break my legs,” King says. “I walked in the door and said here’s my leg. Who is going to break it?”

King’s bravado is laudable, but it doesn’t provide much of a template for less confrontational, but equally idealistic, Native editors. However, his relentless push for freedom of the press is a model others could, and should, follow.

In 2003, largely through the persistence of King and his wife, Lise Balk King, the National Congress of American Indians passed a resolution calling for freedom of the press. While the actual effect of the resolution is the subject of debate, its symbolic importance cannot be discounted.

Tribal officials tamper with the press for numerous reasons. Some are corrupt political Draculas, whose shady actions can’t abide the scrutiny of daylight. And, “their argument a lot of times is ‘We fund you, we sign your checks, we pay you, so therefore you should do what we want,’” says Arviso.

Some tribal figures believe that, on principle, the newspaper should showcase their tribe’s strengths, not weaknesses, and report the good news while omitting the bad.

“You have a cultural responsibility to have checks and balances with your leaders,” says King, who fashions himself a modern-day Eyapaha, or “town-crier.” King says this cultural responsibility comes from his people’s long tradition of tolerance of freedom of expression. The function of the crier was, he says, to “scold” people.

“It’s not just about journalism,” King says. “It’s about being able to say to your tribal counselor, ‘You’re not doing a good job.’”

King realizes, though, that with the power to scold comes professional responsibility—the responsibility to accurately present the news. Both King and Arviso agree separately that accuracy and professionalism are sometimes lacking in Native journalism.

“We need to make sure that we’re accountable, that we practice good journalism,” says Arviso. “And a lot of times,
because of that, we’re our own worst enemy—because some papers just don’t do that. They don’t follow the rules the way they’re supposed to. And it has hurt us.”

Lack of professional training opportunities is keeping Native journalists back. Of the roughly 30 tribal colleges, only a handful have student newspapers, and none offer a journalism major. And those that study journalism at non-native universities might find that their training doesn’t prepare them for reporting on the reservation.

Journalist Teresa Lamsam returned to her childhood home after years working in mainstream media, to run the Osage Nation News on the Osage Nation Reservation in Oklahoma. She found that some of her training was a liability, particularly her aggressiveness as a reporter.

“I remember one of my first experiences with my mainstream cultural bias causing a problem,” says Lamsam, “was when a very large Indian man, whom I had known for years, cornered me in a hallway and backed me against a wall and said ‘Sister, you’re going to have to remember where you’re from, and you don’t bring that white stuff in here.’”

Lamsam says the confrontation forced her to realize that no matter how diverse non-Native newsrooms are, they are all part of a mainstream news culture that doesn’t always jibe with Native culture.

“Instead of getting defensive or thinking that he’s ignorant or he doesn’t know what he was talking about—his delivery left something to be desired—I thought, you know, he has a point,” Lamsam says. “And so I let that start changing my orientation and I kind of humbled myself and realized that I may know a lot about how to do journalism in the mainstream world, but I didn’t know best how to do it at home.”

Arviso says there are fundamental differences between Native and non-Native journalism.

“We are more respectful, I would say, of our people and of our culture and of our language,” he says. “Because we hold those things in high regard, there are certain things we will not report on, or that we would report on in a different way.” Death is a particular subject in which Arviso says non-Native and Native journalism diverge.

“When people die, depending on what the story entails, some families will say, ‘Will you please just leave us alone; let us have our four days to mourn.’ In our tradition, the Navajo, you get four days. And we say OK, and sure enough, families, when you honor and respect them that way, they’ll be more open to you later when you come back.”

While she agrees that Native editors and reporters should operate with the same level of freedom as their mainstream counterparts, for Lamsam, improving Native journalism doesn’t mean making it more like mainstream journalism.

“Story telling is part of our culture. We’re natural story tellers, because that’s how our traditions and culture have been handed down.”

Lori Edmo-Suppah, Sho-Ban News editor

“To come in and tell me or tell my tribe how we have to run our newspaper, or what kind of freedom of the press laws that we have to have—I don’t want any part of that,” she says. “It’s almost this attitude of, ‘See the cute little monkeys, they’re trying to put out their newspaper, they’re trying to run their government. Let’s step in and tell them how it’s really done.’”

Lamsam also cautions against seeing Native journalism as a monolithic thing, with common problems and common prescriptions.

“What I’m saying is that tribal people—Indian people—are capable of addressing freedom of the press on their own, in their own time frame, in their own way. And the way the Osage address it may be completely different than the way the Chickasaw or the Choctaw [address it]. I hesitate to lump everybody into one category of Native American.”

And indeed, tribes are finding their own distinct solutions to the problem of press interference. The Cherokee tribe of Oklahoma recently amended its constitution to include a freedom of the press provision, as well as legislating an open access law.

Sho-Ban News editor Lori Edmo-Suppah was once fired from her position for publishing what the tribal leadership considered overly negative news; now, she says tribal leaders are more laissez-faire, more understanding of the function of an unhampered press. Like King, Edmo-Suppah believes that doing journalism is part of preserving her culture, and as more people understand that, she says, the sooner the Native press will thrive.

“Story telling is part of our culture,” Edmo-Suppah says. “We’re natural storytellers, because that’s how our traditions and culture have been handed down.”

One of the most important things, she says, is earning the reader’s trust so he or she believes in what the publication is doing.

Famed journalist A.J. Liebling once wrote, “Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one.” Across Indian Country, the chilly relations between tribal leaders and the press are starting to thaw, proving the venerable journalist wrong.

Jeb Foster is currently finishing his master’s thesis on press restrictions in Native American media. He recently moved to Colorado, where he spends much of his time missing Montana.
Pulling the veil off

Indecency

Could broadcast indecency rules be dumped?

BY ANNE MARIE SQUEO

The crackdown on racy material broadcast on radio and television gained a lot of traction in Washington in the last year, aided by a nationwide outcry over singer Janet Jackson’s “wardrobe malfunction” in 2004.

But as federal legislators and regulators toughen punishments on those accused of violating national broadcast decency standards, the situation is ripe for a court fight that could prompt a Supreme Court ruling that rolls back the special designation given to broadcast airwaves given the proliferation of media outlets now available. Most people, for example, don’t know that NBC is a broadcast network and MSNBC is a cable channel, and that different decency standards apply to each.

The Supreme Court hasn’t directly addressed the issue of broadcast decency since 1978. That’s when, in the landmark case of FCC vs. Pacifica Broadcasting, it famously immortalized the comedian George Carlin’s “Seven Dirty Words” as indecent. In a 5-4 ruling, the justices singled out the special nature of the public airwaves to invade “the privacy of the home where the individual’s right to be left alone plainly outweighs the First Amendment rights of the intruder.”

Much has changed since then. Today, some 85 percent of the nation’s television watchers get their broadcast signals via a cable or satellite provider,
neither of which is restricted by the decency standards because they are services that individuals must pay for and therefore invite into their homes. Satellite radio companies like Sirius—also free from government-content regulations—are picking up thousands of listeners each month and signing big name talent like shock jock Howard Stern. And children, whom decency standards were put in place to protect, are increasingly turning to the unregulated Internet for entertainment.

In recent years the high court has made clear its reluctance to extend indecency protections to the Internet or to cable, stoking speculation a fresh judicial look might well have a different result. The commingling of cable, Internet and broadcast that allows consumers to watch a favorite television show on their personal computer makes the old distinctions more curious.

“The reason why we do indecency only in broadcasting is not just a historical anomaly,” says Michael Powell, who recently resigned as chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, which enforces the decency standards. “It’s the only medium the Supreme Court has been comfortable regulating content in. But it has said quite strongly you can’t do that to newspapers … and cable and Internet have been given similar protections. As these things converge, this First Amendment abstraction is going to fall apart.”

The basic tenet of indecency regulations is to protect children from exposure to sexually explicit or other “patently offensive” material. As the laws have evolved, indecent material has been deemed a form of protected speech under the Constitution’s First Amendment. But its broadcast is limited to the hours of 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., when children are least likely to see or hear it. Attempts to extend such rules to other hours and other forms of media have been knocked down by the courts.

Broadcasters have long derided these rules as vague and open to interpretation. But for years, they’ve had few options and even less incentive to challenge the FCC, which also approves lucrative broadcast licenses and acquisitions, among other things.

In the mid-1990s, for example, Infinity Broadcasting Inc. only agreed to pay $1.7 million to settle a number of fines against Howard Stern to win approval of several radio stations.

Indeed, there was no way to argue the validity of an FCC indecency fine unless the Justice Department agreed to file suit to collect, since the FCC doesn’t have authority to sue on its own behalf. Given the average fine totaled just $7,000 over many years, none of these cases made it to trial and broadcasters sometimes didn’t even bother paying.

That’s no longer true as fines have begun to top $1 million and Congress is set to pass the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act of 2005, giving the FCC authority to levy even larger fines and revoke lucrative broadcasting licenses for three-time offenders.

Some legislators, including the powerful Senate
Commerce Committee Chairman Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, have even floated the idea of extending decency regulations to cable and satellite which, unlike broadcast airwaves, consumers must pay to receive each month. And while Mr. Powell only got serious about punishing decency violators under political duress, his successor, Kevin Martin, has been a zealot about such matters, pushing for more and bigger fines.

Industry attorneys, speaking on condition of anonymity, say such threats will force them to fight the merits of decency violations because not doing so constitutes an admission of guilt. Legal experts say anyone affected by the regulations and the new law in the works could contest them as unconstitutional, and that it wouldn’t be long before the issue was back before the high court.

The justices’ guiding precedent, Pacifica, involved the midday airing of Carlin’s riff on bad language, during which he repeatedly used words he said probably aren’t OK to say over the public airwaves. In the majority opinion written by Justice John Paul Stevens, the court emphasized “the narrowness” of the ruling and said it “requires consideration of a host of variables.”

It was a close call, and dissenting justices were strident in their rebuke. The majority’s attempt “to impose its notions of propriety on the whole of the American people [is] so misguided, that I am unable to remain silent,” wrote Justice William Brennan, joined by Justice Thurgood Marshall.

Since then, the high court has refused attempts to use this opinion to extend its protection-of-children argument to cable and the Internet.

In 1997, the court struck down a federal law seeking to protect children from pornography and other harmful material on the Internet. In the 7-2 decision, also written by Justice Stevens, the court noted the “emphatically narrow holding” in Pacifica, finding that its extension to the Internet would “suppress a large amount of speech adults have a constitutional right to receive.”

Three years later, the justices ruled 5-4 to strike down a federal law seeking to restrict adult programming to overnight hours if cable operators couldn’t fully scramble the signal.

Anne Marie Squeo is a reporter for The Wall Street Journal. She is based in Washington, D.C., and currently covers the Justice Department.
A reporter at the Lake County Leader, in Polson, Mont., double checks the name of a Poison High School student.

The challenges of maintaining journalistic integrity

By Heidi Desch

When terrorists flew planes into the Pentagon and the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001, Jeanie Wright was thousands of miles away in Douglas, Wyo.

But that doesn’t mean the editor of The Douglas Budget didn’t write about the incident.

“When September 11 happened, I knew we had a contingent of people in Washington, D.C., and so I knew I had to try to get ahold of them,” she says.

Wright did, and it turned out that the group of people from Douglas had been on the National Mall when the Pentagon was hit.

The editor of the weekly paper says it can be a challenge to localize a national story, but it’s important to take the opportunity if it’s there.
Putting a local spin on national or world news may be a challenge for community editors, but it's not the only issue they face when it comes to reporting in a small town.

Every day editors tackle tough decisions. Using sources that may be personal friends, handling advertisers that might disagree with the newspaper's policies and covering a hometown team's loss all present ethical decisions.

In Jock Lauterer's book "Community Journalism: the Personal Approach," he says the role of the community newspaper is "far more demanding and complex than that of the big city paper, which can afford to be detached, remote, critical, aloof, cynical and, at times, elite."

Lauterer, who has 15 years experience as co-founder, publisher and editor of two community newspapers in North Carolina and teaches community journalism and news writing at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, believes community editors need a moral compass that is locked directly north. With each issue, their decisions about what to publish will be questioned almost every time.

Journalism’s code of ethics says that a paper and its reporters should always be unbiased, but in community journalism the issues aren’t so black and white.

When it comes to deciding what to report, Wright says it's important to put personal feelings aside.

"You have to think about the public’s right to know," she says.

It may be tempting for an editor to avoid reporting a sensitive issue because of direct repercussions the article may have to the town or newspaper.

Reporters and editors should never shy away from sensitive issues, says Ethan Smith, editor of the Lake County Leader in Polson, Mont.

Working as a reporter for two years at the Hungry Horse News in Columbia Falls, Mont., Smith learned how to report sensitive issues in a small town.

He says one of the hardest things to write about is when someone gets killed in a car accident.

Smith once wrote a story about a resident who died in a car accident caused by drunken driving. While Smith didn't know the family of the victim, he says the story was difficult to write because he knew they would read the story he wrote again and again. But it can be important to write the story, he says, because it may create public awareness about safety issues such as seat-belt use or drunken driving.

"By presenting the facts — there was alcohol or high speed involved — you are also performing a public service, in a manner of speaking. Maybe someone will think twice before drinking and driving, or they will remember to buckle up next time," Smith says.

Sensitive issues can generate strong reader interest, he says, and can be beneficial for the paper.

“We love them as long as they’re handled correctly. It creates dialogue in the community, which you can often gauge by letters to the editor,” he says.

Sensitive issues can draw readers' ire, too, but newspapers shouldn’t shy away from covering them just for that reason.

“A reporter shouldn’t avoid a sensitive issue just because sometimes people try to shoot the messenger,” he says.

Besides covering controversial issues, small-town reporters also cover everyday occurrences in the town and local government.

“The mayor or school superintendent might be your friend or your neighbor, but you maintain integrity by doing a fair job,” Smith says. “There's nothing wrong with quoting people you know — which happens a lot in smaller towns — as long as you are presenting a balanced story.”

In the real world, writing objectively may not be quite that simple. Ideally, every important story should be reported, but what about the potential loss of an advertiser?

Local advertisers are often the life-blood of community newspapers. If one gets angry and decides to pull out, there isn’t necessarily a line of other advertisers waiting to buy those blank spots.

W. Leon Smith, editor and publisher of Crawford, Texas'
newspaper, *The Lone Star Iconoclast,* decided to endorse John Kerry in September, making national headlines. Subscribers canceled subscriptions and advertisers pulled out of his paper.

Conflict with advertisers isn’t unique to Crawford and doesn’t always reach national headlines, but it happens all the time.

Ethan Smith, *Lake County Leader* editor, says most of his conflict with advertisers arises when they want to gain free publicity by being written about in news articles. And when new businesses open in town, or stores get new products, they expect to be written about.

Some merit a story, some don’t.

If there is news interest in a new business opening, Smith will write the story, but he doesn’t want to lower the paper’s credibility by giving away free advertisement in the editorial space.

If a major retailer opened in a small town, he would write an article because the opening would likely create numerous jobs. However, a smaller business employing one or two people is unlikely to have such a large impact economically, and doesn’t merit a story.

While Smith stands strong on this issue, he also says he must pick and choose his battles. When it comes to sports, he takes a different approach.

Reporting on the local team while athletes, coaches and parents are watching can be a tough act to balance.

Smith says he tries to be more sympathetic to the hometown team, putting them in the most favorable light possible.

“There’s nothing wrong with being supportive of your hometown team,” he says. “We generally don’t write about a baseball player’s batting slump like you would if you were an Associate Press reporter covering the New York Yankees. You want to be supportive of kids, not belittle them.”

At the *Hungry Horse News,* the home team is the Columbia Falls Wildcats. He says if Columbia Falls lost a game, his lead would read something like “The Wildcats had a good game but came up short in the end.”

“You have to remember these are high school kids,” he says. “They’re going to read it; their parents are going to read it, and grandma’s going to read it. They’ll clip it out and put it on the fridge.”

Barbara Simonetti, editor of the *Shelby Promoter* in Shelby, Mont., doesn’t feel that high school sports should receive any different consideration than a controversial levy at election time.

However, she will run a feature piece on an athlete so readers feel like they are receiving adequate coverage.

“Small things in a small town can go a long way to making sure people feel they have coverage, but not favoritism,” she writes in an e-mail interview.

No two editors agree exactly on how to handle every situation, but many agree that it’s important to be objective in community journalism.

Simonetti is one such editor.

“It is my responsibility to tell people what is going on, but that implies telling them what is important—what to feel—at times,” she writes. “It is therefore more important that I leave my own feelings out of the equation.”

**Heidi Desch graduated from the University of Montana in 2005 with a B.A. in journalism. She has interned at *The Western News* in Libby, Mont. She is a design editor for *MJR.***
Diversity Warrior

Victor Merina, a Filipino-born reporter, works to make newsrooms more inclusive

By Alison Grey

On assignment for the Los Angeles Times, Victor Merina wore black slacks and a white shirt, and was ready to cover a charity fundraiser in Malibu that attracted affluent, wealthy guests. It wasn’t the details of the event, however, that stick out in Merina’s mind.

Merina heard one of the guests shouting out to him, “Andale, señor!” telling him to hurry and get to work. Merina made his way over to the woman, where she stood next to a man and a Mercedes Benz. As the man began to hand Merina his keys to park the car, Merina pulled out his notebook, informing the two that he was, in fact, a reporter.

A smile comes to Merina’s face when he describes the look of shock that came to their faces and the profuse apologies that followed from the driver. The woman, a public relations representative for the event, had vanished.

The incident never made it into print, but for Merina, born in the Philippines, it stands out as another reminder of the misunderstandings entire cultures can have about each other, due in large part, to stereotypes.

For nearly 20 years Merina worked at the Los Angeles Times, covering everything from city council to homicides to the infamous 1992 L.A. riots, which later helped win the paper a Pulitzer Prize for best spot news coverage.

At 56, gray flecks spot Merina’s black hair, neatly cut and without a sign of balding. For the soft-spoken reporter, racial issues and relationships have played a dominant role in both his life and his news stories.

Merina’s father was a Filipino guerrilla fighter during WWII, helping the United States Army battle the invading Japanese forces. After the war, he immigrated and lived with his wife, four daughters and only son on military bases in Kansas and Kentucky and later settled in California.

Merina received a degree in political science from UCLA, with hopes of becoming a political reporter, before he went on to graduate school in journalism at Columbia University.
After graduate school, the 27-year-old Merina began freelancing for the *Los Angeles Times* before he was hired as a full-time reporter, covering a broad range of subjects, including politics and city government.

When he first walked into the newsroom, Merina remembers that it was predominantly white.

"I was one of the few people of color in the newsroom," he says.

In the late 70s, less than 1 percent of newsroom staffs nationwide were made up of people of color. Today, that number has increased to about 13 percent. That’s still significantly lower than the percentage of people of color in the nation—about 32 percent.

To help newspapers cover the entire community and diversify newsrooms, the American Society of Newspaper Editors set a goal of matching the percentage of minorities in the newsroom with the nation’s minority population by the year 2025 or sooner—a necessary goal for an unbiased, fair media, Merina says.

Even as minority populations increase and more reporters of color are working in newsrooms, Merina still notices a lack of coverage of minority communities. Often, the only time these communities are in the news is in a negative light.

Solely covering these communities in light of murders or drug offenses maintained, perhaps even increased, preconceived notions and stereotypes that the public may already have about these groups, Merina says.

When you look in the news and realize that these are the only depictions of these communities, it’s misleading, because readers begin to think of the community as drug dealers and murderers, when really, there are other so many other stories to be told, Merina says.

"There is too much coverage along stereotypical lines," Merina says. "If you have other stories, it’s all in context."

Since he stopped working full-time at the *Times* in 1996, Merina has crisscrossed the country, giving speeches, teaching classes and writing articles detailing the importance of bringing people of color into the media and covering “under-covered” and oftentimes misrepresented communities.

At the same time, he continues to contribute to the *Times* Sunday opinion page and writes occasional essays for the *LA Times Magazine*.

Alongside his career, Merina has tried to balance the other side of his life—his family. He and his wife, Cynthia, a senior librarian for the L.A. City Public Library, have raised three daughters and one son—nearly all grown except the youngest in college in Ireland. Raising a family and pursuing a career wasn’t exactly easy, he says.

"I think journalism can be a pretty intense and time consuming job," he says.

Merina feels he has been able to maintain that balance with his family while pursuing what many would consider a successful career.

These successes include the 1993 Pulitzer Prize and being named a 1997 Pulitzer Prize finalist, along with a team of reporters, for an investigative series on homicides in Los Angeles County.

Merina, however, does not mark his career with these highlights.

From attending a funeral for a young Vietnamese murder victim and meeting the boy’s mother, to writing a story about an elderly couple that survived the Holocaust who were in danger of being kicked out of their home, all of the stories he has covered over the years mark a fulfilling career—not just the ones that win awards or national attention, he says.

---

**“There is too much coverage along stereotypical lines.”**

*Victor Merina*

---

Alison Grey graduated from the UM School of Journalism in spring 2005. She is deputy editor for *MJR*, was copy editor for the UM Mansfield Library’s annual progress report and interned at *Bugle* magazine.
A Good Fellow

Mentor Victor Merina, a fellow at the University of Southern California, discusses a story with Angeline Squirrel Coat. At right is student Reegan Brant.

Former Los Angeles Times reporter scrutinizes race and diversity in the newsroom

**By Victor Merina**

I have stood in the shadow of the Crazy Horse monument in the Black Hills of South Dakota listening to the excited conversations of Native American students who hope to be journalists one day.

I have walked the Sky City village atop a New Mexico mesa, listening to an Acoma Pueblo guide enthral a group of veteran journalists with the story of his people. And I have been warmed by the conversation of a young Yupiik in Alaska seeking a friendly face and mistaking me for a member of one of the indigenous tribes of the north.

I have sat in the black township of Soweto basking in the melodic voices of journalists from Uganda, Zaire and South Africa singing “Happy Birthday” to me. And

I have stood in the doorway of a Jesuit mission on the Flathead Reservation in Montana marveling at the depiction of an Indian Madonna clothed in buckskin dress while nearby a tipi tabernacle pays homage to the three tribes living on the reservation: the Salish, Kootenai and Pend d’Oreille.

In each instance, I had arrived at these places to instruct. To teach. To advise. To mentor. To talk to student journalists. Or young professional journalists. Or more experienced journalists.

I had come to share my wisdom and my knowledge and my thoughts. But in the end, it was the teacher who was taught. It was I who learned so much.

That is why I have been constantly on the road, trav-
eling from the Southwest to South Dakota, from South Africa to the upper reaches of North America. I have been a man on the move since I left the Los Angeles Times in the mid-1990s, and I have lived the peripatetic life of an itinerant journalist leaping from place to place, from fellowship to fellowship.

I have been a Poynter fellow, a Freedom Forum fellow, a Ford Foundation fellow. I have been a teaching fellow at the University of California at Berkeley and a senior fellow at the University of Southern California Annenberg’s Institute for Justice and Journalism. As a newsroom colleague once told me, “You have stumbled into fellowship heaven.”

I emphasize the need for an evolving journalism that reflects our changing country, our transformed world.

It appears that I have. But this version of paradise can be exhausting and frustrating. It can leave you constantly staring into the financial abyss. And supplemented only by some occasional writing, I sometimes find myself the lonely equivalent of the long-distance runner.

So why did I do it? Why did I leave a career as an investigative reporter at a million-reader newspaper? Why did I abandon one of the “plum jobs in journalism” as the American Journalism Review once described my position in detailing my decision to take a buyout and leave the Times?

That AJR article referred to the novel I was planning to write, and that book remains locked in my mind and my computer. However, I also found another more immediate calling: a mission to talk about how media cover race and race relations and how journalists report on emerging communities or long-existent ones that have been overlooked or misrepresented.

Today, I talk to newsrooms and classrooms and workshops and conferences about the lack of diversity in newsrooms and the paucity of alternative voices in our news pages and news broadcasts. I urge reporters to seek the untold story and for writers to value inclusion while guarding against the language of exclusion. I emphasize the need for an evolving journalism that reflects our changing country, our transformed world.

But carrying such a message has not been without its frustrations.

I once was in New Orleans to speak on diversity at a convention of college educators. Scheduled for a Friday night and with the French Quarter beckoning, the panelists unsurprisingly outnumbered the audience.

I was disappointed, of course. But as if to both under-

score the need for diversity and the fact that racism still exists, the next day found me witnessing the rawness of a white tourist using a racial epithet to describe a black carriage driver. Her remarks were delivered as if they were the most commonplace and acceptable of descriptions.

When I objected to the woman’s racist comment, another person quickly sided with me and tried to soothe my feelings with these words: “But I just want to say that when you return to your own country, I hope that you do not think that all Americans feel this way.”

Stunned by those well-meaning but misguided words, I explained to the woman that I was in my own country and, as an American, knew that not everyone held those racist views.

As an individual, I was outraged by the incident in New Orleans. As a journalist, I wrote about it.

That is the power we have as journalists. That is the opportunity of the storyteller.

In part, that is the message I convey to these gatherings of journalists or would-be journalists, particularly those of color, who may question the profession or waver about whether to enter or remain in that career. Media coverage of their communities is replete with historical errors and omissions. But it is through journalism that we can tell the accurate stories of our communities and spotlight the voices that have not been heard. Through journalism we can expose readers, viewers and listeners to issues that they may not have considered.

In all this, we can maintain the integrity and standards of our journalistic craft while widening the breadth of our journalistic scope.

This continues to be exciting and important work to me, just as striving for those page-one bylines once was for me at the Los Angeles Times.

If ever I want to be reminded of the rewards, I need only visit such places as the Crazy Horse Memorial where an annual newspaper career conference is held each April for Native American high school and college students. The event is aimed at encouraging these young people to consider journalism as a career and to help enlarge the miniscule pool of Native Americans in newsrooms.

Although I was at the conference as a mentor, I found myself learning from two people I met there.

One was Dalton Walker, a 22-year-old student from
Arizona’s Mesa Community College, who will intern at the Duluth News-Tribune this summer. A Red Lake Chippewa, Walker was thrust into his new role as a journalist when he returned to his reservation to cover the tragic shootings that left 10 people dead, including a half-dozen students at the local high school. Proving his journalistic mettle, Walker’s round-the-clock reporting provided unusual insight and sensitivity to the shootings for not only the Duluth paper but also for The Washington Post, where he was recruited as a stringer.

Katie Oyan was another person who taught me a lesson. At 28, she is a 1999 graduate of the University of Montana and an assistant city editor at the Great Falls Tribune. A member of the Oglala Lakota tribe, Oyan was one of the youngest professionals serving as a mentor, and she was worried because she was less experienced and had fewer credentials than most of us who had been invited to teach and assist at Crazy Horse.

But watching her work that week with the Native students and listening to her encourage them to share their stories with a wider audience left me smiling. Oyan had nothing to fear about having nothing to teach. She indeed had much to share, just as the young people she was mentoring have much to contribute to journalism.

Those are the lessons of Crazy Horse. Those are the benefits of diversity. And those are the rewards for an itinerant journalist who travels from place to place in search of such hope.
Pick up your head and kick up your heels: with a little know-how, the job search just got easier

By Becky Moore

OK, so the end of college is near, and graduation looms closer everyday. But instead of popping the champagne, you want to trade in that ticking clock for more time. Why? Because once you receive that diploma, the journey to your journalism job of choice is spotted with roadblocks you’d rather not cross and shadowed with a scary thing called competition. But don’t lace up your running shoes yet. There are some pointers that will help the hunt, spotlight your resume and move you one step closer to landing a job.

Two-timing your way through college

A fresh diploma doesn’t necessarily mean you are fresh meat: you are entry-level because of your lack of work experience. Practice is one of the most beneficial ways to get a head start. That means starting while you are in school, not after. Try writing professionally—whether for the college paper or the local farm’s monthly newsletter—to bring you closer to the real deal.

Unlike writing for grades, working with an editor is more demanding and the hours are less forgiving. You learn that a deadline is a deadline, period. And you establish a relationship with your writing that leads to the creation of your own voice.

Experience counts more than anything else on your resume and helps applying interns get their resume to the top of the stack, says Scott Gillespie, managing editor at the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

“When applying for a job, or even for an internship, we really like to see the students involved in the school paper or having previous internships—indications that the person is serious about journalism for a career,” he says.

Most journalism schools require that students have internships before graduating. These internships help you find a job that is not only right, but also right for you.

Searching for a job online

Online searches can be a blessing in finding the perfect job.

Journalismjobs.com offers a variable database allowing you to choose the industry, position and location to pinpoint your search. The site also provides sample resumes and encouraging testimonials.

For the freelance folk, mediabistro.com offers a helpful Freelance Marketplace and “How to Pitch” features. For those who cringe when it comes to resume building, the site offers a free program that guides the production and awards you with a private resume URL on its site.

Those seeking magazine jobs should add Ed2010.com to the list. One of the most valuable tools it offers: posting new job listings before they hit the papers. The Web site also has a 60-minute mentor program and plenty of success stories, encouraging even the most frustrated job-seeker to press on.
Former Lake County Leader intern Nate Traylor returned to his hometown after landing his first job as a reporter at the same paper.

Putting it all together

Make sure your resume has clear, concise writing and a simple, yet striking, design. Having it completed before applying for the perfect job means you don’t have to worry about the dirty work last minute.

According to Mary Jane Wilkinson, managing editor at the Boston Globe, a well-written cover letter is almost as valuable as the resume and clips.

“A bit of personality goes a long way,” Wilkinson says. “But don’t go over the top. I just want to get a little flavor of what you are all about.”

Cover letters are the first impression that set apart certain applicants. It shouldn’t read like a generic letter that could be used as a template for any job.

Address it to the right person, with the correct title. Start with an introduction that captures interest, and make sure the letter is tailored to the style and personality of the company and position you are applying for.

“Three or four short paragraphs is plenty,” Wilkinson says. “And it should never exceed a page.”

Portfolios can equally make or break your chance of getting an interview. Writers needn’t send more than six to eight clips, Wilkinson says, but they should show your range as a reporter and writer.

Include the stories you are proud of, she says, but don’t limit the selection to just feature stories. Add a news scoop, a personality profile or a book review. And never leave out news clips if you have them, Wilkinson says.

Finding a forum

By the time graduation nears, the words “It’s who you know” have been instilled in your head, and you scan the mental black book for someone—anyone—who can help you get an edge on the competition. Alas, when you finally realize you’re like the majority of other applicants without an “in,” a plethora of jobs have already come and gone.

Don’t fall into the trap; broaden your search.

Twenty-three year old Nate Traylor just landed
his first job at the Lake County Leader in Polson, Mont. after an intense nine-month search, involving more than 100 resumes and cover letters custom-fit to the publications’ styles.

“I would hit up journalism jobs (journalismjobs.com) twice to three times a week,” he says.

But Traylor’s persistence paid off, and he ended up at the paper he interned with two years earlier.

His advice: follow up on every resume and especially after an interview.

Minneapolis Star Tribune editor Scott Gillespie advises applicants to call in the morning, when deadline pressure isn’t looming. Calling on a Friday afternoon can damage your possibilities, Gillespie says, so it is best to wait until Monday. When in doubt—send an e-mail or note. They are fine for any day of the week and should not be discredited or thought to lack formality.

Once you’ve made it this far, there is only one thing left to do. Updating your resume throughout your journalism career is easy, as long as you don’t put it off until the very end. Having it prepared for an on-the-spot offer can be just the ticket you need. And remember, with the right tools and push in the right direction, finding your dream job doesn’t always have to be “Who you know,” but “What you know.”

Becky Moore is a senior in the journalism program at the University of Montana. She will be interning at Condé Nast this summer, where she will work for House and Garden.

Interning: Part of the process

Experience counts. And in journalism, the only way to get it is through internships.

The University of Montana requires that students complete an internship before graduation.

“It’s an integral part of [the] curriculum,” says Keith Graham, a journalism professor at the university.

Before landing that first job, a journalism graduate needs to have some real-life experience.

“Internships allow [students] to take what they’ve learned and apply it on a daily basis,” Graham says.

UM 2005 graduate Jessica Wambach interned at the Richmond Times-Dispatch in Virginia during the summer of 2004, and is taking a second internship at the Spokesman-Review in Spokane, Wash. in 2005.

Wambach used the Internet to track down her internship in Richmond.

“I checked the ASNE (American Society of Newspaper Editors) Web site religiously,” she says.

“It was the first and biggest (newspaper) I applied for. I have no idea why I got it.”

Wambach says that her first internship “played a big part” in nailing down her plans for after graduation. At the Times-Dispatch, Wambach worked on the features desk. Her biggest story was covering an influx in Richmond’s Hispanic population, a valuable clip she thinks helped get the spot at the Spokesman-Review.

Fellow 2005 graduate Joe Friedrichs is pursuing a sports-reporting job at the Bozeman Daily Chronicle. Although he’s already been offered a job at the Seaside Signal in Seaside, Ore., Friedrichs thinks his previous intern spot at the Jefferson County Courier near Helena, Mont., will help him in Bozeman.

“It will definitely help, especially since Bozeman’s in the same area,” he says.
“Darkest Before Dawn”

85 years ago, speaking ill of the government could mean time behind bars

By Katherine Sather

Pinned above Clem Work’s desk in the University of Montana Journalism School are the black-and-white photographs of early 20th century convicts.

The portraits are of Montanans who were tried under the state’s WWI sedition laws that criminalized anything negative that was said about government conduct in wartime. Their names had long been forgotten, but Work has spent the last few years dusting them off for a book, “Darkest Before Dawn,” which will be published by the University of New Mexico Press in September.

The book chronicles the sedition era in Montana, when First Amendment rights were pushed aside by a government that feared political dissent.

“The feeling among lawmakers, business leaders and editors was ‘liberty can wait. In an emergency situation, freedom of speech can be temporarily put aside,’” Work says. “I speak about it like I’m amazed because it happened only 85 years ago.”

This spring Work received a pin recognizing 15 years of teaching at the School of Journalism. He previously worked as deputy director of the Reporters Committee for the Freedom of the Press in Washington, D.C. and later was a senior editor for U.S. News & World Report.

His interest in the sedition era was piqued while preparing for his media law class, where he lectures about the infamous Wobblies, or Industrial Workers of the World. The radical labor group first appeared in Missoula in 1909 to make their case for workers’ rights.

“They were in-your-face people,” Work says. “They stood for doing something to change the way capitalism oppressed the poor.”

The Wobblies loved to draw attention to themselves in the name of free speech. In his book Work writes that they would use “strikes, job actions, sabotage and other forms of confrontation.” They would deliberately get themselves thrown in jail, where they’d be known to throw food out of the cell bars.

Government and big business at the time felt threatened by groups like the Wobblies, and newspapers portrayed them as dangerous anarchists. Their bias contributed even more to a growing wartime feeling of fear and hysteria, Work says.

A political feeling emerged that people who were against the war or who were dangerous to capitalist production needed to be suppressed.

In February of 1918 the Montana Legislature called a special session to pass a sedition law. Congress later adopted the law almost word for word.

“The basic question posed by the passing of this law was: to what extent are people committed to the ideal of free speech?” Work says. “The
answer, clearly, was ‘not very.’”

Research for Work’s book took him across the state and even to the East Coast to find out more about Montanans who were tried for sedition.

In the spring of 2001 he traveled to Washington, D.C., for an intense week of research at the National Archives, a process requiring strict security clearance and meticulous procedures. He returned home with a stack of sedition case files.

“All I remember is 10 days went by in kind of a blur,” he says.

From there, he tracked records of the sedition cases in early Montana papers, such as the Anaconda Standard, Daily Missoulian and Helena Independent.

“I went half blind looking at newspaper microfilms,” he says.

He traveled to the State Historical Society in Helena to uncover the names of Montanans who were jailed for sedition — 64 in all — and then traveled to each county they were from to find the original case files. The trip took him from Missoula to the North Dakota border.

“I may have been the first person to look at these records since these people were convicted,” he says.

But the research helped him piece together the feeling of the time, and the stories of the Montanans who were convicted. Many served more than a year in prison — some almost three — for casual comments that were perceived as disloyal to the country.

“A lot of people were kind of rootless, they worked blue collar jobs and many were vagrants in a way,” Work says.

“None were well to do. They didn’t leave many traces.”

Work bought the Gold level membership to Geneology.com and set about teaching himself genealogy. He found people through their death records, and in a few cases, he was able to contact their relatives.

He got lucky tracking down the family of Fred Rodewald, a German immigrant with nine children who was convicted for saying that the United States “would have a hard time unless the Kaiser didn’t get over here and rule this country.”

Work found an online obituary for one of Rodewald’s daughters and contacted the listed survivors, including his granddaughter. She was shocked to hear that her grandfather served time in the Montana State Prison in Deer Lodge, and wouldn’t believe it at first. Work said she declared her Grandpa to be the sweetest, nicest man she’d ever met.

“I just felt terrible,” Work says. “I said ‘I may be wrong.’”

But after more conversation, the woman opened up and they exchanged stories about Rodewald.

Work says writing the book was a daunting task, but he drew inspiration from a seven week cross-country bike trip he took in 2000.

“I had thought it impossible for somebody to bike across country, that person being me,” he says. “The single lesson I learned is that one pedal at a time you accomplish small goals. If you keep at it, in the same direction, you’ll eventually end up on the other side.”

Wine salesman Ben Kahn told a hotel owner in Red Lodge that wartime food regulations were a “big joke.” For that, he received a 7 1/2 to 20 years prison sentence for sedition and served 34 months.

As a young Austrian immigrant, Martin Wehinger handled wagon trains. For saying Germany had a better army in WWI, Martin served 18 months of a 3-6 year prison sentence for sedition.

Katherine Sather graduated from the University of Montana this spring with a degree in print journalism. She grew up in the panhandle of Idaho and is set to complete an internship at The Oregonian this summer.
History

Japan censors incidents of sexual slavery during World War II

BY PATRICK GALBRAITH

TOKYO — Anger over a recent rash of scandals and charges of close governmental cooperation and censorship has led some viewers of Japan’s sole public radio and television provider to denounce it as no more than the mouthpiece of a propaganda machine.

In its airing of a special program covering a mock trial of the late Showa Emperor Hirohito, Japan Broadcasting Corp. (NHK) edited out sections of graphic testimony by so-called “comfort women,” mostly Taiwanese and Korean sex slaves who serviced members of the Japanese Imperial Army in frontline brothels during World War II, as well as the verdict passed down by a judge.

Hirohito was found “guilty” of all crimes committed against tens of thousands of Asian women by condoning the actions of his military forces.

The original piece included footage from the decisive verdict placing the blame for the horrific episode of sexual slavery squarely on Japan’s acting commander-in-chief.

“It’s principally a matter of attention, of forcing Japan to take responsibility and providing some dignified closure to these forgotten women. They (NHK) have no right to deny citizens that,” says Jin Hwa Su, a graduate student at Waseda University and contributor to the controversial TV documentary.

Jin worked with an international team of lawyers, feminists and human-rights activists to collect evidence, summon witnesses and take the deceased leader of Japan to a court of the people—outside the system and thus without real legal consequences.

Members of the volunteer organization called NHK’s revised content a “misappropriated” product “not at all true to original intentions.”

“It is beyond me how any of this can be happening,” Jin says. “As a Korean and as a scholar of Japanese wartime nationalism, it is simply too much for me to imagine that in this age, the government can say what news can and can’t be aired.”

The 31-year-old, born in South Korea, but raised in Argentina and New York before finally settling in Tokyo, is not the only one who’s more than a little upset by the past months’ revelations concerning her adopted country’s sole public news provider.

Ebisawa Katsuji, NHK’s top executive, resigned early this year to “take responsibility” for the censorship and save face for the network, which is financed by receiver fees paid by every household with a TV.

Japan has numerous commercial television networks dependent on advertising revenue, but non-profit NHK is the official and most authoritative broadcast outlet, quite unlike PBS in the United States.

Its massive budget is furnished by a national viewership and gives featured news and entertainment a pervasive presence in average people’s lives.

But voices are emerging to cast doubt on NHK’s reputation for reliability, most notably those surrounding the documentary.

The issue rapidly disseminated throughout the zainichi community, a collection of non-Japanese residents brought to Japan during World War II who now reside in the country, and grew to proportions that could no longer be ignored.

“I saw it (the documentary), but it was a little boring,” says student Ishikawa Yoko. “But I heard it might have been censored. That’s so wrong! If it’s true, someone has to answer for that.”

Even as NHK was dealt a severe blow by accusations of top brass embezzling funds for private use, the coup de grace to Ebisawa’s administration was delivered by its treatment of the sensitive material and later evasiveness. This sparked widespread suspicions the network had caved to pressure from leading politicians.

Asahi Shimbun, one of Japan’s most widely circulated daily newspapers with a morning circulation of around 8.5 million, reported that senior lawmakers in Japan’s long-standing majority Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) had “urged” NHK to reconsider the direction of the historical documentary.

Nagai Satoru, an NHK producer in charge of the project, tearfully admitted to the press that he and others were “ordered to alter the program before it was aired” due to “political pressure” from the LDP.

Nagai says he was ordered to delete the verdict as well as scenes of particularly damaging testimony.

NHK has repeatedly denied accusations in televised conferences.

Nagai’s accounts of government censorship led Jin to
Comfort Women's Painful Memories

Wan Aihua, (Chinese) testified:
that she was seized from her home in Shannxi, China, in 1943 at the age of 14, was mass-raped by Japanese soldiers until she passed out, and was eventually thrown into a frozen river to die. An old Chinese man rescued her. Her injuries forced her to stay in bed as an invalid for three years.

Kim Young-shil (Korean) testified:
"It was 1941. One day I encountered a well-dressed man in western clothes. He asked me if I wanted to have a good job. Thinking that any job would be better then working as a maid, I accepted his offer and followed him to where there were already eight other girls ahead of me. They were all about 14 or 15 years old. So we all got on a truck... A soldier came up to me and put a name tag on my chest. It had a Japanese name 'Eiko' written on it. He then told me, 'From now on, you must not speak Korean. If you do, we will kill you. Now your name is Eiko...'
"I was totally exhausted. I could keep neither my sense of humiliation nor my dignity. I felt like a living corpse. When soldiers came to my room and did it to me one after another, it was done to a lifeless body. Again, and again..."

Photos and captions courtesy of Helen Wang, Asian-Pacific World War II Atrocities Museum

threaten the NHK with a lawsuit.
"We're going to sue if they don't immediately agree to air the segment in its entirety," she says, hinting that extreme measures might be the only way to garner an apology, assure the piece's availability and incite long-term reform of the system.

The furor also helped provoke a host of bad blood between Japan and China, the Koreas, East Asia and the zainichi about government historical revisionism in educational texts' treatment of certain subjects like Japan's invasion of China. Wartime brutality and colonization of Manchuria and Korea have been bowdlerized.

Textbooks have long portrayed Japan's role in the war as negative. There is now pressure to revise the texts to include Western expansionism as a contributor to the war.

In an interview with The Washington Post in January, Kawasaki Yasushi, a former NHK political reporter who teaches journalism at Sugiyama Women's University in Nagoya, says he also believes the claims of political pressure, citing "the regime of terror" under Ebisawa.

Like much of the Japanese media establishment's upper echelon, Ebisawa got his start as a correspondent assigned to cover LDP factions.

But as Anno Tadashi, a professor of political science at Sophia University in Tokyo, sees it, NHK's disgraced former president was little more than an LDP front man with a press badge.

"It seemed to me he always toed the party line," Anno says.

Japanese mainstream media have long been criticized for having cozy relations with those in power.

Chiefly at fault are "kisha (reporters') clubs," found in all aspects of political news coverage in Japan.

Companies pay a fee for each of their employees to belong to a specific club. Each club covers a certain aspect of Japanese politics. There are clubs for government agencies, political parties, large businesses and even labor federation headquarters. The clubs provide full-time coverage of their organization, its leaders and policy.

Given the close and continuous interaction between reporters who spend entire careers with one specialty group, some say journalists are more interested in being loyal to these groups than releasing potentially damaging information.

"Serving governments' designs is not the place of journalists," Anno says. "That seems the clearest betrayal of honesty and integrity. Unfortunately journalism in Japan cannot be said to be truly independent. That was the case before, and now it is something for the public to seriously consider and debate."

Jin believes the basic purpose of media is to give the public otherwise unobtainable information and provide an outlet for response.

"It has to be about consequences," she says. "The reporter says plainly what the government does and the people react to this. If the reporter cannot say the truth, what then? The people are excluded."

Editor's note: Japanese names are printed with the last name first.

Patrick Galbraith graduated in 2005 from the University of Montana School of Journalism. He spent the last year studying abroad at Jouchi Daigaku in Tokyo. He is presenting at the Harvard Forum in August and will attend graduate school at Tokyo Daigaku.
The New New Journalism
Robert S. Boynton
Vintage Books
456 pages

Richard Ben Cramer spent six years reporting and writing “What It Takes: The Way to the White House” about the 1988 presidential election. The book was not about the obvious—opinion polls, political strength, speeches and caucus votes—but about the candidates and who they are as people. It is a rare book about politics, and it was written by an odd kind of journalist.

During interviews, Cramer only takes out his notebook to write down quotes if they are really good. And then he tells his subject why they’re so good and what they mean for his project. Then he puts his notebook away.

“And this drives them crazy,” Cramer explains in Robert S. Boynton’s new book, “They’ll spend the next six hours trying to make me take my notebook out again!”

“The New New Journalism” is a collection of interviews with 19 nonfiction masters—from University of Montana alumni William Finnegan to Lawrence Wright, Jonathan Harr, Jon Krakauer and Gay Talese.

Boynton, himself a senior editor at Harper’s and contributing writer for The New Yorker, wants his readers to walk away from the book knowing how and why his subjects produce the work they do. The idea sprang from his classroom at New York University’s graduate magazine program, and explores how new projects are researched, how ideas are generated, writing rituals, ground rules for interviews and the future of long-form nonfiction.

Ron Rosenbaum prefers typewriters instead of computers; Gay Talese says he tries to write pictures; Jon Krakauer hates interviewing people in restaurants, and Ted Conover thinks re-created dialogue is the major problem with creative nonfiction.

Although some of the techniques and rituals might seem odd, the book is filled with useful tips and methodology from the long-form masters of the journalistic profession. Both students and professionals are advised to keep a highlighter handy—if you are a writer or aspire to write long narratives, you’ll use this book as a reference.

— Eric V. Segalstad

Justice on the Grass
Dina Temple-Raston
Free Press
301 pages

Can the news media kill? Can news executives be responsible for inciting genocide? Yes, said a United Nations war crimes tribunal in Arusha, Tanzania, in 2003. After a three-year trial, it held three men connected with a radio station nicknamed “Radio Machete” and with a newspaper complicit in the slaughter of more than 800,000 people, mostly minority Tutsis, by their racial rivals, the Hutus, in Rwanda during the spring of 1994.

Two men were sentenced to life in prison for the racial hatred spewed by the news media they controlled. The station repeatedly exhorted listeners to exterminate Tutsis, even broadcasting license plate numbers and street addresses of potential victims. The newspaper was equally incendiary.

Yet as guilty as these individuals may be, the broad ruling by the tribunal in this extreme case could make news media defendants in other international tribunals liable for what they broadcast and publish in more equivocal circumstances.

The ruling, if upheld on appeal, could prove especially troublesome for American news media. In the United States, hate speech is protected to a
degree unparalleled elsewhere, under the theory that the broadest possible protection of expression best serves democracy and human liberty. Many other countries punish hate speech. The theory endorsed by the U.N. tribunal doesn’t even require a direct link between the hate speech and a specific violent crime such as rape or murder, just a general intent to cause such harm.

This moral dilemma—can ideas be punished?—is the message of Dina Temple-Raston’s account of the genocide trial of the Rwandan media executives. The title refers to gacaca, open-air village courts still used to reconcile the deep wounds from the slaughter.

Her book is not as compelling as her earlier writings on the subject in journalism reviews and columns. While writing dispassionately and with apparent fairness, she attempts to cover too much, distracting from the central tale. Nonetheless, her account is an eye-opening journey into a hell of human venality—where greed, corruption, jealousy and hatred combined in an almost unbelievably cruel, 100-day massacre that wiped out more than 10 percent of the nation’s population—and the consequences that resulted.

—Clem Work

On Bullshit
Harry G. Frankfurt
Princeton University Press
67 pages

According to the Random House Dictionary of English Language, bullshit is: 1. Nonsense, lies or exaggeration. 2. To lie or to exaggerate to. 3. To speak lies or nonsense.

Princeton philosophy professor emeritus Harry G. Frankfurt’s definition of bullshit is: 1. Not quite lying, yet exhibiting certain characteristics of lying. 2. Deliberate misrepresentation of the truth. 3. Motivated pretentiousness.

When it comes to bullshit, let’s face it—most of us have done it. But as journalists, it is especially important to know when someone’s trying to feed it to us. We have to be on the watch for bullshitting sources and information, and we should avoid indulging in it ourselves.

While Frankfurt’s pocket-sized book, “On Bullshit,” is not directed at journalists, it may offer a new perspective on the term. Going beyond the dictionary definition of bullshit, Frankfurt tries to analyze and define it, figure out its existence and understand why “one of the most salient features of our culture is that there is so much bullshit.”

Frankfurt’s notion of bullshit largely relies on a comparison to lying, and how bullshit isn’t quite the dictionary definition that equates it with lying.

He argues that a bullshitter, unlike a liar, has an agenda that doesn’t include the value of truth. A liar recognizes the truth, and then avoids it. But a bullshitter is unconcerned about the truth in the first place. For this reason, Frankfurt believes bullshit is worse than lying.

The book is a philosophical treatise—not easy to skim. However, Frankfurt does make you rethink bullshit. He blames a world that willfully invites bullshit into society, and questions whether objective reality can exist in a society filled with bullshit because it lacks correctness and sincerity.

The notion of bullshit is very much applicable to journalists, who both practice it and sniff it out. Recognizing bullshit for what it is, considering its prevalence and role in society, Frankfurt provides a useful service to journalists and the general public.

—Becky Moore
Let the news hounds loose: 

Honesty, competence are critical factors

BY PAT WILLIAMS

DURING THE PAST 40 YEARS I HAVE BEEN INTERVIEWED MORE THAN A THOUSAND TIMES BY REPORTERS. I FOUND VIRTUALLY EVERY ONE OF THEM TO BE HARD WORKING AND Meticulously fair. Perhaps it is inevitable that anyone who has faced so many interviews would develop a list of attributes one believes important, perhaps necessary, for a good journalist. I have my own list. However, I first want to share a couple of thoughts with the newest generation of journalists.

Those entering the journalism profession in this extraordinary era face enormous responsibility—and with it, power. Beginning reporters and broadcasters now preparing for the privileged world of witnessing and reporting the news—“history shot on the wing” as a great reporter, Gene Fowler, called it—face a world of journalism which has been significantly reshaped by the corporate concentration of the public’s news outlets and by the dizzying rise of communication technologies.

The media is an imperative to the democratic process; it is, after all, the only private institution given explicit protection in the U.S. Constitution. The implication, of course, is that our brand of democracy relies upon an unfettered press. For that we need journalists: real journalists who can read and write and think; news hounds who can sniff out a lead, follow it and dig up the story; open-minded, disciplined, humble reporters whose instincts rest on scholarship; sleuths who chase the important stories—the ones that inform rather than those commercially viable stories of the day that simply titillate.

It will be the caliber and determination of today’s young journalists, combined with the eagerness of publishers and corporate owners to provide those reporters the tools and time with which to do the job, that will determine whether or not the media performs its main functions: watchdog of the powerful, ferreter of the truth and informer of critical issues.

Young journalists should also consider this: does the public trust reporters? Do people believe what they hear or watch on news programs and read in newspapers and magazines? Tragically, the answer is no.

The public believes, with more than a little justification, that too many journalists are political actors. The emergence of television’s CNN and FOX News with their angry, shouting-heads roundtable “discussions,” the Sunday morning news programs in which the anchors and reporters are better recognized than are their guests, have created a situation in which journalists have become the equivalent of the old party bosses, telling all of us the “political gospel,” according to them. Americans have become understandably untrusting of that perversity.

Most Americans believe that reporters live in a culture unfamiliar to the masses. Reporters, it is thought, live in upscale neighborhoods, are never seen on the streets, theaters or bars where, supposedly, the common people hang. Folks believe correctly, or incorrectly, that journalists, particularly national journalists, are filtering the news through their own high-end, monastic biases, and they distrust it.

Are Americans correct in their distrust of the media? For the most part I think not, but perception is reality. If the view of many Americans about the press is to change, at least part of that challenge lies with the next generation of reporters.

But, back to the past four decades of being on the receiving end of reporters’ questions. I have my own five-star list of qualities that I believe make a first-rate reporter. They are: honest, competent, smart, inquisitive and finally, but perhaps not critical, it always helps to be friendly.

Perhaps being smart, inquisitive and friendly speak for themselves, but honesty and competency deserve a look. As a public official, I have learned that the best journalists can be trusted explicitly. That is, I always knew during an interview when I was on or off the record. I have learned which reporters would not only work to accurately report my words, but would also attribute those words within the proper context. And, perhaps most important, I came to realize that good reporters will never, never mislead. And, as we have all seen time and again, the best of them will do time in prison in order to protect their sources.

Along with honesty, competence is the other critical quality of a good reporter. Finding the real story, the right hook requires an understanding of the current scene, the public climate, the news gut. Competent reporters are determined, undeterred, and always, always they are good writers. They are good writers because they read, including the daily news.

In 1861 The Chicago Times motto was: “It is a newspaper’s duty to print the news and raise hell.” Journalists ought to either memorize those words or, failing that, have them tattooed on the back of their writing hand.

Pat Williams, Montana’s former Congressman, served nine terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. He is now Senior Fellow at the O’Connor Center for the Rocky Mountain West and teaches at The University of Montana.

https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mjr/vol1/iss34/1
Ashley Martinez, 2, takes a bath in an old laundry detergent bucket. Ashley was born in Wenatchee, Wash., at the end of the 2002 cherry harvest season.

Photo by Kathryn Stevens

Kathryn Stevens, who graduated in May 2005 with a master's degree in photojournalism, spent much of the last year documenting the lives of the Martinez family from Mexico, who spend nine months of the year as migrant farm workers in the United States. Stevens traveled to Mexico, to Lodi Calif., and to Wenatchee, Wash., to finish the project. The result is "Toward Home: One Migrant Family's Journey," which Stevens premiered for family and friends on May 5—Cinco de Mayo—in Missoula.