



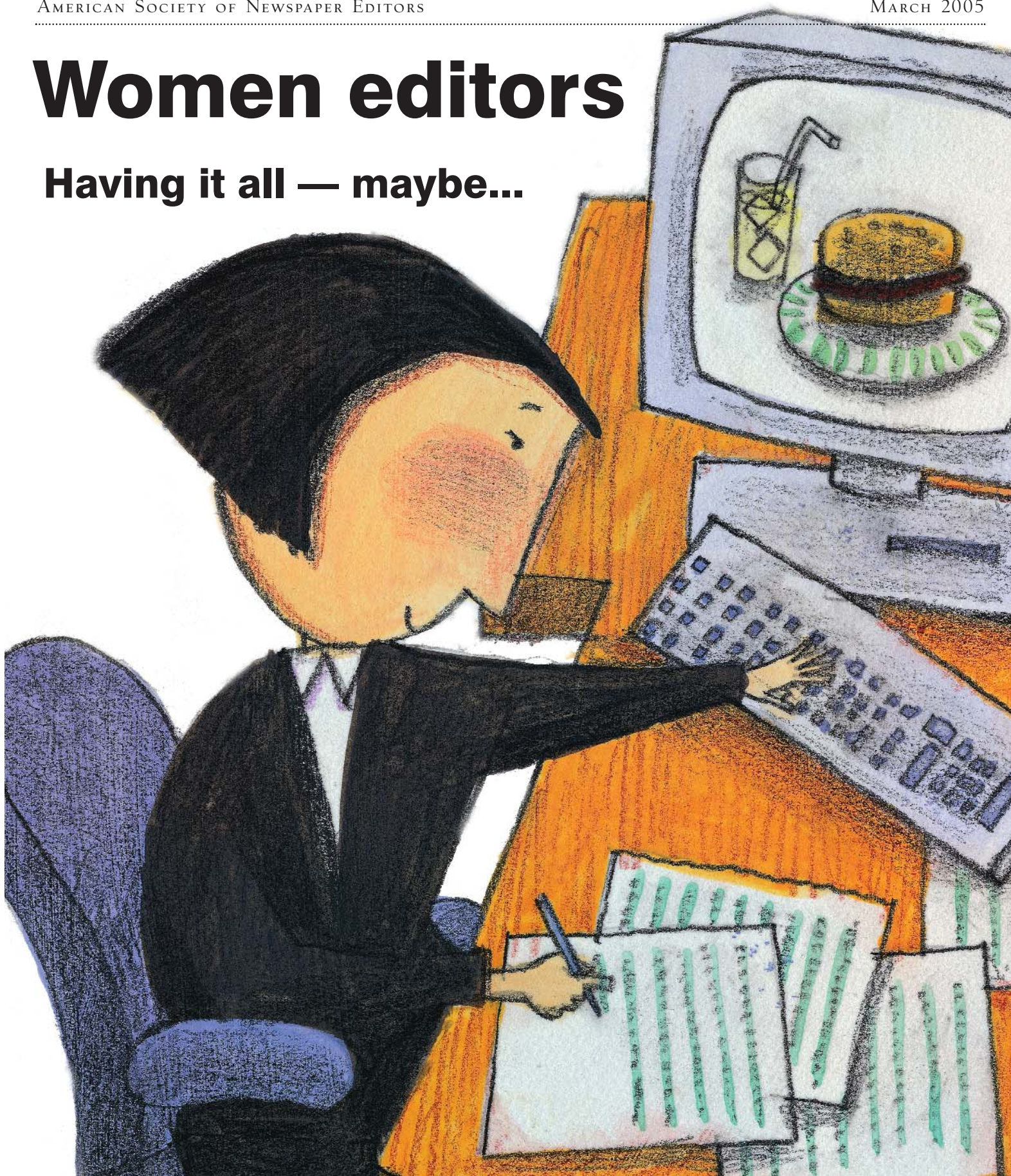
# The American Editor<sup>®</sup>

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEWSPAPER EDITORS

MARCH 2005

## Women editors

Having it all — maybe...





# An important time for unleashing the watchdogs

BY RICK RODRIGUEZ

**I**t's been nearly 33 years since I walked into a newsroom to take my first job as a copy boy for *The Salinas Californian*.

It came during an exciting and turbulent time during California's labor history. Cesar Chavez and his United Farm Workers union were fighting to organize a largely immigrant workforce in the fertile fields of the Salinas Valley.

I knew the work — my paternal grandparents, my father, cousins, my brother and I had all worked at one time or another cutting lettuce, picking strawberries or gathering prunes.

I knew many of the growers through their children who were friends at Salinas High School.

And because I knew Spanish, I quickly found myself out on the front lines, at first translating for seasoned reporters then writing stories myself.

Through those experiences, I learned early that there were multiple sides to a story, that everything wasn't black and white, good or bad. I learned the art of listening, the need to speak to anyone and to check out everything. And I learned that this was a business that I loved.

I was 18 years old then and I had a ringside seat to history in the making. It's a seat I never relinquished.

Now, I will be privileged to lead the American Society of Newspaper Editors as president. I will try to bring to this post the same passion that I've had for this business for three decades.



Rodriguez, ASNE vice president, is editor of *The Sacramento (Calif.) Bee*.

For my theme, "Unleashing the Watchdogs," I'm going back to what initially attracted me — and I'm sure many of you — to journalism. While so many things have changed in the business, the public's need and appetite for solid, fair and thorough investigative journalism hasn't.

What has changed is our standing in the public's eye. Too many people question the very foundation of our craft, our credibility, and we have ourselves to partially blame for that. We need to be even more scrupulous about our standards when we do watchdog journalism. We

must work harder to be fair, we must be indisputably accurate, we must be exceedingly thorough in our reporting. If we fail, we lose more ground.

In May, The Poynter Institute will help ASNE launch the watchdog theme by hosting a conference in which teams of top editors and their publishers will share their expertise and debate the issues surrounding investigative journalism. It is my hope that we'll work with groups to hold similar conferences throughout the year.

Much of the committee work will support the investigative theme. We'll try to focus on giving aspiring young journalists in high school and college some help in instituting the proper journalism ethics and values early in their careers. We'll look to help develop the craft of editing investigative projects and the leadership skills needed to do them. Our Freedom of Information Committee will be busy working to ensure that our First Amendment rights don't continue to be eroded. At the same time, our Ethics and Values Committee will examine the use of anonymous sources and other investigative techniques. Our Awards Board will initiate a prize for the best local investigative story, which we hope will encourage well-written, aggressive watchdog journalism at every size newspaper.

I'll work with stellar organizations like the Investigative Reporters and Editors and the Society of Environmental Journalists to leverage our resources. Too often, journalism organizations have competed for the same shrinking pool of money instead of coordinating. There is no need to reinvent the wheel when our mutual goals are the same — to make positive changes in our communities through fair and accurate reporting.

Our Diversity Committee will work with Columbia University and New California Media to try to establish a pilot program in which a handful of newsrooms will work in tandem with reporters from local ethnic media outlets. Traditional newsrooms will benefit by gaining wider access and insight into communities that we often know too little about.

In turn, we hope our ethnic media partners will benefit from our journalistic knowledge. And, of course, the committee will continue to work with organizations of minority journalists to diversify our newsrooms.

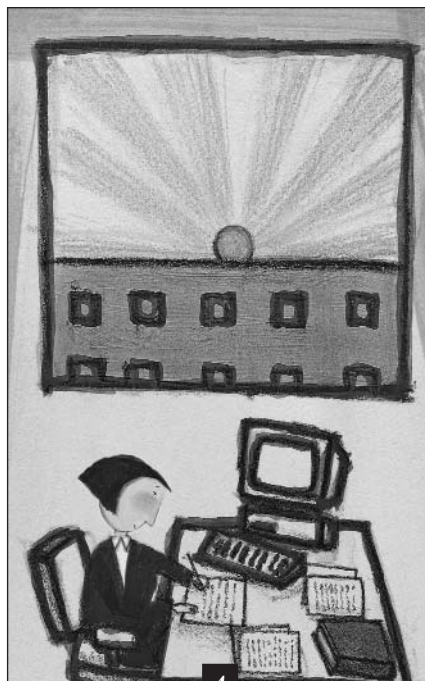
Our Readership Committee will focus on trying to find solutions for the perplexing words we hear too often: "subscription canceled — too busy to read." Our International Committee will continue to stand up for reporters' rights around the world and will plan a fact-finding trip.

And if all of that sounds very serious, it is. But we also shouldn't forget letting our readers have fun — and editors, too. We plan to try to do some of that next year at our convention in Seattle, April 25-28. We'll have the opening reception at the Experience Music Project — which has the largest collection of Jimi Hendrix guitars as well as other musical treasures.

I'm looking forward to working with you. It's an important time in our history. Investigative journalism is something only we will do, unique content that only we will provide. It's time to rock with it. ♦

## Features

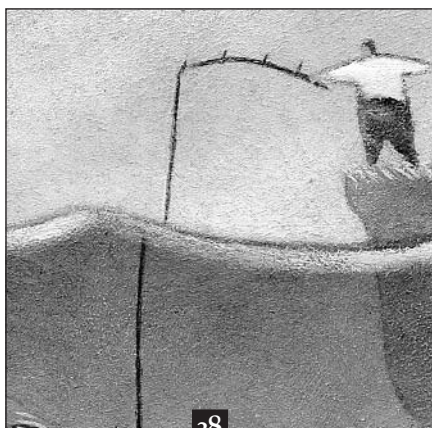
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# Having it all?

*After rising dramatically, the number of women editors is creeping forward slowly as some leave the profession, tired of the balancing act*

BY PAUL ANGER

Can women in newsrooms have it all? Kids, family, career? The optimistic answer: Yes. This is 2005, after all. More managers — women and men — offer flextime and support women torn by the newsroom and the family room. Besides, the number of women in leadership continues to go up.

The best answer, for our industry: Yes. Studies show female journalists connect to what many readers want — more local news, more good news, more human interest content.

Unfortunately, the real answer is not that simple.

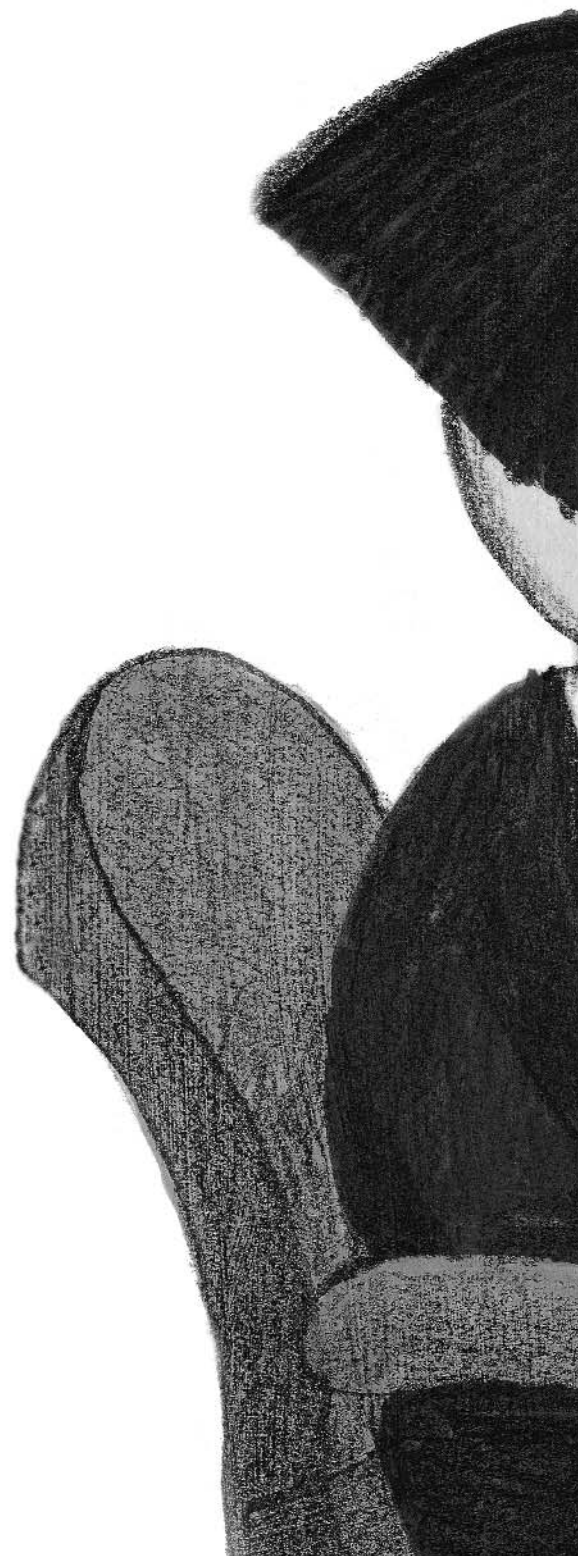
Although the latest figures (2003) from Northwestern University's Media Management Center show women as 22 percent of top editors and 40 percent of managing editors in newspapers over 85,000 circulation, those numbers are now increasing at a glacial rate after rising dramatically for two decades.

What's more, the American Press Institute and the Pew Center have reported that newspaper women are more likely than men to leave journalism, and that women are less likely to anticipate moving up the career ladder.

Men still tend to hire editors in their



Anger is editor of *The Des Moines Register*.









own images, and society is still hard-wired to make women the chief caregivers. That brings a stress on mothers that many men can't quite grasp, and a reality that most newsrooms, however enlightened, find hard to deal with.

Janet Leach left as editor of the *The Beacon Journal*, Akron, Ohio, when she could no longer juggle competing demands. She dealt with some tough newsroom layoffs but had a supportive husband with a law career and worked for bosses who were "extremely family friendly."

But her kids were into activities, and she was on the phone constantly ("can you pick up the kids, can they stay an hour at your house?") while managing the newsroom.

If a successful editor like Jan Leach opts out, what does that leave us with? Women married to stay-at-home fathers? Those affluent enough to pay a live-in nanny?

The question is put to Leach, who now teaches at Kent State:

We need to keep more people like you — how?

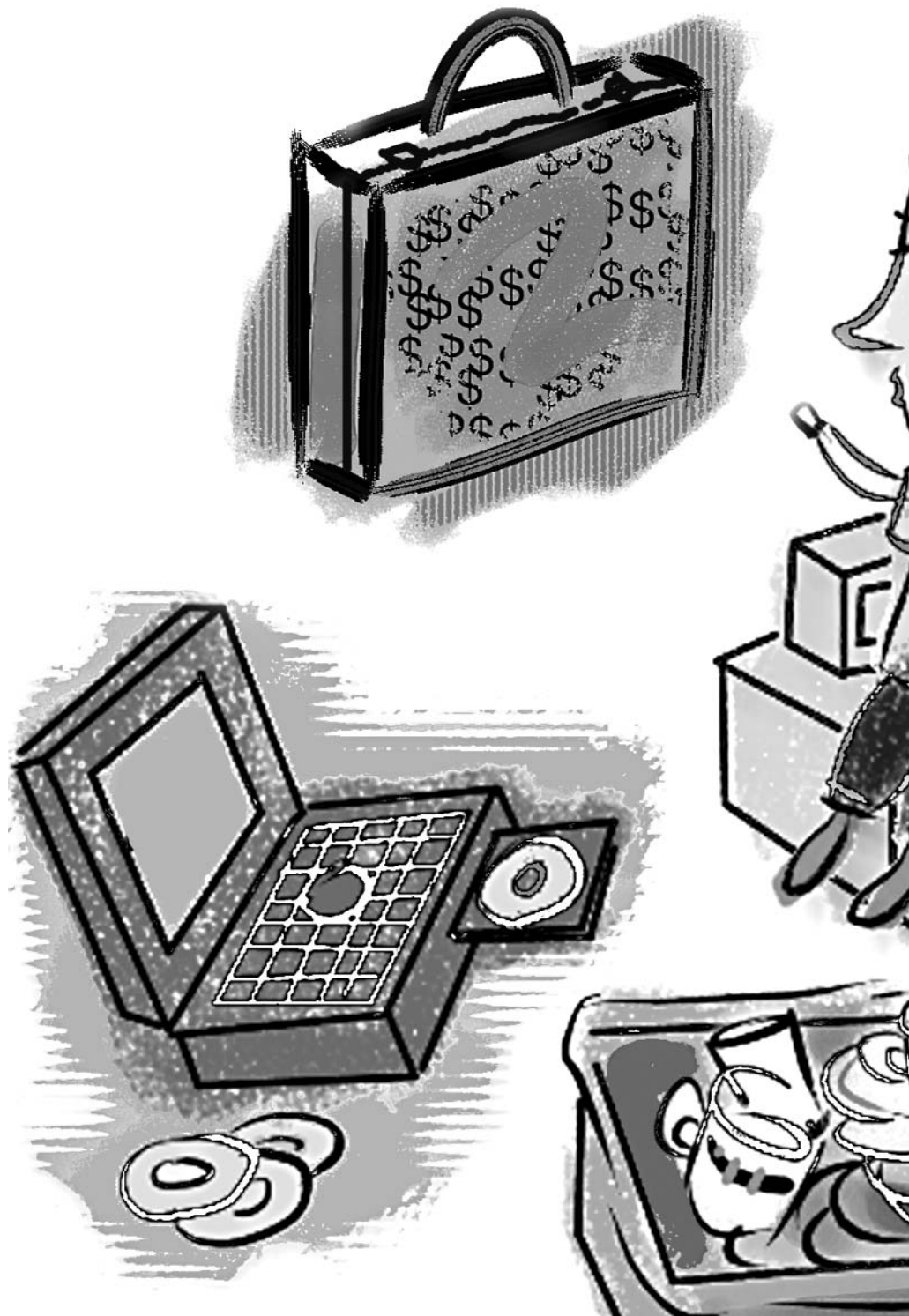
She's not sure. Copy editors can't just say they want to work from home. Little children can't run around the office touching the computers.

"Journalists want it all," she says. "Loving family life, challenging and invigorating career. Employers want it all, too: Journalists who can work any story any time, meet deadlines, travel and stay with the company for years. Something's got to give.

"I'd start with journalism schools to prepare students for the reality of media careers. It's unrealistic to think they're going to work 9 to 5 with holidays and weekends off. If they're prepared for that, they might adjust their expectations.

"I'd also make sure women, especially middle managers, have flexibility to accommodate sick kids, snow days and volunteering and band boosters. That would involve salary, vacation, flextime and adaptable colleagues.

"Next, I'd recommend managers and companies stop 'situational sympathy' — that is being totally reasonable for today's problem — and start paying



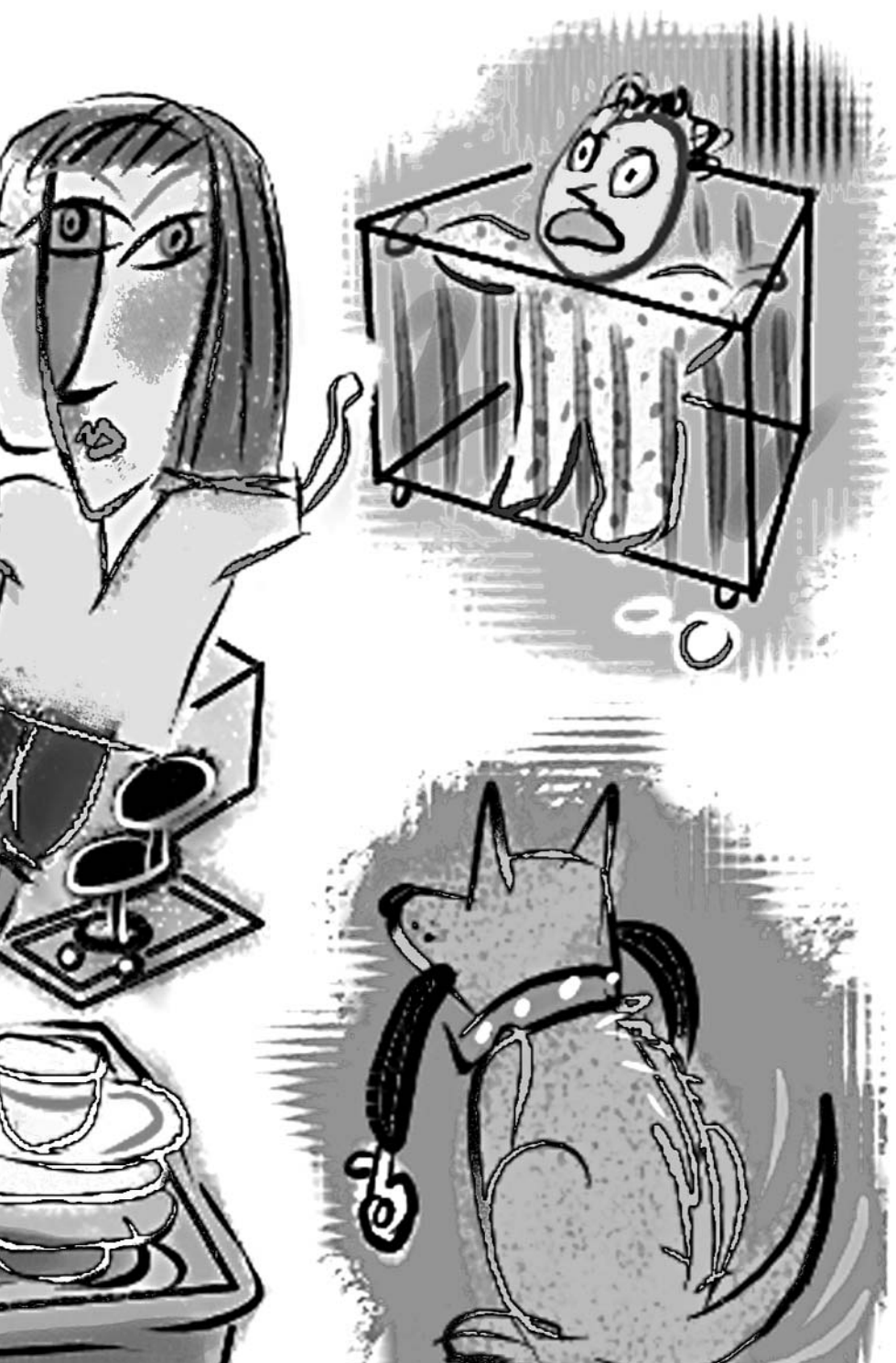
attention to these issues all the time."

The payoff? Better working environments, more readers, maybe closing the gap that shows men reading newspapers more frequently.

Helen Fisher, a Rutgers University anthropologist, says "the news business is a curiosity." She believes slow change is partly because men have historically risen to newsroom prominence because

they're programmed to be interested in "hard news, politics and warfare."

She is told that the Iraq war, the ultimate political-warfare-hard news topic, has not driven readership or single copy sales. Fisher says that's because the coverage decided mostly by men needs to be more human. "Women would not focus so much on the guns or who got shot — they would broaden the con-



text.”

Fisher is familiar with the newspaper industry and has spoken before ASNE members. “Women are built to solve your particular problem. Women are more progressive, more collaborative.”

Men are not quite wired that way. Men see more black and white. It’s the result, Fisher says, of “biological reasons for four million years.”

So who needs men, anyway?

Fisher laughs: “You guys can focus when the chips are down. What we need in the newsroom are both perspectives.”

But when the chips are down, men “tend to hire men, people who think like them,” says June Nicholson, associate professor at Virginia Commonwealth University. “Women are excluded from

the networking.”

Liza Gross, managing editor/presentations and operations at The Miami Herald, says that “newsrooms are lousy at succession planning and mentoring, but being dominated by males, they provide a natural structure for advancement of that group.”

Gross remembers telling a male boss that newsrooms are different from 20 years ago because the increase in women staff members had given more prominence to family issues. “The response from him was, ‘Well, but 20 years ago men had wives and families, too.’”

“The difference is, they got home whenever they got home. Ignoring household needs is not an option for most women. It is worse for Latinas because of our more traditional viewpoints regarding family. Most women I know who have made it to the top are single, divorced, widowed or have exceptional domestic arrangements.”

But women do make it — despite the sexism and the pull of family and the newsroom’s infamous demands. Julia Wallace in Atlanta is an example. So is Ann Marie Lipinski in Chicago. The list goes on.

Leach’s successor in Akron, Debra Adams Simmons, has sons ages 6 and 4. “You do have to have a support system, and you have to make choices — you can’t expect to be perfect both at home and at work every day,” Simmons says.

She believes top editors can find enough flexibility because they call their own shots — “the line editors have the most excruciating level to get through.”

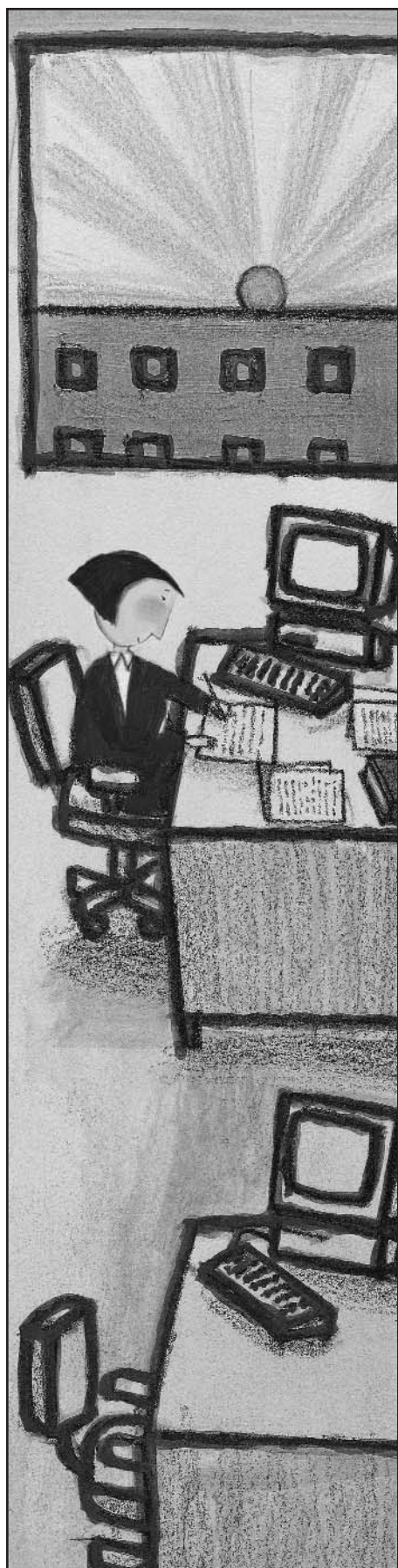
Simmons is 40, a young Turk. That’s reassuring, because the generation of Baby Boomer women who worked hard to shatter the glass ceiling only has so much time left on the stage.

Cynthia Miller, a media consultant and former metro editor at The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, says that “some of the most talented women journalists I know are in PR, marketing.” She talks about newsroom ghosts — those who have dropped out.

She fears that not enough 20- and 30-

*Continued on Page 31.*





# Don't just sit back and hope it happens

*If you want women to take and keep key leadership positions, make it a point to identify promising candidates and encourage them*

BY KAY TUCKER ADDIS

**T**ake care of your women. If I had one piece of advice for the country's top women editors, that would be it.

I was one of some 50 senior editors who came together at API a couple of years ago to talk about how we could help more women reach top leadership positions and how we could keep high-potential women from leaving the industry.

From my 35 years in the business, I think women do need special attention — and if that can come from a key woman editor, all the better.

Why?

It's a generalization, but I would say that women TEND:

- To be less vocal and open about their ambition.

- To have fewer female role models and mentors.

- To have more complicated lives, especially if they are working mothers.

- To have fewer opportunities for informal bonding and friendship with company leaders than do men who have golf outings, go to baseball games, etc. (Several times we thought about organizing lunchtime shopping events for us women, but the idea never seemed to get off the ground.)

If we want more women

to take and keep leadership positions, we at the top of our organizations need to do more than sit back and hope it happens, just as we cannot just sit back and hope that more journalists of color reach the top spots in major U.S. newspapers.

Some ideas:

- Make it a point to take a woman to lunch once a week, whether it's a promising young reporter, a young editor or one of your senior leaders. Talk to them about their careers. Ask them what advice they'd give you in running the newsroom.

- Be a formal mentor for one or more high-potential women on staff.

- Have regular brown-bag sessions with women editors on your staff to talk about their concerns, to have panel discussions on things such as juggling "leadership and motherhood."

Yes, you run the risk of creating some confusion, concern, resentment and anger among the men on your staff.

Among the options: Taking your lumps, firm in the belief that your special attention to women in the long term will help both your newspaper and the industry.

Or do all the same things for all of your promising staffers, regardless of gender or race. ♦

Addis retired as editor of the *Virginian Pilot*, Norfolk March 1.



# Being the only woman in the room

BY RENÉE LOTH

In 1969, I defied the high school guidance counselor and applied to journalism school, even though her advice was to major in English at a nice liberal arts college. That way, she said, “you can always fall back on teaching.”

Newsrooms, she said, were “no place for a young lady.”

What did I know? Writing was the only thing I was ever any good at, and it seemed to me working at a newspaper was a more reliable way to make a living than fiction or haiku.

She was right, though: In the early 1970s newsrooms were no place for a lady. Or a woman. You could be The Girl, or Hon, or Hey You, but lady-like sensibilities were sure to be tested by the grizzled, foul-tempered, hard-drinking, decidedly pre-feminist men who ruled big-city newspapers in those days.

You knew you had arrived when they referred to you simply by your last name. As in: “This story has legs. Give it to Loth.”

Early on, I found it helps to have a sense of humor, to care more about the work than about the working conditions, and — especially in Boston — to know something about either sports or politics. Sports was a non-starter, but working political campaigns gave me my bona fides in journalism, taught me to speak the language. Got me on Page One. Made me promotable.

And it made me familiar with being the only woman in the room. Indeed at my college newspaper I was the

only woman editor, plotting anti-war coverage. When I graduated to what was then called an “alternative” weekly, I was the only woman on a news staff of eight. For some period I was the only woman in the Globe’s State House bureau. I was the Globe’s first woman political editor, and in general warmed many a “Susan B. Anthony chair”: the one reserved for the woman.

Even today, I can sometimes be the only woman in an editorial board meeting with dark-suited foreign ambassadors or business titans who want the Globe’s ear.

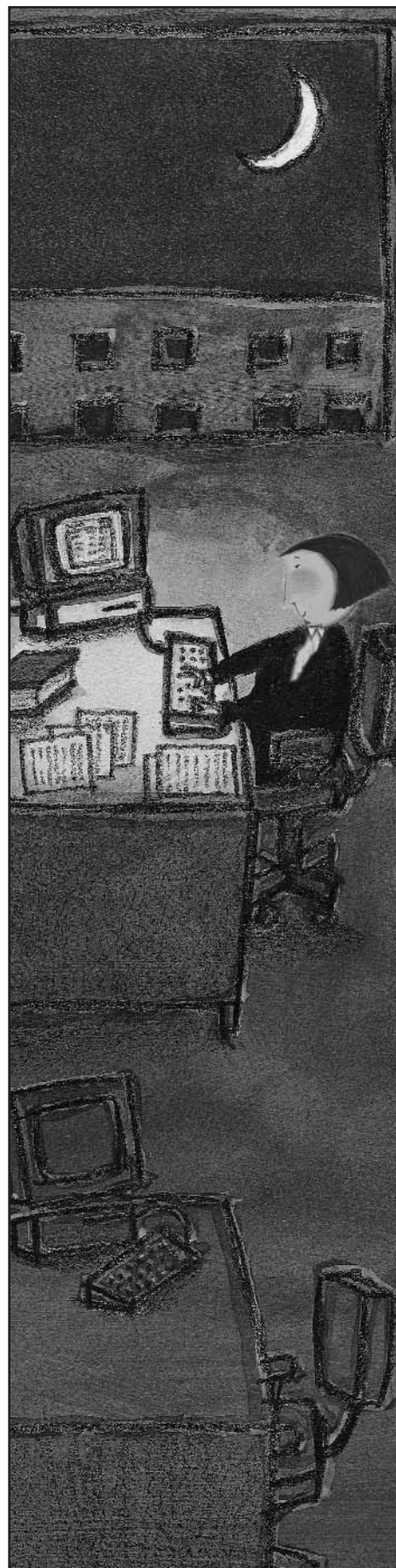
But something has changed. More often I am not the only woman, and in some glorious situations there might even be three. The very possibility that I might not be flying solo — that the men in the room might be the ones puzzled by a passing cultural reference or inside joke — is powerfully liberating. I have no doubt it has made me a better journalist; freed my authentic voice and made it easier to ask the impertinent question. Overall, it has put not just women’s bylines but women’s societal concerns — domestic violence and family leave and the glass ceiling — on Page One.

I know we’re not close to critical mass. But having more women in the newsroom better reflects the true complexity of the world.

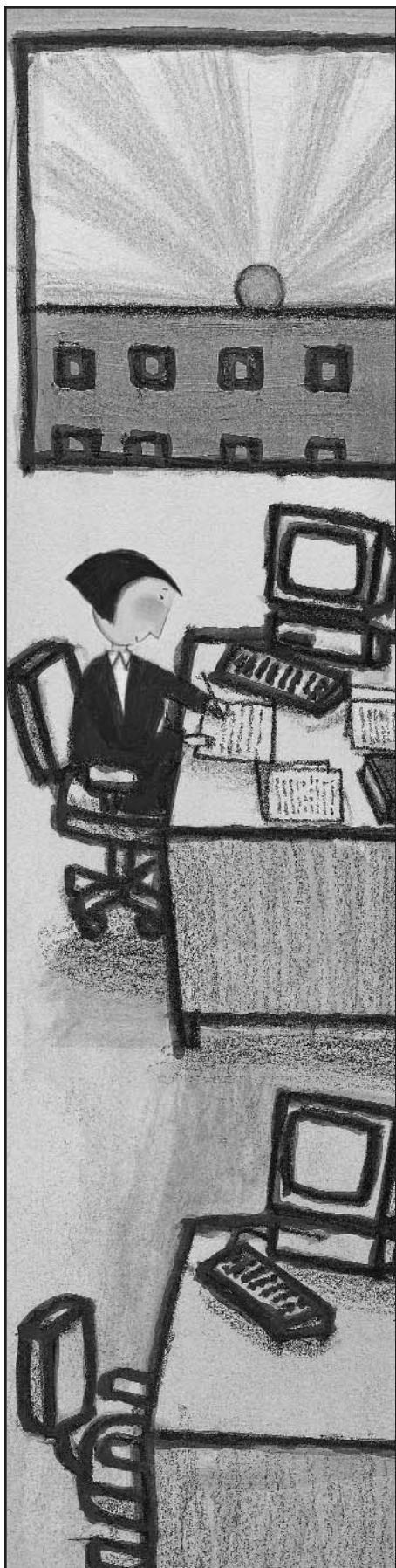
In the end, that is more of an advantage than being able to hold your liquor, predicting the turnout in the New Hampshire primary, and knowing when to shout “off sides!” all put together. ♦



Loth is editor, editorial page, at The Boston Globe.







# Making a difference in the newsroom

*Women go from 0 to 22 percent of the top editor jobs at the 100 largest newspapers in America and change the newspaper landscape in the process*

BY MARGARET SULLIVAN

As 1976 began, Time Magazine's usual "Man of the Year" cover story took a different turn. Instead of recognizing an individual, the magazine chose to recognize American women as a group. Indeed, it was a new era — feminism was in full bloom. Women were breaking down barriers and smashing through glass ceilings.

"They have arrived like a new immigrant wave in male America," the story marveled. Among these pioneers, Time noted, was Carol Sutton, who had been named managing editor of a metropolitan daily newspaper, The Courier-Journal in Louisville, Ky.

Despite that recognition, Sutton was not quite the first ranking editor of a metro daily. Katherine Fanning had become editor of the Anchorage Daily News in 1971, a few years after she and her husband had bought the paper.

After leading the Alaska daily to a Pulitzer Prize, Fanning left Anchorage to become editor of the Christian Science Monitor in 1983 — the first woman to edit a national daily paper.

Meanwhile, in 1981, at the (now-defunct) Los Angeles Herald Examiner, Mary Anne Dolan became in the proud words of her predecessor, Jim Bellows, "the first woman editor-in-chief of a major metro-

"I think (women editors) have helped change how news is defined. They have expanded the conversation."

Pam Luecke  
professor

Washington and Lee University

politan newspaper in the United States." Soon after, in 1984, Sandra Mims Rowe became editor of The Virginian-Pilot in Norfolk; she is now editor of The Oregonian in Portland.

These first forays by women into top editing roles in the '70s and early '80s gave way to the '90s when top women editors of metro dailies became, if not commonplace, at least less astounding. In that decade, two of the nation's largest newspapers saw their first female chief editors appointed: Debby Krenk at the New York Daily News in 1997

and USA Today's Karen Jurgensen in 1999. Ann Marie Lipinski was named editor of the Chicago Tribune in 2001. (Lipinski still holds the Tribune post; Krenk, whose tenure at the top of the Daily News was short, recently was named a managing editor at Newsday. Jurgensen retired last year in the wake of the Jack Kelley scandal at USA Today.)

Have women in charge



Sullivan is editor of The Buffalo News.



## Women editors at the 100 largest newspapers in the U.S.

Ann Marie Lipinski, Chicago Tribune, Editor  
 Amanda Bennett, The Philadelphia Inquirer, Editor  
 Julia D. Wallace, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Editor  
 Carole Leigh Hutton, Detroit Free Press, Publisher and Editor  
 Sandra Mims Rowe, The Oregonian, Portland, Editor  
 Karin E. Winner, The San Diego Union-Tribune, Editor  
 Ellen Soeteber, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Editor  
 Susan Goldberg, San Jose (Calif.) Mercury News, Executive Editor  
 Charlotte H.Hall, Orlando (Fla.) Sentinel, Editor  
 Janet S. Weaver, The Tampa (Fla.) Tribune, Executive Editor  
 Margaret M. Sullivan, The Buffalo (N.Y.) News, Editor  
 Sue A. Hale, The Oklahoman, Oklahoma City, Executive Editor  
 Vicki S. Gowler, St. Paul (Minn.) Pioneer Press, Editor  
 Maria De Varenne, The Press-Enterprise, Riverside, Calif., Editor  
 Vivian Waixel, The Record and Herald News, Hackensack, N.J.,  
 Executive Editor  
 Karen M. Magnuson, Rochester (N.Y.) Democrat and Chronicle, Editor  
 Melanie A. Sill, The News & Observer, Raleigh, N.C., Executive Editor  
 Saundra E. Keyes, The Honolulu Advertiser, Editor  
 Nancy A. Conway, The Salt Lake Tribune, Editor  
 Debra Adams Simmons, Akron (Ohio) Beacon Journal, Executive Editor  
 Ardith Hilliard, The Morning Call, Allentown, Pa., Editor  
 Marilyn Thompson, Lexington (Ky.) Herald-Leader, Editor

made a difference?

Pam Luecke, former editor of the Lexington Herald-Leader in Kentucky and now the Donald W. Reynolds professor of business journalism at Washington and Lee University, thinks women at the top have made their mark — both on newspapers' content and newsroom culture.

"I think (women editors) have helped change how news is defined. They have expanded the conversation," Luecke says. "Diversity of all kinds is good for that reason." Specifically, the byproducts of women at the helm, she says, include newspapers' greater emphasis on health news, more attention for women's sports and a broader view of political news (viewing politics less as a sport and more as a way to shape society). In terms of newsroom culture, Luecke is reluctant to generalize about women's management style, but thinks that some newsrooms may have become more family-friendly and more consensus-oriented due to female bosses.

Whatever the effects, women's

progress has been swift. Only a few years ago, as the end of the 20th century approached, 13 of the 100 largest newspapers in the United States had women at their newsrooms' helm. Now, according to ASNE, that number has increased to 22 — less than a quarter, but still substantial. Of course, there are still plenty of newspapers, big and small, that have never had a female chief editor. Among them are some of the nation's most prestigious papers: The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, The Los Angeles Times, The Boston Globe. (Both The New York Times and The Boston Globe, however, now have female managing editors and editorial page editors.)

Going from zero to 22 percent in three decades makes for a steep trend line. Can it continue? ASNE's executive director Scott Bosley thinks the ranks of women editors will keep swelling — but less radically than in recent years: "My own sense is that this trend will continue for some time (but) at a more measured pace." ♦





# It's a great time to be a woman editor

*There are tradeoffs, tough choices and sacrifices to be made to balance work and family life, but leading a newsroom is an incredible opportunity*

BY DEBRA ADAMS SIMMONS

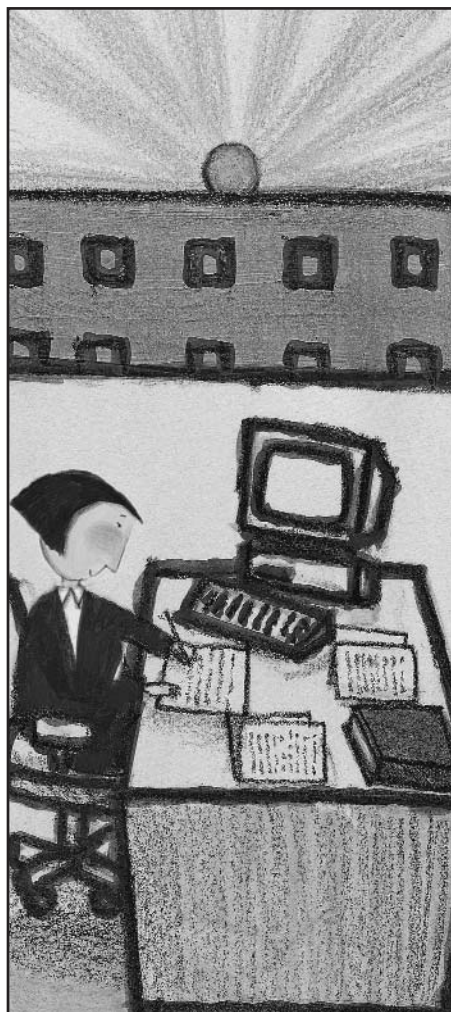
While I was a deputy managing editor at the Norfolk Ledger-Star, friends at Knight Ridder called about the managing editor job at The Beacon Journal, Akron, Ohio.

I struggled in making the decision, but decided it was the right thing to do. Then, between the time I accepted the job in Akron and showed up for work, the editor who hired me (Janet Leach) stepped down to spend more time with her family. My introduction to Akron was trial by fire. I spent the first six months as managing editor with no editor. The next six months as the editor with no managing editor.

It was a wild first year! I handled it. Are there people who believe race, gender and age were variables in my hiring? Perhaps, but I haven't heard it. I have heard people say I "got lucky." I acknowledge that timing was a variable in landing this job. Knight Ridder's

commitment to grooming women senior leaders is an even greater variable. Publisher Jim Crutchfield's belief that I could handle the job was perhaps the most critical variable.

It's a great time to be a woman editor. For the people who say there's a crisis in leadership,



I say look across the country. Several of the nation's largest newsrooms — Detroit, Philadelphia, Chicago, Atlanta, San Jose — are led by women.

Are there tradeoffs, tough choices and sacrifices I have to make to balance my work and family life? Absolutely. I

have never seen raising a family as a barrier to my success.

Working and parenting can co-exist. For several working mothers and fathers in the newsroom, our shared experience reduces some stress related to juggling children and careers. When I arrived in Akron, reporters recommended day care programs for my two-year-old. For more than a year, my son was in the same class as the children of two reporters.

I'm OK with not being a first-grade room mother or organizing the Valentine's Day party. That doesn't mean I'm willing to give up helping with homework. I'm just as comfortable going to a bowling alley birthday party with 15 six-year-old boys as I am coming into the office on the weekend. I don't have any guilt about having my husband take six-year-old Jonathan and four-year-old Jacob to swimming lessons on Saturday. Historically, black women have always worked outside the home — so this is who I am.

For women editors as well as for men, leading today's newsroom is an incredible challenge. When I talk with my women colleagues, our conversations are not about balance, they're about the demands of the job. The responsibility is dramatically different than in years past. Responding to threats to our business, Internet competition, attacks on our credibility, rising business performance expectations, all distinguish newsroom leadership in this millennium.

Even greater than all of that is the desire to exceed personal expectations. Many journalists of color believe our mistakes are magnified and that we need to work twice as hard. It's not just your mistake, it's the impact your mistake has on the next potential editor who comes along or on the larger push for diversity in the industry.

There are only four African-American women who are top editors. Our success will open doors for the African-American women managing editors, department heads and line editors who are positioned to move into top jobs. It's part of our job to make the impossible possible. ♦



Simmons is editor of the Akron (Ohio) Beacon Journal.



# Publisher: The thrill and the nightmare

By ELLEN LEIFELD

**M**y path to the publisher's office doesn't seem all that unusual, not to me.

At 50, I've been a publisher for 10 years — after having spent 21 in the newsroom.

It is unusual, though, considering the circumstances. But those circumstances go beyond gender.

At 19, I began as a news clerk at a small daily in Nebraska with nothing more than a new baby and a high-school diploma. I spent years over-compensating, trying to learn as much as I could. What incredibly stupid thing would I write or say? The other reporters were college graduates. They were talented, smart and savvy.

I was far from any of those things. Every mistake I made is still etched in my brain.

When I wrote in a 42-point headline that a candidate was a shoe-in, rather than shoo-in, I knew every college graduate would have known better.

When I spelled under way as one word, and an editor said under way is always two words unless you are referring to a ship's under-current, I was sure that was covered in some course I hadn't taken.

I memorized the AP stylebook, front to back. I worked on my stories until 2 a.m. night after night.

I married for a



second time. Ron was once a chief photographer, but he became our chief caregiver when we had another child and my career began to take off.

Over those years, my heart stayed in my throat. The lack of a college education was haunting my thoughts at every career stop. What didn't I know? How

would it hold me back? I felt insecure, dim, less cultured than my colleagues.

Becoming publisher was a thrill — and a nightmare. I was responsible for running the business. That meant math and economics and marketing. All of those classes I didn't take.

I worked harder, read more, asked question after question to make sure that I truly understood every issue. One of my favorite sayings is, "You don't know what you don't know." I lived in fear for many years about what I didn't know.

I never really aimed high. Sure, when I was city editor, I wanted to become managing editor. When I was managing editor, I wanted to become editor.

The choices I made certainly affected my oldest. She's 31, and I still feel guilty. But if you talk to either of my kids today, they don't feel deprived or angry. When we were together, we really made quality time.

When I moved to Wisconsin, my family stayed behind in Michigan until my son graduated from high school. I flew home every weekend to be with them and watch my son play football, baseball and basketball. The company didn't blink about supporting that. I did that for 16 months.

I do think there's something to personality differences among the generations and us Boomers being hard-drivers. As I look at some younger people, I don't think they'd be able to handle something like I did.

Being female never seemed to be an obstacle. Sure, there were injustices. Once, a male reporter was given my pay raise because he and his wife were having another baby. The male editors thought he needed the money.

More often, the decision-makers — both men and women — gave me opportunities.

I recently shared my story at a Women's Fund luncheon here in Appleton. A local college president was in the audience. He invited me to speak to his graduates.

He also gave me something I was missing.

At winter commencement, he awarded me an honorary degree. ♦



*Leifeld is president and publisher of the Appleton (Wis.) Post-Crescent and vice president of the Gannett Co. Midwest Group.*



# Inside the Beltway, but not out of touch

*Washington reporters are using blogs, e-mail and the trusty old telephone to reach out to readers who are sometimes thousands of miles away*

BY ELLEN SHEARER

WASHINGTON — The dateline alone has negative connotations for some readers and editors. Insulated, elitist, out of touch with the rest of America. And they're not just characterizing elected officials and bureaucrats, they're talking about the thousands of journalists working in the nation's capital.

Washington reporters and editors are well aware of the need to connect with readers and their interests, and they have developed strategies to help make sure the stories with Washington datelines are must-reads back home.

"Readers ... suspect that this locale is teeming with devious scoundrels intent on building their own empires at the expense of the much larger population that lives and works outside the Beltway," said Hearst Newspapers Bureau Chief Charles Lewis. "The potency of this perception is proved every two years when voters retire politicians deemed to have become captives of the Beltway. ...

"Journalists face the same challenge. They fight to overcome it by keeping in close touch with the roots back home, personal contacts, reading weekly newspapers that serve their outside-the-Beltway communities and by keeping close tabs on" which stories get used and where they're placed in the paper.

Daily contact between Washington staffs and editors back home is routine, as well as regular trip to the main news-

paper offices, said all the bureau editors and reporters contacted for this article.

"We still depend on the editors in California to say, 'Hello, out there — this is an issue we really care about,'" said Los Angeles Times Bureau Chief Doyle McManus. "It does help to be reminded whether or not we are covering the right set of economic regulatory issues, for example, or whether we're covering immigration closely enough or doing too much on homeland security."

In addition to the phone contact and visiting its newspapers, the Cox Newspapers' Washington bureau also brings in editors and reporters from its papers to work in the bureau so they have a better understanding of the operation and the highly competitive nature of D.C. reporting, said Cox Bureau Chief Andy Alexander.

Most bureaus make tracking story usage a high priority because it clarifies the issues that editors consider to be front-page issues. In addition, most bureaus familiarize themselves with the results of their papers' readership surveys.

However, Austin American-Statesman Editor Rich Oppel cautioned that surveys showing what readers are thinking at a certain point in time can't substitute for a deep understanding of the stories that affect local readers and "producing those stories

before readers are thinking of them."

Getting direct input from readers can be difficult because of the distance, but Bureau Chief Sylvia Smith of The Journal Gazette has established a regular method of contact. On her trips home to Fort Wayne, Ind., she convenes focus groups on different topics with about 20 experts on the topics, asking them to explain their business or undertaking, how the federal government affects them and what they'd like to read about. She also then has them on file as local sources for future stories.

McManus, a California native, talks to friends on his trips to Los Angeles to stay plugged in to the state's political gossip. His deputy, Tom McCarthy, who is from Oklahoma, adds an extra day to his L.A. trips to visit a new place in Southern California and talk to residents of that area, McManus said.

E-mails also provide insights into readers' priorities and deserve D.C. bureau attention because readers "tend to e-mail and call on stories they care about and that lets me know it's important," said Dena Bunis, bureau chief of The Orange County Register.

E-mails can also be used to improve stories. "I keep the e-mail addresses of every Journal Gazette reader who e-mails me to rant or rave, usually about a column," said Sylvia Smith. "Then when I need an example of someone — say, someone who as a businessperson either sends out a lot of faxes or is bothered by junk faxes — I write a gang e-mail. I almost always get a hit, and then I have an anecdotal lead or a Fort

Wayne person to quote in a story about legislation dealing with junk faxes. I took a story with no more relevance to Fort Wayne than to any other geographic area and made it into a local story."

A few Washington bureaus used blogs to connect with readers during the two national political conventions, but they are not yet used by newspaper bureaus on a regular basis. However, the Cox bureau has discussed whether to start one. Hearst's Lewis



Shearer is co-director and editor, Medill News Service, Washington.



## Tips for Washington stories that hit home

**Phone home** — Daily contact between Washington staff and the main paper's staff.

**Go home** — Regular trips to the city or cities you cover, both to talk to editors and to talk to readers.

**Leave home** — Bring editors and reporters from the paper to the Washington to bureau to visit or work so they have a better understanding of the D.C. operation.

**Focus** — When you're back home, create focus groups of readers and/or experts to explore what's important locally; you get information plus contacts for stories.

**Track usage** — know what gets picked up to get a sense of the issues that matter to editors.

**Read** — all sections of your paper, not just the A section, and the weeklies from your area.

**Research** — Use the paper's readership studies to better understand your audience.

**Report** — Ask congressmen you cover about constituent concerns.

**Watch** — Keep an eye on TV news because that's what your readers are watching.

**E-mail** — Use e-mail from readers to track which issues most interest them.

**D-mail** — Create database of e-mails from readers and use them when you need local quotes.

— E.S.

said his bureau “blogged at both political conventions, with modest results in terms of igniting a dialogue with readers.” He called it “a very enjoyable experiment in a new style of writing” that he’d like to try again.

Readers aren’t the only audience that must be won. Faced with the closing and consolidation of more and more bureaus, including the Tribune Co.’s staff cuts in several bureaus as it moves to one merged bureau, D.C. editors must make sure their bureaus are considered vital by the paper’s top management.

While several bureau chiefs said they are rarely forgotten, a few, particularly those in smaller bureaus, said they sometimes suffer from an “out-of-sight, out-of-mind” attitude. Either way, all of them emphasized the importance of daily contact with editors back home.

Being assigned to an editing desk rather than operating independently helps ensure close contact, several said.

“Maybe because we’re more than 2,000 miles away, we have ended up deciding that the best strategy is having a national editor and national desk in LA whom we belong to and who are fully invested in us because they own the stories,” McManus said. “On this paper the national editor does own the bureau.”

McManus echoed others in saying he has multiple phone and e-mail conversations with home editors daily. In addition, bureau chiefs unanimously said they make it a priority to visit their papers at least twice a year.

“I personally visit our papers on a regular basis for face-to-face meetings with editors,” Alexander said.

Sometimes I’m accompanied by one or more bureau editors. Other times, I send bureau editors, who are sometimes accompanied by reporters if we need to talk about specific coverage.”

Oppel said that because of Alexander’s trips to Cox papers, the Cox bureau “doesn’t see itself as some independent juggernaut, but a day-to-day partner in getting to the right stories, including the stories we want.”

William Millsaps Jr., executive editor of the Richmond Times-Dispatch, said the Media General Washington bureau has worked closely with the individual papers to determine the kinds of stories and issues that most interests the papers’ readers.

“Communication between the bureau and company papers is the key,” he said.

All the contact aims toward the real goal: compelling stories.

“If the stories have compelling enough local voices in them and relate specifically to the individual newspaper and that happens routinely, then the bureau will stand out from the rest of the news sources,” said Bunis. “The more a D.C. bureau repeats what the wire editor can pull from AP, the less credibility and the less the upper echelon of the paper will see that bureau as invaluable.”

The importance of Washington news has never been clearer, both to editors back home and to readers, bureau chiefs said.

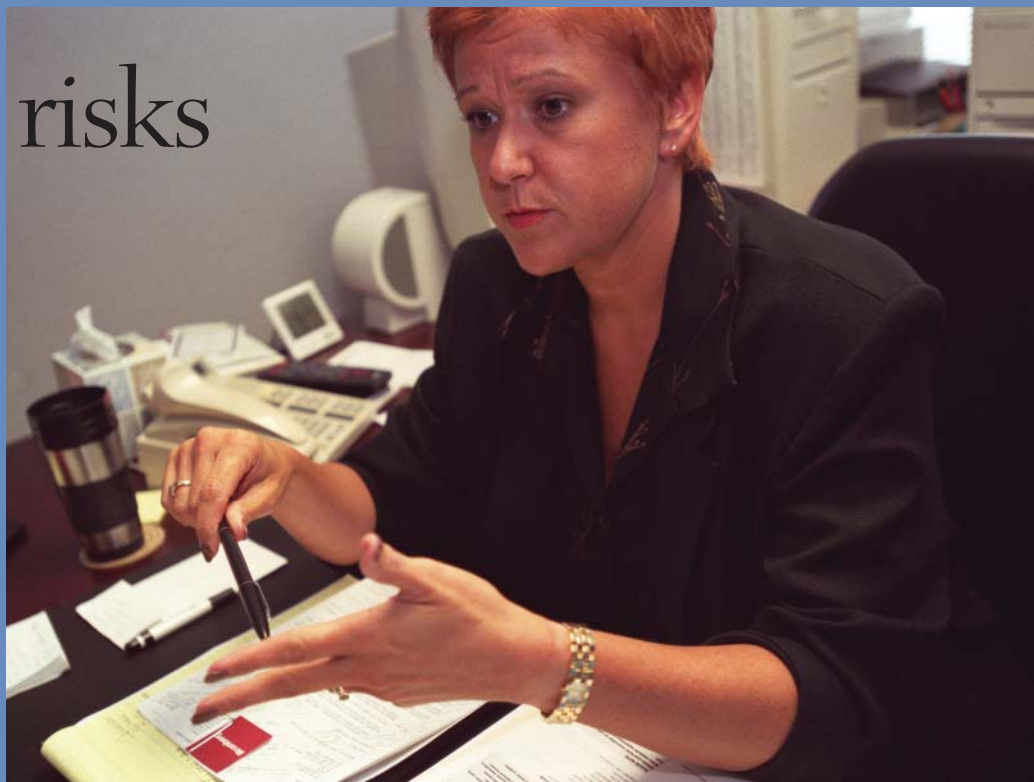
“The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 and the war in Iraq have definitely increased the appetite for Washington news,” said Vickie Walton-James, bureau chief of the Chicago Tribune. “The law enforcement and intelligence communities have been under scrutiny, as has the Pentagon. There have also been questions concerning civil liberties, preemptive war and a host of other issues.”

Bunis said one reason for the increased interest is that “the federal government has entered people’s lives more. Now readers care about what homeland security is saying about airline safety; they care about the latest call-ups for troops going to Iraq.” ♦



# Taking risks

*Carole Leigh Hutton runs a newsroom with a reputation for training, openness and a commitment to diversity*



BY ARLENE NOTORO MORGAN

Carole Leigh Hutton was named the first woman publisher and editor of the Detroit Free Press in December 2003 after serving in a variety of editorial roles during a 13-year career at the paper. The Free Press, one of the largest newspapers in the Knight Ridder chain, is considered an industry standard bearer in terms of recruiting, from the high school level on, to the development of its diverse staff. Hutton, 48, who succeeded the late Robert G. McGruder as executive editor in 2002, holds a unique role as the watchdog of both the business and editorial sides in a joint operating agreement with the Detroit News. A native of Framingham, Mass., Hutton is a graduate of Michigan State University and in 2002 Crain's Detroit Business recognized her as one of the "100 most influential women" in Southeast Michigan.

**Q. Who or what influenced you to pursue a journalism career?**

A. A sports columnist with the old Boston Record American, who answered my letter 35 years ago about

what it was like to be a sports writer. His name was D. Leo Monaghan. I never met him, but he wrote back!

**Q. Has your career met your expectations?**

A. It has exceeded them. I've never been great at plotting the future, and while I've always felt drawn to leadership positions, I did not predict that I'd one day have the opportunity to lead a newsroom of this caliber.

**Q. What are the best parts of your day?**

A. Very early in the morning, when it's quiet in the newsroom and I can focus without interruption on whatever I need to do. And late in the evening when we gather around the News Desk to look at the first edition front page and talk about whether it works.

That group is ever changing and ever growing, it seems, and the give and take can be fun.

**Q. And the worst?**

A. The parade of meetings, some days uninterrupted, that leaves too little time for individual conversations or attention to detail.

**Q. The latest poll on who Americans find trustworthy still rates the media profession just above used car salespeople. Why do you think this rap is so hard to beat?**

A. I think our industry is too often intent on denying bias rather than acknowledging and confronting it. Bias exists. It's true that many, if not most, of the people drawn to journalism tend to be politically and socially liberal. We often see ourselves as change agents. So the challenge is to do that fairly, but not to deny it or abandon it. We diminish our own credibility when we pretend we aren't who we are.



Morgan is Associate Dean, Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, N.Y.



**Q.** If I asked a Free Press reader about why they depend on you, what would he or she say?

A. Fortunately, our readers give lots of different answers to that question. For some, it's all about news, but there are plenty for whom it's all about entertainment, and plenty more for whom it's all about coupons. And I value each of them equally, because to be a mass medium we have to appeal across interests.

**Q.** How would you describe your "loyal" reader?

A. Our most loyal reader is 50 or older, a bit more affluent than average, and with one or more professionals in the household.

**Q.** Who do you have to add to that mix to survive?

A. Younger people. And by that I mean everyone younger than 50, but particularly younger than 30.

**Q.** Since the ASNE Credibility and Readership studies were undertaken, we have seen many attempts by editors to reach out to the community. How do you reach out?

A. We participate in the Credibility Roundtables project, and we do other roundtables ourselves that bring scores of people together with our journalists each year. Sometimes we focus them on provocative subjects (e.g. kids and violence, safety in schools, etc.) and sometimes we key in on a single community. We've tried to limit our community sponsorships to activities that we think are meaningful enough to help us make a difference. We also frequently invite guests to our daily news meetings. And we try never to turn down a speaking request, so we have an internal speakers bureau that brokers those requests that aren't specifically limited to a key newsroom personality.

In recent months we've started soliciting reader input with some stories, either because they're controversial or we think they might touch a chord. When we ask for calls and emails, we tend to get lots of them.

"... we're doing all sorts of analysis, in and out of the newsroom, about how to make the newspaper more relevant, more essential. We're going outside the industry for help, using an innovations firm to help us brainstorm and a different consultant to help us assess our ideas. We're daring to be different, which is a risk worth taking in an industry where no one seems to have really good answers."

— Carole Leigh Hutton



**Q.** How do you communicate what the public thinks to the staff?

A. We share research results, monthly circulation data, any significant swings or changes in how we're received in the marketplace and a daily transcript of calls from readers through our newsroom intranet. Our daily critique of the newspaper carries a link to the reader calls and emails, as does the intranet home page. We try to make it as easy as possible for the newsroom to know what we know about what readers are saying to us.

**Q.** When it comes to evaluating complaints, how do you separate the typical gripe versus complaints about legitimate issues that might deal with the paper's perceived bias or under coverage of a topic?

A. We're a large enough staff that we have a Public Editor who can devote whatever time is necessary to sifting those complaints and helping the senior management team evaluate them and us. But I think some of it is gut instinct. I know we have some folks who read us just to hate us, and I can predict their complaints before they arrive. I also see thoughtful and genuine com-

plaints, and I take those very seriously. And I don't spend a lot of time with e-mails that come in full of profanity or threats.

**Q.** You have earned a lot of attention for creating a "learning newsroom." Tell us about your orientation and development programs

A. Simple answer: Joe Grimm. Because of Joe, we have meaningful orientation of new employees. And because of Joe, we have a constant flow of training in and out of the newsroom. We host regional workshops from all manner of institutions and organizations, so we get more of our own folks in these and we get to know those who attend from elsewhere. And we do a lot of staff "nooners," at which we offer lunch and an outside speaker of some sort. We occasionally get our own folks to present at nooners, but we've been less successful with that.

**Q.** What insights does being a woman at the helm give you into these issues?

A. I'm not sure that women have any special insight, just different lenses. I've worked for some very enlightened men at the Free Press over the years. In a broad, general sense, women tend to be more communicative than men, and I suppose I talk about this stuff more than some of my predecessors might have. I'm sure I get more animated about it.

**Q.** We still hear a lot about the "glass ceiling" for women who aspire to top positions. How did you crack that ceiling?

A. I've been lucky to be in the right place at the right time more than once, and lucky to work for very enlightened men. But I was in that place because I worked hard, performed well, did the lousy shifts when that's what I was asked to do, and made it my business to be known and appreciated. I touched just about every rung on the traditional newsroom ladder (assistant editor, deputy department head, department head, deputy managing editor, managing editor, executive editor and now publisher and editor). I don't think

shortcuts tend to work that well.

**Q.** We hear a lot these days about the impact of the newspaper's culture on its success. How do you interpret that?

**A.** I'm a big believer in the importance of culture, and of the difficulty in changing it. I've seen other newsrooms I've worked in retain the very same culture even as the entire leadership team changed. So I think it's true that we succeed in one environment over another because we work well within its culture, not because we change its culture to reflect how we work. That said, I think leadership can have a big impact on the subtle changes in culture that help direct change. If you sit at the helm, you can reinforce the status quo or reinforce the need for change. To do the latter, you have to respect the culture and understand how it works and where there's wiggle room.

**Q.** How can women editors make a difference in newsroom culture?

**A.** Women editors can only make a difference as part of a diverse group that includes men and women in a variety of life stages, as well as all the more visible under-represented groups. I think women experience life stages more vividly than men. Think about parenthood as a single example, and the way that impacts the genders differently from idea to execution. I think those life stage experiences can make us more empathetic with readers, more attuned, and more open to differences. That can result in fuller discussion of options, more staff being heard and represented and some ideas shared that might've remained unvoiced. This is not universal; there are plenty of men in this industry who can do this. But diversity only works if it's real. A newsroom of all women would not appeal to me. Nor would a newsroom of all parents, or all single people, or all senior citizens or all 20-somethings. I think women are more likely to feel that way, to value that variety.

**Q.** Describe the Free Press newsroom culture.

## Carole Leigh Hutton

**Hometown:** Framingham, Mass.

**Married:** To Tom Huff

**Children:** One stepson, Kevin Huff, daughter-in-law Alison Huff and granddaughter, Julianna, 2.

**Self portrait:** Passionate, hard working, opinionated, talkative, overweight, middle-aged woman who embraces the dichotomy of loving grandparenthood while hating getting old.

**Bad habit:** Interrupting. And shredding my lower lip to keep from interrupting.

**Pet peeve:** People who don't listen to what's being said because they're too busy planning what they want to say.

**Most dangerous story:** When I was a reporter in Indiana I was doing a story on a very smooth con man who had ripped off a lot of gullible people. When I finally got an interview with him in his office, he stationed two armed guards at either side of my chair with their suit coats pulled back on the right to show off their holstered weapons. I thought he might be crazy, and I knew I was for staying there and doing the interview.

**Best interview and why:** The parents of a 19-year-old girl who'd been raped and murdered by two 14-year-olds from the neighborhood. They were stunned and overwhelmed but they badly wanted their daughter to be remembered as a girl, not just a victim. They were very soft spoken; they'd never spoken to a reporter before and didn't really expect to. But they forced themselves to do it, and that took a lot of strength.

**My newspaper's strength:** Being thoughtful. Almost everyone does a good job jumping and running on breaking news, but looking thoughtfully at what's behind what's happening is just as valuable. I love stories that answer a question you didn't know you had until you read it.

**Worst part of the job:** Disappointing people. Sometimes you have to say no to an idea because you can't afford it, or you need to keep the focus on bigger priorities. That's disappointing to staff. And sometimes you disappoint readers because you fail to meet their expectations.

**Best part of the job:** Gently guiding the immense creativity and energy that lives in the newsroom. Sometimes I'm so amazed at what we do.

**Books at bedside:** I'm in an Anita Shreve period, so anything by her right now. Just finished "The Weight of Water" and "The Pilot's Wife" and I'm about to start "All He Ever Wanted." Her writing is good escapism.

**Best advice I could give a 20-year-old:** Trust that there are things you don't know and that you'll change your mind about a few things once you've experienced more.

**My trademark expression:** If you're spending so much energy treading water that you can't climb into the lifeboat, you're going to drown.

**My best asset is:** My willingness to take a risk in the newspaper and do things we haven't done before.

**Behind my back, employees say:** She doesn't understand how hard it is to do all that we do.

**I wish I were a leader like:** Bob McGruder, my late boss, mentor and friend, who had a grace about him that I tried for years to emulate but never quite got it.

**What I worry about most is:** The future of my newspaper and our industry. I want to leave it in better shape and I'm struggling to figure out how to do that. Fortunately I have a lot of smart help here. ♦



A. We have a culture of openness that allows everyone who wants to have a big role to actually have one, and that perhaps indulges those who want to stand on the sidelines and jeer. We share the same urgency and cynicism that mark a lot of newsrooms, but we also try to reward risk, so the risk takers can rise here. People who've left the Free Press often return to say they miss that openness. And the cake. We eat way too much cake, because we're a newsroom that loves any excuse for a celebration.

**Q. If you were to create a perfect newsroom, what would it look like?**

A. Everyone would be a brilliant writer and photographer with great presentation skills, so there would never be this break between word people and visual people. Each staffer would be assigned a segment of readers with whom he or she was responsible for communicating all the time, and they wouldn't be the same ones he or she wrote or edited about. There would be no traditional departments, no pods or teams or other silly borders and boundaries. And there would be no turf wars over content or people.

**Q. Readership issues are at the forefront of many ASNE and APME programs right now. What are you doing in this area that is a cut above the routine?**

A. We're in the midst of a major rethinking effort that is pegged to the opportunity we'll have later this year when we (finally) move to the 50-web and to brand new presses. So we're doing all sorts of analysis, in and out of the newsroom, about how to make the newspaper more relevant, more essential. We're going outside the industry for help, using an innovations firm to help us brainstorm and a different consultant to help us assess our ideas. We're daring to be different, which is a risk worth taking in an industry where no one seems to have really good answers.

**Q. It seems that our industry goes through one trend or fad after another in the hope of finding the magic**

**bullet to bring readers back. What is your philosophy about trying new things?**

A. I'll try almost anything that I think makes sense. We try new things all the time, we just don't always apply someone else's label to them. For example, we've been soliciting reader reaction a lot to certain stories and then publishing scores and scores of comments in print (and hundreds more online) for a while now. I don't see that as a trend, but we're doing it in an effort to engage readers — and I think that's what all these efforts are about.

**Q. The circulation scandals of the past year obviously have not helped build confidence, especially with advertisers. Have you done anything specific to prove the integrity of your circulation numbers?**

A. Fortunately, our numbers are solid and we were able to say so forthrightly when those stories broke. We make a greater effort with advertisers, but we don't seem to have been tainted much by that.

**Q. For years, the Detroit Free Press has run one of the most respected high school workshop projects in the country. How has that program paid you back?**

A. Nichole Christian is a member of the Free Press editorial board who we hired a couple of years ago from the New York Times. She first came to the Free Press in the high school program. Chastity Pratt is an education writer on the metro desk here who we hired from Newsday. She first came here in the high school program. The list goes on, and these folks are in newsrooms all over the country. It's probably the best return on investment of anything we do.

**Q. What have your high school journalists taught you about how young people can use a newspaper?**

A. Often, they teach us that we don't know nearly as much as we think we do (or should) about what's important to them and how they communicate. We often ask their opinions about sto-

ries because there are so often students working in the newsroom on their own papers, and we learn a lot that way.

**Q. What do you think of the most recent efforts to give away smaller or niche versions of newspapers?**

A. Experimentation is a good thing. We know the traditional formula for newspapers isn't resonating in the marketplace the way it once did, so why not try other things? I'm not ready to abandon the daily newspaper, but that doesn't mean there isn't room to add products to the mix. As an industry, we've been fairly slow about that.

**Q. The Detroit area offers you every challenge — from reaching city residents to serving suburban growth. You also have the largest Arab community in the country. How are you meeting these challenges?**

A. The diversity of this market is one of its best calling cards. We use it to recruit. Yes, it's essential to have Arabic speakers on staff here and that's probably not true everywhere. But I wish I had some more Chinese speakers, too, because that's the next battleground of the auto industry, and that's still the bread and butter of this region. I think we struggle like everyone does to make sure we reflect the diversity of the region in our coverage without being stereotypical and doing only holiday-focused features or religion-of-the-month coverage. We have some very sophisticated journalists here who really do get it.

**Q. The 9/11 attacks and the War in Iraq obviously must have raised sensitive issues in your Arab community. How have you dealt with that?**

A. We were covering the Arab American community long before 9/11/01, so we knew who to talk to and what was happening before the national media swept down on Dearborn that week. We've tried to do frank and honest coverage, and that means some people don't like it and others do. It helped tremendously that Joe Grimm had

*Continued on Page 31.*

# The fight for electronic access to court records

*Many states, fearful to possible abuse, and discounting the benefits, are moving to lock away entire classes of court records from electronic access*

BY KEVIN GOLDBERG

Sometimes it seems that most government employees handling official records would prefer that we return to the days before Gutenberg, when the number of copies of any given document was likely to be "one."

After all, the records officer or courthouse clerk could then virtually ensure that sensitive information with the potential to adversely affect national security or an individual's personal privacy would not receive widespread distribution.

Of course, that also means that most government documents would be useless to a population that would never access those documents. And many policy makers might just consider that a fair trade-off, as an uniformed citizenry cannot fully effect change in a functioning democracy. So it is no surprise that most state governments dragged their feet when updating their access policies to keep pace with technology.

It has been approximately a decade since court records emerged on the Internet. Throughout the nation, state governments are devising ways to strike a balance between efficient and effective access to these records and the protection of sensitive information they contain.

To date, approximately half of the states have fashioned policies regarding remote access to electronic court records. Several, including Florida, New Hampshire, Texas and Utah, have pro-

ceedings pending on the topic, with resolution expected later this spring.

Those states that have not yet addressed the issue are almost certain to do so in the near future. Editors must be vigilant for the commencement of these proceedings in their state because, in most cases — the traditionally access-friendly states of Texas and Florida frustratingly fitting this example as we speak — the judicial officials drafting these policies have let unfounded fears that personal privacy will be unduly compromised trump the presumption that the public's records should be open to the greatest extent possible.

The benefits of allowing Internet access to court records are several and varied, affecting all walks of society. The public has a right to be a part of the judicial process and monitor the fairness of its judges and court system in general; remote access permits everyone to participate in this process.

No longer must those in rural parts of a state travel miles to the courthouse to review the records of a given case; citizens with disabilities have the tools to fully participate in their own governance. The benefits even extend to those who are at the courthouse on a regular basis, as they are no longer reliant on the availability of a courthouse employee in order to

obtain a case file. Of course, this also makes for a more efficient government, as courthouse staff are freed up to perform other tasks. For reporters working on deadline, remote access means the ability to double or triple-check a quote from home or the office to ensure accuracy. Even the parties to the case would be hard-pressed to quarrel with increased accuracy.

Specific instances where electronic records have been compiled and reviewed to the public's benefit are well-documented. Electronic records have been used to compare legal trends between jurisdictions to determine how a given state approaches important public issues vis-à-vis the rest of the country.

The records themselves can be mined in a way that reveals malfeasance or inefficiency in the judicial system. For instance, as noted by the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press in its comments on the proposed Texas rules on access to court records, remote access resulted in the following news stories:

■ A January 2004 article in The Denver Post reported that 41 percent of Colorado's child abuse and neglect cases, some of which involved the death of the children involved, resulted from failure by social service agencies to follow up on warnings of potential problems.

■ The Louisville (Ky.) Courier-Journal used a computer analysis of court records to report in October 2003 that Kentucky had more than 2,000

indictments that had been pending for more than three years, with hundreds of other cases dismissed for lack of prosecution.

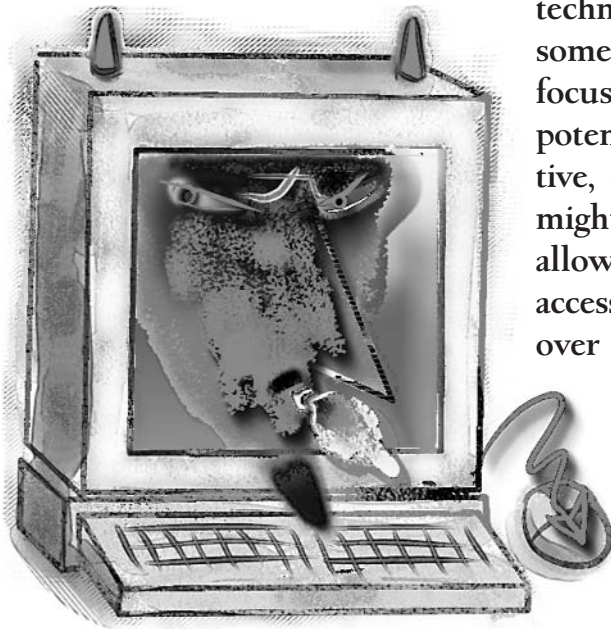
■ An analysis in September 2000 by the Chicago Tribune of 3 million state and federal computer records, including court records, determined that mistakes by nurses had resulted in the accidental death of more than 1,700 people across the United States.

Rather than viewing technology as a boon, some state



Goldberg, an attorney at Cohn and Marks, Washington, is ASNE legal counsel.





**Rather than viewing technology as a boon, some state officials focus only on the potential, but speculative, dangers that might ensue from allowing the public to access court records over the Internet.**

officials focus only on the potential, but speculative, dangers that might ensue from allowing the public to access court records over the Internet.

Despite the fact that state and federal courts have found that there exists a presumptive right of public access to any government records that should only be overcome in limited circumstances involving a demonstrable harm that would ensue from access, many proposed access policies exempt entire classes of documents by rule, often tending to treat electronic records differently from paper records.

A paper record is generally accessible until a court finds, after a hearing and opportunity for arguments against closure, that a specific danger would ensue from releasing the record. Nevertheless, state commissions addressing the future use of court records often propose to restrict access to entire classes of records based upon the medium in which they are available — that is to say, they restrict access to certain classes of records held in electronic format.

For example, the Texas Judicial Council has proposed to restrict access to Family Code records in electronic

format based upon the unfounded fear that “high school students would be able to access the divorce records or custody dispute records of their friends’ parents and display them at school.”

It has also proposed distinct treatment for financial records filed as part of a court case, even though there are no widespread reports of abuse or invasion of privacy in any state that has an established right of access to electronic records.

When financial records are illegally abused, it is often an “inside job” involving someone close to the victim or having legal access to the records. In fact, there is no evidence that any records are remotely searched by anyone that would not already have gone to the courthouse to get the records in person.

These state commissions must understand that there is no justifiable reason for treating electronic records differently than paper records.

Editors must watch for the convening of a judicial commission, panel, committee or other body in their state that will address the future of records policy in the age of technology. They must speak out when comments are

collected and hearings are held. This is because you often get only one bite at the apple — there will be only be one substantial proceeding to draft and enact these rules on access to court records, and it is often very difficult to effect changes to established rules.

Within the sole proceeding in a given state, there may only be a limited comment period and it can be as little as just one public hearing. In the absence of filing official comments, newspaper editors can use the editorials and op-eds to make their views known and educate the public on the benefits of open records.

As United States Senator John Cornyn (R-Texas) wrote in the Fall 2004 edition of the LBJ Journal of Public Affairs, “Our national commitment to democracy and freedom is not merely some abstract notion. It is a very real and continuing effort, and an essential element of that effort is an open and accessible government.”

Perhaps the best support for his statement is a counter-example: On the 1998 ASNE trip to Cuba, our delegation met with Elizardo Sanchez, Director of the Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation, who brought for distribution fifty copies of a four page statement on human rights issues in his country.

Mr. Sanchez made those “copies” by retyping his statement fifty different times, because one tool used by Fidel Castro to stifle dissent is a prohibition on ownership of computers, fax machines and copying machines by members of the general population.

In this way, Castro isolates his citizens from national or international news or opinion that may be critical of his regime. In essence, he has taken them back to the dark ages, when mass media, and the instant interaction it allows, did not exist, allowing power to be more easily centralized.

In the United States, various state judiciaries threaten to keep their citizens in the dark ages with regard to court records. Newspapers should show these governors, and those they govern, the light. ♦

## The election

Seven members will be elected to the 2005-06 Board of Directors during the ASNE convention. Members eligible to vote will find ballots on their registration card.

The ballot box will be at the ASNE convention registration desk until 4 p.m. Thursday, April 14. Winners will be announced later that evening.

● Denotes incumbent

**JIM AMOSS**  
EDITOR  
THE TIMES-PICAYUNE  
NEW ORLEANS

### Aspirations for ASNE

Having grown up in a town that prizes its oddness, I believe newspapers should extol and reflect whatever is local and unique beneath the homogeneous surface of American life. No other medium can offer that as we can. Newspapers should exude a love of the communities in which they're rooted. That doesn't mean an uncritical, boosterish embrace. It does mean a voracious appetite for local news big and small, an ear for rendering local voices and an eye for exposing local corruption. What should ASNE do to further our mission? It should bind us together in common causes; it should bring us together to inspire each other and face the mounting challenges of our business; it should prod us and help us to diversify our newsrooms and our coverage; it should be a force for government openness; it should facilitate the communication of



ideas that work and that help ensure our survival.

### Career

Amoss began his career in 1974 as a reporter at The States-Item, the afternoon daily of New Orleans, his hometown. In 1979, he received a fellowship from Journalistes en Europe for a year of study in Paris. On his return to New Orleans, he worked as an investigative reporter for The Times-Picayune after the morning and afternoon papers merged in 1980. He spent a week pacing up and down a Gulf Coast beach in 1982 before deciding to give up reporting and become a suburban bureau chief for the New Orleans paper. He held a succession of editing jobs – city editor, metro editor – before becoming editor of The Times-Picayune in 1990. In 1997, the National Press Foundation named him Editor of the year. He serves on the Board of Visitors of Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication.

### ASNE activities

Amoss has been a member of ASNE since 1990. He has served on the Diversity and Convention Program committees. He has been a convention floor manager and a judge for the ASNE Awards contest.

**CAESAR ANDREWS**  
EDITOR  
GANNETT NEWS SERVICE

### Aspirations for ASNE

I see ASNE as a source for helping editors think through what newsrooms must do to remain a force in their communities. There is an appetite for both thoughtful analysis on where the industry is headed and practical ideas on getting there.



ASNE should serve as a resource for editors struggling to understand moving targets like audiences, competition and technology.

It ought to provoke editors with insights and ideas for managing and leading newsrooms.

It should continue making a forceful case for diverse talent and diverse news content.

It should provide a strong voice against threats to an aggressive press.

### Career

In 1997, Andrews became editor of Gannett News Service, where he directs wire services for Gannett's 101 daily newspapers from headquarters in Tysons Corner, Va., and a bureau in Washington, D.C.

Previous jobs: senior managing editor for Gannett Suburban Newspapers, Westchester County, N.Y.; executive editor, Rockland Journal-News, West Nyack, N.Y.; executive editor, The Reporter, Lansdale, Pa.; and managing editor, FLORIDA TODAY, Melbourne. He was an editor on the staff launching USA TODAY in 1982.

He started his career as a reporter for TODAY in Brevard County, Fla., and later was an editor for The Tribune, a Gannett weekly started in Cocoa, Fla.

Andrews took leave in 1991 to become editor-in-residence at Grambling State University, his alma



mater in Louisiana.

He's been active in the Associated Press Managing Editors 15 years. He was APME president in 2002 and represents the organization on the national council that accredits college journalism programs.

## ASNE activities

Andrews joined ASNE in 1988. He is the chair of the Ethics and Values Committee. He has also chaired the Management and Human Resources Committee and served on the Awards Board and the American Editor, Convention Program, Diversity, Ethics, Human Resources, Minorities and Nominations committees and the Credibility Think Tank.

AMANDA BENNETT  
EDITOR  
THE PHILADELPHIA  
INQUIRER

## Aspirations for ASNE

I am eager to join the board of ASNE because I fret constantly about our future. I became a journalist in the post-Watergate era, intent, like all 23-year-old journalists at the time, on changing the world. Well, now the world is changing us.



I do not feel that we, as editors, are yet doing enough to help our newspaper industry to seize control of our own destinies. We need to be engaging as many critical minds as possible anywhere we can find them on this topic. We need to engage in not only trying to save and grow our newspapers, but all of the valuable things that go into making a newspaper – the intellectual rigor, the information gathering expertise, the strict ethical codes, the ability to move quickly, think sharply, and provide sorting and context.

We need to value these things

because a new world is rapidly emerging that does not necessarily value sheets of paper, but that can – and should – value all the things that we do that go onto those sheets of paper every day. I think we at ASNE should engage more in envisioning a robust future for the type of journalism we value, even if paper plays a smaller role in that future.

We as an industry are appropriately excellent at self-criticism and we are becoming even better at transparency and self-disclosure. As a recent Knight Foundation survey of high school journalism students showed (that more than a third think the First Amendment goes too far) we have been far less diligent at celebrating and championing everything we do every day that is wonderful, everything we do every day that is the foundation of a free society. We need to do better.

## Career

After a very brief stint at The Ottawa Citizen, in Ottawa, Ontario, in 1975, Bennett worked for the next 23 years at The Wall Street Journal, as a reporter in Toronto, Detroit, Washington, Beijing, New York, and finally as an editor in Atlanta. Bennett joined The Oregonian in Portland, Oregon, in 1998, as Managing Editor, Projects. She became editor of The Lexington Herald-Leader in 2001, and editor of The Philadelphia Inquirer in 2003. Bennett is author, or co-author, of five books of nonfiction. These include *The Quiet Room*, an autobiography of a young woman's journey through schizophrenia; and *The Man Who Stayed Behind*, an autobiography of the only American citizen ever to join the Chinese Communist Party.

## ASNE activities

Bennett joined ASNE in 2000. She has chaired the Readership Issues Committee, was a Convention Floor Manager and has served on the Awards Board and the Leadership Committee.

● SUSAN BISCHOFF  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

## Aspirations for ASNE

The strong voice of ASNE advocating for press freedom, excellence in our papers and diversity needs to be even louder. For editors, ASNE must continue to raise issues and convene forums that develop solutions.



As our newspapers expand their Web presence, publish more niche products and report in additional languages, ASNE's leadership in sharing best practices becomes even more important.

Beyond informing and convening its members, ASNE must build on its renewed relationship with high school and university educators to inspire the print and Web journalists of the future.

## Career

Bischoff is associate editor of the Houston Chronicle. A veteran of the Houston Chronicle, she has been deputy managing editor, assistant managing editor for features, business editor and a reporter in business and metro news. She has been chairman of the Chronicle's Readability Task Force and its New Product Development Committee.

The Indianapolis native was editor of her weekly high school newspaper and the Indiana Daily Student at Indiana University. Her first job was at Congressional Quarterly in Washington, D.C.

She is a past president of the American Association of Sunday and Feature Editors and past officer of the Society of American Business and Economic Writers. She is active in the Texas Associated Press Managing Editors.

## ASNE activities

Bischoff has been a member of ASNE since 1999. She chaired the Education for Journalism Committee and co-chaired The American Editor Committee. She has served on the Awards Board and the Convention Program, Future of Newspapers, High School Journalism and New Media and Values committees.

ELLEN FOLEY  
EDITOR  
WISCONSIN STATE  
JOURNAL  
MADISON

## Aspirations for ASNE

"There is nothing more noble than being a newspaper editor," my former boss Zack Stalberg said to me when I got the top job in Madison. "And the smaller the newspaper, the more noble the job."



The angst about the future of our business has sent spasms through editors' offices in the past year. We wonder if the end of the ink-on-paper world is coming.

ASNE can more keenly tap into the optimism among us little guys. We can change on a dime. Our readers are talking to us every day as we shop in the grocery, attend our congregations and eat lunch at the diner. And those of us in college towns get immediate reactions from large numbers of younger viewers/readers when we experiment with blogs, forums, and other new technology.

The world will not end. But it is changing. ASNE could do worse than embrace the boldness and nobility many smaller markets already practice.

## Career

Foley was named editor of the

Wisconsin State Journal in April, 2004.

She returned to the Midwest after working six years in Philadelphia as the managing editor of the Philadelphia Daily News.

She also held editing positions in Kansas City and Minneapolis.

During her tenure at the Daily News, the paper chose "People Paper" journalism — also known as civic journalism — as a focus. She led initiatives for several new areas of coverage, including enhanced lifestyle coverage in the Yo! section and the unique solutions-focused project aptly named "Rethinking Philadelphia."

She has worked as a news and features reporter and editor for almost 30 years.

She was assistant managing editor for features at the Kansas City Star in the late '90s. She worked as a reporter, assignment editor and copy editor at the Minneapolis Star Tribune for 13 years. She held similar positions at the Milwaukee Sentinel and the Detroit News. She started her career as managing editor of a small daily in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan in the mid-'70s.

In 2003, Foley was elected to the board of directors of the Associated Press Managing Editors. She serves as the co-chair of that organization's membership committee.

She was a member of the board of the Philadelphia Society of Professional Journalists and a member of the board of directors of the Pennsylvania Associated Press Managing Editors.

Foley and her husband, Thomas, have two daughters and live in Madison, Wisconsin. Her hobbies include napping on weekends, driving teenagers to shopping malls and moving.

## ASNE activities

Foley joined ASNE in 1998. She chaired the Convention Floor Managers, and has served on The American Editor, Convention Program, Coverage and Content, Craft Development, Interactive Media, Management and Human Resources and Readership Issues committees.

VICKI GOWLER  
EDITOR  
ST. PAUL (MINN.)  
PIONEER PRESS

## Aspirations for ASNE

My top goals are to focus on rebuilding trust with readers, on diversifying our newsrooms and on identifying the essential information our readers need.



It's been a trying time for mainstream media — with ethics violations, relentless challenges to our definition of objectivity, lack of support for the First Amendment, and the continued explosion of information.

ASNE can play a vital role for all of us if we work together to share best practices, to value quality journalism that is honest, illuminating and, often, unsettling, to support strong leaders and to build understanding of the critical role a free press plays in our democracy.

## Career

Gowler has been in her current position since November 2001. Previously she was the managing editor for four years.

During her time in St. Paul, Gowler helped supervise coverage of the University of Minnesota academic fraud story and the election and tenure of the ever newsworthy Jesse Ventura.

Gowler is a member of the boards of the Minnesota News Council, of the Minnesota Media Collaborative (which helps identify, train and track high school minority students into college and the workforce) and of the University of Minnesota's Journalism Center. Previously she was on the board of Kids Voting Minnesota.

Gowler has been in Knight Ridder since 1978, spending 10 years at the Miami Herald, working as a reporter and then editor. She went to the Knight Ridder Washington bureau in 1988, running the 1992 presidential campaign cov-



erage. She went to Duluth in 1993 as executive editor.

Gowler grew up on a corn and soybean farm in central Illinois. She has seven nieces and nephews and four great-nieces and great-nephews.

## ASNE activities

Gowler joined ASNE in 1994. She has chaired the Convention Floor Managers, and the Ethics and Values Committee. Gowler has served as an election judge and been on the Change and Readership Issues committees.

**TERRY GREENBERG**  
EDITOR  
THE PANTAGRAPH,  
BLOOMINGTON, ILL.

## Aspirations for ASNE

We can take great pride in what ASNE has done over the past years on credibility, content, diversity, freedom of information, leadership and other issues that address our core values. When speaking to community groups, I routinely mention ASNE and its initiatives. Some people in those audiences are pleasantly surprised because it doesn't fit with what they read and hear about the media. ASNE should continue to lead in these areas, but we should be more aggressive in helping editors communicate to readers all the great things we do in our communities.

## Career

Greenberg became editor of The Pantagraph in 2002. Before that, the Southern California native was editor of The Truth, in Elkhart, Ind. Most of his career has been spent in Southern California, where he's served as editor or managing editor of daily newspapers in Thousand Oaks, Pasadena and Redlands.

He also served as editor of the Minot Daily News in North Dakota in the mid-'80s, assistant news editor of the Orange County Register in the late '80s and as managing editor of the San Mateo Times in the San Francisco Bay area in the mid-'90s. He is past president of the Indiana Associated Press Managing Editors and president-elect of the Illinois Associated Press Editors Association.

## ASNE activities

Greenberg joined ASNE in 1995. He was a Convention Floor Manager and has served on the Change, Craft Development, Leadership, Management and Human Resources, Readership Issues and Small Newspapers committees.

**J. FORD HUFFMAN**  
DEPUTY MANAGING  
EDITOR/  
GRAPHICS AND  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
USA TODAY

## Aspirations for ASNE

As an editor who's worked at both small (12,000 daily) and large (2.4 million daily) newspapers, I'm eager to help ASNE provide opportunities and resources for member editors:

- to better understand the under-represented staffers in their newsrooms and potential staffers outside.

- to better understand the under-covered readers and non-readers who are not currently in their news pages.

How?

- In convention programs, continuing to try to promote topics that connect:

- a. With editors' and readers' "take home" needs in tangible and creative ways.

- b. With editors' desires to be challenged by non-traditional formats and ideas.

- In the ongoing efforts to:

- a. Included all journalists and readers of diversity in daily newspapering and newspapers' content and presentation.

- b. Make readers excited about what they might find relevant to their lives in the daily newspapers available to them.

- c. Find out why some newspaper editors choose not to be involved in ASNE.

## Career

Huffman's current responsibilities include recommending Page One art and design.

He helped develop the prototypes of USA TODAY in 1981, was a Life content editor at the startup in 1982, and a member on the New Media Task Force exploring Gannett online options in 1984.

Before returning to USA TODAY in 1999, he was a managing editor at Gannett News Service, including its 40,000-graphic Gannett Graphics Network, for 13 years, managing editor at the morning Democrat and Chronicle in Rochester, N.Y., in 1986, and managing editor of the afternoon Times-Union in Rochester 1984-86. His first job was general-assignment reporting at the Wheeling (W.Va.) News-Register.

He has been invited to more than 50 Gannett newsrooms to advise on presentation, including the Military Times newspapers that he helped redesign in 1999.

He has led discussions at workshops everywhere from Halifax, Nova Scotia, and San Jose, Costa Rica, for the Society for News Design Quick Course program, to Warsaw, Poland, and Budapest, Hungary, for the Freedom Forum.

He has taught at the American Press and Poynter institutes and at Miami, American, West Virginia and South Dakota State universities, and is a past director of NLGJA.

He's a former two-term president of the 250-member D.C. Front Runners and has run in 14 marathons. The U.S. Marine Corps selected his illustration as the 2004 marathon's image.



## ASNE activities

Huffman joined ASNE in 1984. He has served on the Convention Program, Design and Presentation and Nominations committees.

DAVE OFFER  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR  
CENTRAL MAINE  
NEWSPAPERS  
AUGUSTA

## Aspirations for ASNE

ASNE should be the voice of journalism both within our craft and to the public.

We should exemplify and explain the ethical and professional standards that are the key to credibility. ASNE should be a clear voice for integrity in every newsroom.

ASNE must remain a leading voice for open government at all levels.

We must continue and strengthen our commitment to diversity in our newsrooms, seeking innovative ways to turn diversity goals into reality.

We should use our meetings, our committees and our magazine to share best practices with each other, looking for better ways to serve readers.

We should continue to inspire each other, never forgetting the ideals that led us to spend our lives in this rewarding, challenging craft.

## Career

Offer became executive editor of newspapers in Augusta and Waterville, Maine, in October 2002. In 2000, after 13 years as editor of The Newport (R.I.) Daily News, he became executive editor of the military newspaper, Stars and Stripes. He resigned after four months to protest censorship at the newspaper.

He was out of work for 18 months before accepting the job in Maine. Earlier, he was a reporter at The Wenatchee (Wash.) Daily World, the

Hartford (Conn.) Courant and the Milwaukee Journal. He was managing editor of the La Crosse (Wis.) Tribune for eight years before moving to Newport. He was a director of the Associated Press Managing Editors for nine years, and served as national treasurer. He was chair of the APME Small Newspapers Committee for three years. He is past president of the New England Associated Press News Executives Association.

## ASNE activities

Offer joined ASNE in 1988. He is co-chair of the Campfire Committee. He has chaired the Small Newspapers Committee and served on the Craft Development and Leadership committees.

CHRIS PECK  
EDITOR  
THE COMMERCIAL  
APPEAL  
MEMPHIS, TENN.

## Aspirations for ASNE

Saving journalism.

That's what I think ASNE should be about.

To paraphrase blues legend Robert Johnson, I think journalism stands at the crossroad.

Our mission remains as important as ever: inform readers so they can make good decisions about their lives and communities.

But how?

Will we continue to be an ink-on-paper medium? Will we migrate to the Web? Will we survive on advertising? Or circulation? Or something else?

This generation of newspaper editors must answer these questions. We're on the hook for finding a way to preserve our core values, even as we relentlessly make progress toward a reinvented and renewed concept for our newsrooms.

ASNE can, and must, focus attention

on the future of our business. ASNE is a place where harried editors can find the inspiration to change newsroom culture, create new content and strengthen connections to new communities, which will be essential to journalism's future.

I'd like to help ASNE do that.

## Career

Peck joined The Commercial Appeal as editor in December 2002. He oversees all news and editorial operations for the Scripps-owned newspaper, which was founded in 1838 and is the oldest continuously operated business in Memphis.

In the year before moving to Memphis, Peck spent a year as the first Belo Distinguished Chair of Journalism at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. He helped launch SMU's convergence journalism program.

Before his adventure in academia, Peck was editor of The Spokesman-Review in Spokane, Wash., for 19 years. Peck wrote a book about his life as a columnist for the newspaper.

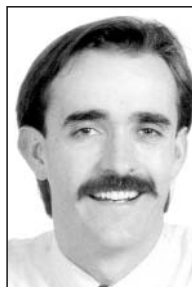
Peck grew up in a newspaper family in Wyoming. His first job was as a janitor for the family newspaper. Today, his father and brother still publish the daily Riverton Ranger.

Peck worked four years for The Stanford Daily in college. He attended the Northwestern University's Advanced Executive Program for journalists. He has been a regular presenter at the Poynter Institute in programs related to diversity coverage and leadership.

He is a past president of APME. He was co-founder of the APME National Credibility Roundtables Project, which has helped more than 100 newspapers host local discussions about newspaper credibility.

## ASNE activities

Peck joined ASNE in 1987. He has chaired the Wire Content and Ethics and Values committees and co-chaired The American Editor Committee. He has been a Convention Floor Manager.





He has also served on the Awards Board, The Bulletin Editorial Board and the Freedom of Information and Prison Journalism committees.

● **SHARON ROSENHAUSE**  
MANAGING EDITOR  
SOUTH FLORIDA SUN-  
SENTINEL  
FORT LAUDERDALE

## Aspirations for ASNE

■ ASNE should be the industry leader in helping newspaper editors reflect our changing communities. This is hard, often frustrating, work. Yet, diversifying our content and staff is the most important and most difficult challenge we face. Let's all support the new ASNE Diversity Leadership Institute which is making a difference.

■ ASNE should lead the fight for public access and open government, which are under siege at every level of government.

■ ASNE editors should encourage young high school and college journalists by serving as mentors, providing intern opportunities and an open environment in which they can learn and grow.

## Career

Rosenhouse joined the South Florida Sun-Sentinel as managing editor in March, 2001. The New York native has also worked at the Bergen (N.J.) Record, Los Angeles Times, New York Daily News, San Francisco Examiner and San Francisco Chronicle. Rosenhouse is a former board member of the Associated Press Managing Editors, the Journalism and Women Symposium and the California Society of Newspaper Editors. She is a current board member of the Florida Society of Newspaper Editors.



## ASNE activities

Rosenhouse joined ASNE in 1994. She will chair the Diversity Committee in 2005-06. She has co-chaired The American Editor Committee. She has been a Convention Floor Manager and has served on the Awards Board and the Diversity, Convention Program and New Media and Values committees.

**MARK SILVERMAN**  
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER  
THE DETROIT NEWS

## Aspirations for ASNE

ASNE has the opportunity to play two critical roles that are linked.

Government secrecy and manipulation of information threaten our liberty. It is incumbent upon newspapers and newspaper editors to defend the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment. That entails aggressive news coverage. But it also requires us to grow readership and improve our credibility with readers. If people don't read us (in print and on line) - and if they don't believe us and trust our motives - all of our crusading will go for naught.

ASNE can help editors and their newspapers develop approaches to hold and grow readership in print and on the Web and build credibility with our communities, and it also can serve as a rallying point in our industry's defense of the public's right to know.

## Career

Silverman began his career as a reporter for the Telegram in Worcester, Mass. He moved to the Miami Herald as an editor in the newspaper's Broward County bureau. He then joined the Providence (R.I.) Journal-Bulletin where he worked as news editor, Sunday edi-



tor, and managing editor for editing operations.

He left Providence to join the Gannett Company as senior managing editor of Gannett Suburban Newspapers in Westchester County, N.Y. Then he became executive editor of the Rockford, Ill., Register-Star.

Silverman then joined Gannett's corporate staff to lead the company's NEWS 2000 program, the forerunner to many industry-wide readership initiatives developed since the early 1990s. He left the corporate assignment to become executive editor of the Courier-Journal in Louisville, Ky.

In Detroit he helped heal labor wounds while rejuvenating the newspaper's public service coverage, growing suburban coverage, and developing several readership initiatives.

Silverman is a member of the board of directors of FACS.

## ASNE activities

Silverman joined ASNE in 1987. He has served on the Change, Convention Program, Freedom of Information, Future of Newspapers, Human Resources, Marketing and Circulation, Partnerships and Circulation and Readership Issues committees.

**KEN TINGLEY**  
MANAGING EDITOR  
THE POST-STAR  
GLENS FALLS, N.Y.

## Aspirations for ASNE

Above all else, ASNE needs to continue to grow as a force in journalism to represent the interests of all editors. That can best be done by expanding the organization's reach into the ranks of the smaller newspapers. Right now ASNE's membership is limited among newspapers with a circulation under 75,000. Some of those editors simply cannot afford to



be part of the organization. Others believe it to be an organization for larger newspapers. Those are important issues that ASNE needs to embrace if it hopes to continue to grow and thrive in the years ahead.

As a member of the Convention Program committee for the past five years, I have tried to be a consistent advocate for small newspapers so that their concerns and problems are also part of the learning equation at each convention. We need to reach out to the newspapers that could most use the organization's help.

### Career

Tingley was named to the top newsroom position at The Post-Star in January, 1999. He had previously worked as the sports editor there since 1988 and before that at newspapers in Kingsport, Tenn., Oneonta, N.Y., Plattsburgh, N.Y. and Ashland, Ky. Tingley previously has been active with the Associated Press Sports Editors and spent one year as APSE's Fourth Vice President and two years as the Third Vice President.

### ASNE activities

Tingley joined ASNE in 2000. He is chair of the Small Newspapers Committee and has served on the Convention Program Committee.

### ● JULIA WALLACE

#### EDITOR

THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION

### Aspirations for ASNE

We need ASNE to be a strong voice. We need to speak out about the importance of a free press and open government in our democracy. We need to continue the conversation with readers on credibility.



We need to constantly explain to politicians, community leaders and readers what we do and why. And we need to engage ASNE members in a dialogue and exchange of ideas on the changing media landscape. Youth products. Online channels. Spanish language publications. Readership trends. We need to share our knowledge so we can learn from one another.

### Career

Wallace was an intern at the Atlanta Journal when she was told to get some experience and maybe she could come back. Twenty-three years later, she did. After stints in Norfolk, Va., and Dallas, she joined USA Today in 1982. She spent 10 years there, working in news, sports and special projects. She was managing editor of the Chicago Sun-Times from 1992-96. Next, she moved to Salem, Ore. as executive editor of the Statesman Journal and then on to Phoenix, where she was managing editor of the Arizona Republic. She returned to Atlanta in 2001 as managing editor and became editor in July 2002. Since then, she has focused on improving print readership and gaining dominance online.

### ASNE activities

Wallace joined ASNE in 1989. She is co-chair of The American Editor Committee. She has chaired the Literacy Committee and been a Convention Floor Manager. She has also served on the Convention Program, Diversity, Future of Newspapers, Membership, New Media and Nominations committees.

# Spider-Man is catch of the day

BY TERRY HEADLEE

One of our newsroom's copy editors recently caught the misspelling of Spider-Man in a news story being edited for publication in our newspaper.

I would have bet almost anything that Spider-Man was spelled like Superman — as one word without the hyphen.

But it's not.

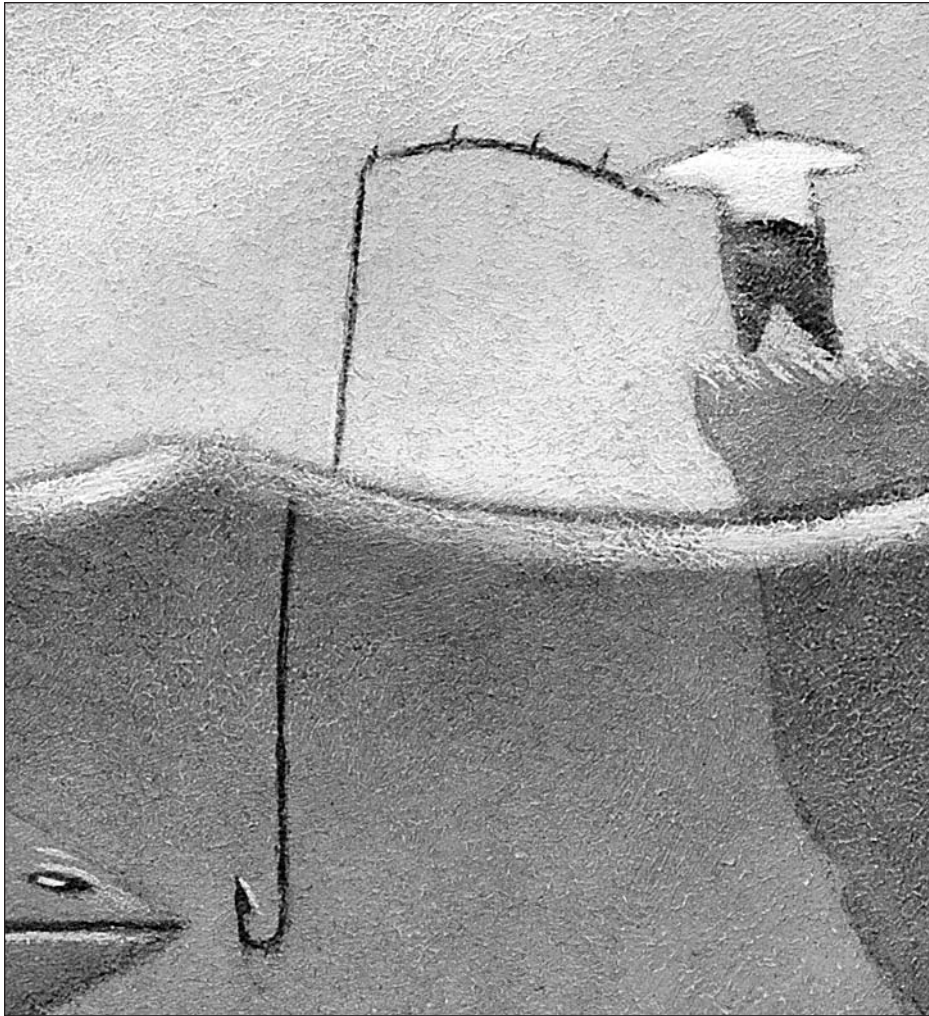
The copy editor that night correctly placed a hyphen in the word and then — and I found this more incredible — made the "m" uppercase. The change was logged into an e-mail sent to me each night for inclusion in a daily memo called "Catch of the Day."

"Catch of the Day" actually is a compilation of mistakes in grammar, punctuation, style and spelling that our copy desk editors catch once reporters file their stories each night. It's a valuable learning tool that we borrowed from a Florida newspaper last June to give all staff members a daily lesson on grammar and accuracy.

The beauty of this training tool is that it is inexpensive and effective — if staff members read it religiously. It gives immediate feedback to both editors and reporters. More importantly it gives the copy desk the credit it deserves for the multiple catches that editors make each night.

I read the "catches" each morning (they are compiled and sent to me via e-mail by the managing editor), review the brief explanations from copy editors on why a specific change or correction





was made, then send the entire list out in an e-mail to everyone in our newsroom. Printouts are also posted in three locations in the newsroom.

Our copy desk makes some fairly amazing catches each day, but for some reason, the “Spider-Man” reference floored me on this particular morning.

“That can’t possibly be right,” I remembered saying out loud as I grabbed the Associated Press Stylebook (our authoritative source on such weighty issues).

The Spider-Man reference wasn’t in there — though Wal-Mart was (note the hyphen and uppercase “M”) as well as Kmart (no hyphen, no space, lowercase “m”).

So I did the next best thing — I grabbed our Sunday comics section.

“Well, shoot,” I said.

There it was — a hyphenated word. Actually, it’s technically “The Amazing Spider-Man,” but no point in quibbling

with too many details at this point.

I guess part of the explanation — and I’ll spread the blame around on this one — is that I’ve seen the word spelled wrong so many times through the years (including on the boxes of the video games and action figures; check it out sometime) that I just assumed that it was right.

And that is what makes our job in the newspaper industry difficult and why a training tool like “Catch of the Day” can be so valuable.

Take the word “nonprofit.” Note there is no hyphen, even when used in a sentence to modify the word “organization.”

That’s because under the so-called rules of prefixes that we follow, you generally only use a hyphen when the last

letter of the prefix ends with a vowel and the first letter of the following word begins with the same vowel. That’s why re-elect is hyphenated and rebuild is not.

Still, many of the press releases sent to newspapers from nonprofit organizations include a hyphen and thus, occasionally, the word nonprofit will be punctuated wrong in our newspaper.

Like most newspapers, we choose to generally follow AP style at our newspaper, which means a word or phrase will be in contradiction with most dictionaries.

For example, words such as fundraiser and work place are both one word in the dictionary, but not in newspapers that follow AP style.

Just trying to keep it straight as to whether a word is one word, two words, or hyphenated can be complicated for reporters and editors.

For example, under AP style, firetruck is one word, not two. Pickup — as in pickup truck — is not hyphenated and neither is sport utility vehicle. Part-time is either hyphenated or two words, depending on whether you use it as an adjective (“a part-time job”) or an adverb

(“She works part time.”)

As you can imagine, these examples will show up a lot in our daily “Catch of the Day.” I always seem to get confused with all right, which is never spelled “alright” — though I should point out that Webster’s lists alright in its dictionary, but does note it is a “disputed” spelling. The AP Stylebook notes that you can stick a hyphen in all-right if used colloquially as a compound modifier: “He is an all-right guy.”

Anyhow, that’s why we started “Catch of the Day” — to help keep all of this straight and to correct the conventional wisdom when it’s wrong. And since we are in the business of publishing thousands of words and sentences each day, we need to get it right the first time. ♦



Headlee is executive editor of *The Herald-Mail* in Hagerstown, Md. His e-mail address is [terryh@herald-mail.com](mailto:terryh@herald-mail.com).

# Calendar

April 5-6 Readership Training Seminar, Miami

April 12-15 ASNE Convention, JW Marriott Hotel, Washington

April 28-29 — Readership Training Seminar, Madison, Wis.

June 12-17 Institute for Journalism Excellence orientation,

American Press Institute, Reston, Va.

July 11-12 Readership Training Seminar, Austin, Texas

Aug. 8-9 Institute for Journalism Excellence debriefing, San Antonio

Sept. 13-14 Readership Training Seminar, Roanoke, Va.

Sept. 15-17 ASNE Board of Directors fall meeting, Sacramento, Calif.

Sept. 19-20 Readership Training Seminar, Memphis, Tenn.

Oct. 4-5 Readership Training Seminar, Portland, Ore.



## The American Editor®

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### ASNE HEADQUARTERS

**Address:** 11690B Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, VA 20191-1409

**Telephone:** 703/453-1122

### Executive Director

Scott Bosley  
703/453-1120  
sbosley@asne.org  
**Diversity Director**  
Bobbi Bowman  
703/453-1126  
bowmanb@asne.org  
**Senior Project Director**  
Diana Mitsu Klos  
703/453-1125  
dmk@asne.org

### Online Director

Craig Branson  
703/453-1123  
cbranson@asne.org  
**Communications Director**  
Kevin Wilcox  
703/453-1132  
kwilcox@asne.org  
**Project Director**  
Cristal Williams  
703/453-1138  
cwilliams@asne.org  
**Project Coordinator**  
Connie Southard  
703/453-1135  
csouthard@asne.org  
**Finance/Membership Manager**  
Chris Schmitt  
703/453-1128  
cschmitt@asne.org  
**Publications Assistant/Systems Manager**  
Suzanne Martin  
703/453-1124  
scj@asne.org  
**Assistant to the Executive Director and Meetings Coordinator**  
Alison Wilcox  
703/453-1121  
awilcox@asne.org

### Legal Counsel

Kevin Goldberg  
Cohn and Marks  
1920 N Street N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
202/452-4840  
kevingoldberg@cohnmarks.com



# Having it all?

*Continued from Page 7.*

some things will stick with it long enough to truly change newsroom culture. Or, to put it differently, not enough editors will do what's necessary to help women stay in newsrooms and advance.

"It's not just her paying her dues, it's investing in her over her career," Miller says. That means being flexible when she has children, "working with her over the next 10 years."

Miller's advice to top editors: "Ask if you're really helping people develop. Take a critical look at the culture — determine if this is a place people want to

work. Be a results-watcher, not a clock watcher — if she leaves at 5, ask yourself when she came in."

To women: "Work hard — you have to have equity before you can ask for flextime. Take advantage of the 24-7 aspect of newsrooms — there are always some hours you can work. Look for ways you can help — it's not just what the company can do for you. Don't be afraid to suggest a solution — ask if you can try it for three months."

Miller and others are concerned that the pace of change is lagging. "Yes, we have more women than ever in schools," she says, "but fewer of them are going into newspapers."

Nicholson points to studies showing that women are underrepresented on media boards of directors, and that 64

percent of women journalists who feel blocked from advancing believe sexism is a reason.

And yet, and yet ... 2005 is still a better time than any other to be a woman in newsrooms. Women are top editors in Chicago, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Detroit. There are more women publishers whose social networks include female candidates to be editors.

Fisher, the anthropologist, urges perspective: "We've actually made a lot of progress ... or I wouldn't be in the position I'm in, and you wouldn't be asking me these questions."

"Eventually, newspapers will figure it out. They'll have to, because it's good business. When both men and women are at the top, together they can be very powerful." ♦

# Taking risks

*Continued from Page 19.*

already published a booklet on Arab Americans and the community. It became a much sought-after resource in our industry that week, and we still get requests for it.

**Q. Newspapers are in a constant struggle to hire and retain journalists of color. You run an ambitious recruiting and staff development program. Talk about the advantage that gives you.**

A. Turnover among journalists of color is high. We have lost many good people to the nation's biggest newspapers. And as some of those companies that have been slow to truly diversify their staffs begin to solve that problem, they recruit our best people. We need to be able to prove to those employees that they have more than just a job here; they have career opportunities. I believe in the business case for diversity; I know how important it is in this community. Not long ago, we beat a lot of other media on access to a very important interview on a national story because the man didn't speak English and our reporter was able to interview him in Arabic. That's simply getting the job done.

**Q. Why is it important to have one person — in this case Joe Grimm, director of recruiting — out there looking for people even during a job freeze?**

A. In order to keep a talented and diverse staff, we have to always be recruiting, whether we're hiring or not. When we have an opening, we expect department heads and the recruiter to have a list of names, and we expect there to be diversity among those names. When we started hiring again,

we were able to move quickly. In more than one case, that kept us from losing to another newspaper going after the same candidate. But I don't think that's only Joe's responsibility. I expect department heads and senior management here to always be recruiting as well.

**Q. What now keeps you awake at night regarding where the newspaper industry is heading?**

A. The persistent decline in readership of daily newspapers and the questions about just what sort of dramatic change it will take to stem that. I'm willing to make big changes, I just want to make the right ones.

**Q. What makes you feel optimistic?**

A. People haven't abandoned reading; there is still great enjoyment in the printed word, and it's still the best advertising vehicle out there. I'm not sure print journalists took as much pride as they should've in the fact that Wal-Mart was forced to jump into newspaper advertising in December to perk up holiday sales. I think we can be players in multiple formats and still inform, educate and entertain a lot of readers. ♦

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# ASNE Convention 2005



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- Floyd Abrams on FOI
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