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**A WRITER'S LAMENT** ■ "On Monday morning I swanned cheerfully into the coalface, virtuous as can be, and deposited not 44.9 cms, not 45.1 cms, but 45 cms right on the nose into the awaiting electronic desk. To improve the shining hour I even popped my head past the door of the page editor, a curmudgeonly character who had once been a big-shot somewhere and was now resentfully working out the hours until he qualified for a pension." ■ **SEE PAGE 6**

# Nine on Ten

No. 2, 1997

A publication for clients and friends of News Design Associates Inc.

## I'll say that again ...

*"Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press and that cannot be limited without being lost. When the press is free, and every man is able to read, all is safe." — Thomas Jefferson, 1787*

*"Nothing can now be believed which is seen in a newspaper. Truth itself becomes suspicious by being put into that polluted vehicle... I will add that the man who never looks into a newspaper is better informed than he who reads them; inasmuch as he who knows nothing is nearer to the truth than he whose mind is filled with falsehoods and errors." — Thomas Jefferson, 1807*



Richard Smallbone

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Why?  
Why not!

Why do you do it? is the question people most often ask when I give them copies of

*Nine on Ten*, *Ragged Right*, *ColdType*, *Dogsleg*, *Review* or the other media publications I've produced over the years.

"Why don't you charge for them?" is usually the second question.

The answer to the first is simple: I develop and design other people's publications for a living, and it's great *fun* (and marvelous therapy) to produce my own as well, unimpeded by the need to satisfy anyone other than myself.

The second question is more difficult, but I think the answer is similar: It's also *fun* to give people a publication that will interest, amuse and probably help them do their job better.

Tony Sutton  
Editor

PS. Thanks to editor Ed Cassavoy and publisher Steve Rhodes, of the *Guelph Mercury* for printing this issue.



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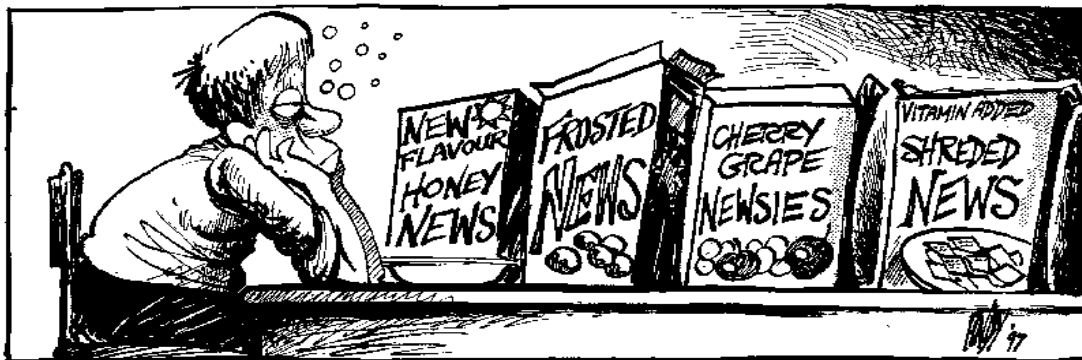
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David Anderson

## OPINION / Ted Pease

## Extra! Extra! News is dead

*News must compete for our attention with (and increasingly be like) everything from game shows to cartoons to MTV in the cacophony of the information age*

The big news as we move toward the end of the century may be an obituary: is news dead? Some think so. The irony of the "information age," according to some smart people who spend a lot of time thinking about these things, is that so-called information has drowned out knowledge, and news of the world around us has been swamped by mere data. Ironically, in this glut of information, we may know less, not more about our world. At the very least, surely we know more things with less certainty than we used to.

One of the smart people who ponder such things is Robert MacNeil, who, as half of the *MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour* tagteam on PBS until his retirement, is one of the most respected newsmen in the country. The end of this millennium, MacNeil says, may be bringing with it "the end of news as we know it."

The problem, say MacNeil and others, is that we've confused more with better in the information age. On the one hand, in a nation such as ours that purports at least to function for and because of an informed citizenry, there cannot be such a thing as "too much" knowledge. But that's different from too much information, because in this glut of information most of us have lost the ability to distinguish between noise and fact.

The problem is the quality of the messenger. As *Newsweek* magazine warned, "The Internet is not a news service. Read what's there with care, and be your own editor."

But most Americans aren't equipped to be their own editors. When confronted by 100 cable channels and the infinity of interactive sources on the Net, how are we poor mortals supposed to know what to believe? In the old days (say, 1990), we could turn to sources that had been proven reliable — The New York Times or PBS or our local newspaper — to sift the day's events and, as one commission on press performance once put it, offer the news of the day in a context that gave it meaning. But no more. News must compete for our attention with (and increasingly be like) everything from game shows to cartoons to MTV in the cacophony of the information age.

"News as we know it is already changing so rapidly that it could be said to be ending," MacNeil told a college audience in South Dakota last fall. "By news as we know it, I mean news produced by institutions practicing journalism more or less observant of standard codes of good journalistic behavior, journalism treated, if not as a learned profession, at least as an honorable and respected craft with an important role to play in the democracy."

Most of what we hear and see and take as news really isn't, at least not in the way MacNeil learned and practiced it, and not in the way that journalism schools teach it. The reason is that news is defined in the public's mind in the context of all "media" — which can mean anything from the Internet to talk shows to CNN, which brings you its version of news all the time, or the

other two all-news networks: MSNBC and Fox News. Not that these organizations don't have plenty of journalistic savvy, but they are driven not by events, but by a need to connect to audiences.

CNN learned that lesson — and taught us to become salivating "news" junkies — during the Gulf War, which it played like a made-for-TV docudrama to keep us glued to our screens. And then came O.J. "The O.J. Simpson story was hyped, hyperventilated and blown out of all proportion," MacNeil says (among others). "The obsession paid off financially. One report estimated that the Simpson coverage goosed CNN's ratings to an extent that raised profits by an additional \$70 million in one quarter."

For many, this is a perfectly appropriate result of supply and demand: O.J. was what viewers wanted, and so why shouldn't someone give it to them? But one unintended outcome, as MacNeil points out, is a growing lack of credibility for news as a whole when journalists must chase ratings and the "hot story" to the exclusion of other things going on in the world.

"What clearly drives the news media today at a time of greatly increased competition is the desire to entertain," MacNeil says. "Pushing confrontation, contention, hostility as an entertainment value in news disguises for millions of ordinary people what the reality is... We should not let the media's hunger for ratings convince us that danger, crime, horror, anger, fury [and] madness outweigh civility."

And, because such "news" is available to us all the time, every second, day or night — news on demand on CNN or MSNBC or Fox News, or on their Internet pages ([www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com), [www.msnbc.com](http://www.msnbc.com) and [www.foxnews.com](http://www.foxnews.com)) — we come to expect news and events to come to us, rather than the other way around. We expect the news to be entertaining and exciting and want to create our own "newscasts" from the wealth of Internet sources, made up of items that fit our tastes. The Net offers "self-serve news," as MacNeil observes, "and no one really knows where it is going to lead journalism."

But how well equipped are most citizens to filter the flood of information now available? Who can serve the gatekeeping function, separating fact from fiction and reliable information from hype, which was once a service offered by journalists like Robert MacNeil, but is now left up to individual tastes? "Who will set the standards by which news is defined, gathered, processed and disseminated?" MacNeil asks. Where these used to be the role of the journalists, now we are left to our own devices, and market forces, to make sense of the world. The irony of the great wealth of information and communication offered by new technologies is that instead of deeper knowledge, they have brought us a shallower understanding of each other and the world around us. ☺

Ted Pease is professor of Journalism at Utah State University at Ogden.

HUMOR / Del Stone Jr.

# Alert! Marketing director on the prowl

*She snarls, slashes out with her claws and brings down an editor who must then lead the tour group around the room, explaining in five minutes what hundreds of years of evolution have brought into existence: the modern newspaper*

It is a drama as old and perverse as life itself. There we are, herds of journalists, peacefully roaming the savannah of our newsroom, squabbling amongst ourselves, girding for the daily migration to lunch, jockeying for breeding rights — doing the things God or the devil put us on this earth to do.

Suddenly, everyone freezes. Heads go up. Eyes track to the door. A cry of alarm. It's the marketing director. She's leading a tour group.

We stampede, the thunder of our Rockports shaking the ceiling in the advertising department (as if they would notice). Our eyes are shot with panic and foam flecks our lips as we trample each other for the exit. But the marketing director is a cagey old pro. She snarls and slashes out with her claws and brings down one of our older, weaker members — an editor — who must then lead the tour group around the room, explaining in five minutes what hundreds of years of evolution have brought into existence: the modern newspaper.

Darwin chose the wrong island. But the process works regardless, as was demonstrated recently when our marketing director snagged the executive editor, the managing editor and me for a lunchtime confabulation with members of a local chamber of commerce leadership group.

And truth is, O'Henry's Rule of Predation yet prevails: the stranger



Alex Green

the players, the more likely it is the hunter will become the hunted.

As we editors huddle in the corner like pale, boneless creatures exposed by having our rock overturned, one of the visitors asks the executive editor if he thinks the Internet will do away with newspapers.

Oh no, the editor bravely responds. The printed product and the electronic product will operate hand-in-hand to provide our customers with information, but never will the day rise when the printed

product disappears.

This is where it gets perverse.

The editor, who should know better, glances my way and says, "But I think Del has a different opinion." Yes, Del has a different opinion. And the Pope goes to church on Sunday.

At this point, the marketing director — the publisher's wife, who is the newspaper's liaison with the schools — leans forward in anticipation.

"Not only will the Internet put newspapers out of business," I be-

gin, "but it will happen faster than anyone believes."

Eyebrows arch. I nod gravely as I launch into the body of my soliloquy, which goes something like this:

"The Internet — more correctly, the World Wide Web — is the only media form that offers the permanence and depth of newspapers, the allure of TV and the interactivity of a computer. Nobody will want to read newspapers when they've got access to the Web, and here's why."

*(Frowny faces big time.)*

"The Web is dynamic. It operates on motion and sound. Plus, the Web's information resources are practically limitless. And, the reader can get news from the source itself, not an intermediary."

*(Big, nasty, frowny faces.)*

"The obstacles to this happening can and are being solved by technology. For example, one day soon we'll have a flexible, flat computer screen that can be rolled up, folded, or otherwise treated like a piece of paper. We'll have wireless 'modems' that transfer data instantly. We'll have computers with terabytes of storage that process at gigahertz speeds, and they'll fit in the palm of your hand."

*(Certain former predators are wearing that Hey-Wait-A-Minute-What-Did-I-Bite-Into? expression.)*

"Information-gathering will be a snap with electronic proxies, or 'agents' that, given as many parameters as you care to assign, collect the information, sort it, even edit

and present it to you."

*(The marketing director uses her finger to make a sawing motion across her throat.)*

"People won't even read anymore. They'll have computer-generated pseudo-personas that'll narrate everything to them."

*(Is that a chicken bone she's choking on?)*

"Who'd want to read a stinky, inky old newspaper when a nice, clean, fast and bright World Wide Web is there at your fingertips?"

GAAAAHHHHHH!

The marketing director wails, "BUT DON'T STOP ADVERTISING WITH US! THE NEWSPAPER WILL STILL BE HERE!"

At this point the executive editor wades in with balms and soporifics and clarifications that calms the herd and sets them back to grazing on their sandwiches and pizza, and afterwards there's nary a blip on the ad revenue charts for the month.

But these days, when the marketing director heads toward the newsroom with a tour group, some of us don't run so fast. Because now we know that Darwin had a sense of humor. A perverse sense of humor. And we have seen the light — it's that flat-screen glow at the bottom of the bird cage. ☺

*When Del Stone Jr. isn't surfing the Web for new and ever more terrifying reasons to avoid work, he passes himself off as the AME for the Northwest Florida Daily News in Fort Walton Beach, Florida.*

CONTENT / Tony Sutton

## Words of wisdom from a smart newslady

Someone, much smarter than me, once said the sole criteria for content, whether it be for a newspaper, magazine or Web site, is INTEREST.

"Make it interesting," she said, "and they will come... That's all there is to it; don't waste money on market research, sack the reader panel. Just do it..." (She also does a pretty neat job of expropriating other people's slogans).

Okay, lady, give me details, be

more specific, I say.

"Do I really have to spell it out for you?" she replies. "That's the trouble with you newspaper folk; you've got no imagination, you spend too much time cribbing each other's ideas."

A few more home truths and she's down to the nitty gritty:

"The front page should be captivating, informative and surprising, with news that readers didn't see on TV the previous day. Tell them

things they don't know about events that affect their lives, nationally and locally. Give 'em a bit of background with a feature-type story, add a picture that stops them in their tracks and, for God's sake, make them smile — humor's part of the mix.

"When it comes to local news, don't bore readers with mind-numbing detail from every council meeting and don't profile every civic dignitary. Produce stories about ordinary people who've done some-

thing interesting or with something worthwhile to say. Be a champion of your readers: take their side in disputes with authority, help them with their problems, honor their achievements — show them you care.

"Feature pages? Simple. Make them interesting and, hopefully, indispensable. You can't fool readers with marvellous design, a great piece of art and 12 inches of mundane drivel from a wire agency.

They won't be impressed. Honest!

"What? Now you want to know about sports pages? You're asking the wrong lady. It's all a mystery to me. Ask my brother.

"You know what I'm going to say next, don't you. The key to success is to be a reader; ask yourself what you'd like to see if you were a reader. Then go out and produce that newspaper."

See, it's easy when you know the right people. ☺



**TYPOGRAPHY** / *Allan Haley*

# No. 1 with a bullet

*When placed before copy, these devices say "stop and read this!"*

Sometimes letters are not enough. Perhaps you've tried changing not-to-be-missed text to bold or italic type, or even to a different face altogether, but it still doesn't have the exact amount of emphasis you need. One solution to this typographic problem: use a bullet, box, or dingbat.

Bullets aren't dangerous; they're simply round dots. They can be solid or just an outline, and come in two standard sizes: em bullets (which are almost as big as capital letters) and en bullets (which are about half the size of em bullets).

When typeset, both varieties are centered vertically on the height of the capital letters. Bullets function as typographic stop signs. When placed before copy, they say "stop and read this!"

They're also used after copy to indicate the end of an article, story or chapter. While they can be found just about anywhere, a bullet's natural habitat is in directories, catalogs and lists.

**BOX IT, DINGBAT**

Boxes serve two purposes: to put things in, and to replace bullets. Like bullets, boxes come in two varieties. Open boxes are the kind found on reply cards, forms, and voting ballots; they're designed to hold a check mark. Closed boxes can be found anywhere bullets are found, serving the same purposes — with just a bit more emphasis. Then there are dingbats. What are dingbats? They're typographic ornaments. Pointing hands (called "pointers" by the old-timers), stars, arrows, flowers, check marks, and



the huge variety of ornaments which defy simple identification are generally lumped into the category of dingbats. As in most other aspects of typography, taste in the use of dingbats has changed over time; today, whether or how much they're used varies dramatically from designer to designer. So can their effect — depending on how they're set, dingbats can appear quite modern or very old-fashioned.

**STRAIGHT SHOOTING WITH BULLETS, BOXES AND DINGBATS**

Below are some rules of thumb on how to use bullets, boxes and dingbats effectively and attractively. Remember, these valuable typographic tools should draw attention to the text they're meant to emphasize, not to themselves.

**Em bullets**

- are almost always too big
- should be limited to use with cap letters
- should be set in outline form for minimum text disruption

**En bullets**

- should center on cap height when they begin a line

- should center on lowercase x-height when used with lowercase text

**En bullets can be set even smaller when**

- less emphasis is required
- very many or very few bullets are used
- they're used with a typeface that has a small x-height
- they're used with a condensed typeface

**Open boxes should be**

- ☐ big enough to hold a check mark
- ☐ base-aligned when they are cap size or smaller, or
- ☐ centered on the point size when they are larger than cap size

**Solid boxes**

- can replace bullets
- can be used at the end of text
- should be base-aligned
- easily become overwhelming

**Dingbats can be used to**

- ✦ add visual spice to mundane documents
- ✧ replace bullets and boxes in virtually any application
- ✧ help justify lines of copy

**Dingbats are also**

- \* difficult to use without becoming overpowering
- ✧ more arresting "stop signs" than bullets and boxes. ☺

*Allan Haley, president of Resolution, a typographic consultancy based in Westport, Connecticut, has written a number of books on typography.*

**STEPPING BACK** / *The Globe and Mail*


For a feature titled "Hitler's willing minstrels," Toronto's *Globe and Mail* used a photo-illustration (above) by Brett Simms, inspired by John Heartfield's 1934 montage, *Blut und Eisen*. Heartfield used his montages to ridicule Hitler in the 1930s (1936 Olympics below, left) before fleeing to Britain where he did some of his most memorable work for the illustrated weekly *Picture Post* (below, right).


**INSPIRATIONS** / *Warren Watson*

## Creative sources versus creative sauces

How do today's busy journalists and designers come up with ideas? What do they do when the chips are down, the deadline is approaching and they're coming up dry? Here's a sample:

• **Bill Castello**, graphic artist, *Associated Press*: Bill is a deadline artist in New York and doesn't have time to drive away or walk in the park. "I look for inspiration in books, magazines, the Internet," he

said. "The AP has a wonderful photo library and that is helpful."

• **Tom Peyton**, art director, *Indianapolis Star*: Tom seeks refuge in his downtown art studio he calls "The Playground." He said, "I try to paint every day; it keeps me fresh." Peyton believes strongly that he must keep working creatively to keep the edge required to direct other artists.

• **Tony Sutton**, consultant and editor of *Design*, the magazine of

the Society of Newspaper Design: "To get an idea sometimes I just sit down and play around at my computer," he said. "The ideas usually come at the computer as I'm thinking." However, Sutton admits that if all else fails, "two or three pints of beer can often assist the creative process. But, more than that and you tend to forget the creative process altogether," he warns.

• **Tony Majeri**, *Chicago Tribune*: Majeri said that finding good ideas

is simply solving problems. "The clearer the head the better. When I need to think, I sometimes lift weights, do aerobics. I don't drink, don't smoke... and I'm too old for the other thing."

• **Chris Watson**, AME, *The Financial Post*, Toronto: "It takes a while for ideas to crystallize. They might roll around in my head for days," he said. "Sometimes something as simple as a hot shower in the morning springs an idea free."

• **Michael Rovner**, graphics editor, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*: Rovner said that ideas "percolate" in his head like coffee in a coffeemaker. "Solitude helps. Ideas might break free for me when I do things that don't take a lot of thought. It might be while I'm giving the baby a bath or washing the dishes," he said. ☺

Warren Watson is executive editor of *Central Maine Newspapers* in Augusta, Maine.

## A WRITER RANTS / Don Gibb

# Graphics! Who needs 'em?

*Give me the word. Give me photos. Keep your interior design gimmickry for lifestyle magazines and display ads ... and give us back the news pages for what counts*

Word pictures are powerful images for readers. They force them to get involved with the story and the writer. Like the description of the little things which amazed David Milgaard, a Canadian who had spent 27 years in prison, wrongly convicted of murder:

*When he was released on a day pass to visit his lawyer, Henry Wolch, Milgaard spent an entire day riding in an elevator, marvelling at its technology.*

*"He rode the elevator all day," Wolch recalls. "Up and down, up and down. Just talking to people. It was a chance to do something he hadn't been able to do."*

*Milgaard has also been jolted by the huge range of colors in the outside world and how they contrast to the drab hues of prison.*

*He finds it claustrophobic to stay inside an apartment. In prison, he often held a mirror outside his cell bars to peer out onto the corridors ... Words are so evocative.*

And pictures, too. The battered, bloody face of the young Somali boy, Shidane Abukar Arone, tortured by his Canadian army 'peace-keeper' tormentors, a baton forced between his teeth. Blood caked on his face. What an image — an image that provokes readers to feel the news and to react.

Who needs graphics to pretty up a newspaper?

I REMEMBER THE ILLUSTRATION THAT HAD THE PACIFIC OCEAN ON CANADA'S EAST COAST, AND JUST FOR CONSISTENCY, MIND YOU, IT HAD

THE ATLANTIC ON THE WEST. NOW THAT PROVOKES A DIFFERENT KIND OF REACTION.

Nah ... I don't need them thar fancy graphics. Rather than simplifying the world of the complex, they too often complicate it.

Give me the word.  
Give me photos.

Keep your interior design gimmickry for lifestyle magazines and display ads ... and give us back the newspapers for what counts.

Listen to this:

*Brown began taking pictures. Matchee posed with Shidane, holding his head up like a trophy deer. Then he put his baton in Shidane's mouth like a horse's bit, and hauled his head up with it. Blood flowed over the baton.*

*Brown kept shooting pictures as Matchee changed positions again and again. Shidane was now slumped against the sand floor. Only the sash cord tied to the roof beam held him up.*

*Brown stood back and took some over-all views of Shidane. His body was powdered with gray dust cut by rivulets of blood, and his shorts were soaked with water, blood and urine.*

Simple writing. Compelling.

Emotional. The reader is here for every brutal, painful scene.

I REMEMBER THE GRAPHIC THAT HAD LITTLE TANKS AND PLANES AND MISSILES TO REPRESENT THE ENOR-

MOUS FIREPOWER OF THE WORLD'S SUPERPOWERS — A GRAPHIC THAT WOULD DELIGHT AN ACCOUNTANT'S MIND. FIGURES, LOTS OF FIGURES DESPERATELY TRYING TO SHOW READERS WHAT WAS MEANT BY ALL THOSE LITTLE TANKS AND PLANES AND MISSILES. TOO MUCH MATH. GOODBYE.

More words:

*They did the dogs first. Six of them, one after the other.*

*The humane society handler led them in one at a time through a side door and lifted them onto a stainless steel table.*

*With an electric razor the veterinarian shaved a small patch of fur off their right paws and then administered the fatal injection into their exposed veins.*

*For all of them — the pit bull, the doberman, the collie, the mongrels — it was over in seconds.*

*There was the buzz of the electric razor, sometimes a brief yelp as the needle went in, a muffled snort, a snore, and then the dogs collapsed, eyes open, tongues lolling onto the cold table.*

Readers can see and hear the terror of the last moment in a dog's life.

I REMEMBER THE ILLUSTRATION OF SINGER GLORIA ESTEFAN'S DAMAGED VERTEBRAE. LIKE LOOKING AT AN X-RAY. WHAT DID IT MEAN?

THERE WAS NO DOCTOR AROUND TO EXPLAIN IT TO ME.

NOT VERY ENLIGHTENING. THANKS ANYWAY, GRAPHICS GUY.

*Thomas Harvey has what may be the greatest mind of the century. He is so afraid of losing it, he hides it in his closet.*

*Thirty-nine years ago, Mr. Harvey, a general practitioner and pathologist, performed the autopsy on Albert Einstein and afterwards he kept the Nobel laureate's brain.*

*Today, it floats in pieces, in a couple of pickling jars full of formaldehyde, in Dr. Harvey's second-floor apartment next door to a gas station.*

Writers must strive for simple, straightforward, colorful prose.

Photographers must be prepared for that split second image that captures the human spirit.

Graphics can't do that.

When such design works, it can offer ancillary material to support the word, but it can't take its place. Too often the word and photo images are sacrificed to make room for the colorful, complex and even meaningless graphic.

I REMEMBER THE CHART OF CRIME STATISTICS FOR THE LAST 10 YEARS IN SOME AMERICAN TOWN. THE RATE FOR VIOLENT CRIMES HAD GONE UP, DOWN, UP, DOWN, UP, UP, DOWN, UP, UP. TOO DAMN MUCH WORK FOR THE LOWLY READER, I THINK.

Reader friendly? Not in this house. The lifeblood of any newspaper is news. Plain and simple, thank you very much. Make me cry,

laugh, get angry, get excited. Graphic design can't do that. Occasionally it makes me

laugh ... but that's all. ☺

*When he's not being nasty to designers, Don Gibb is a lecturer in journalism at Ryerson Polytechnic University in Toronto.*

*He is the author of two booklets on writing: How To Write The Perfect Lead and How To Get The Most From Your Interviews.*

## THE MEDIA

## Quote Unquote

■ "I must say I find television very educational. The minute somebody turns it on, I go to the library and read a book." — *Groucho Marx*.

■ "Dealing with network executives is like being nibbled to death by ducks." — *Eric Sevareid, TV newsman*.

■ "There's a powerful lot of junk on the airwaves; they'd rewrite *Exodus* to include a car chase." — *Walter Cronkite, A Reporter's Life, 1996*.

■ "Bad [TV] ratings do not necessarily decrease viewership. Kids automatically know that the bad stuff they're going to watch is [signalled] through those parental guidance warnings. The word spreads like crabgrass or smoke signals. ... The homes that do not have the V-chip, or don't use it, will be flooded by the refugees, like boat people, from V-chip homes." — *Marvin Kitman, columnist, Newsday, 1997*.

■ "Kids are seen by media as little consumers. It's as if they are saying to kids, 'Our nation depends on YOU! You must consume!' Very few things in media do anything other than entertain or terrorize children. Television should be a very positive tool, but it seems like everybody got together and decided to bring it down to the lowest common denominator." — *Patricia Schroeder, former congresswoman from Colorado, 1994*.

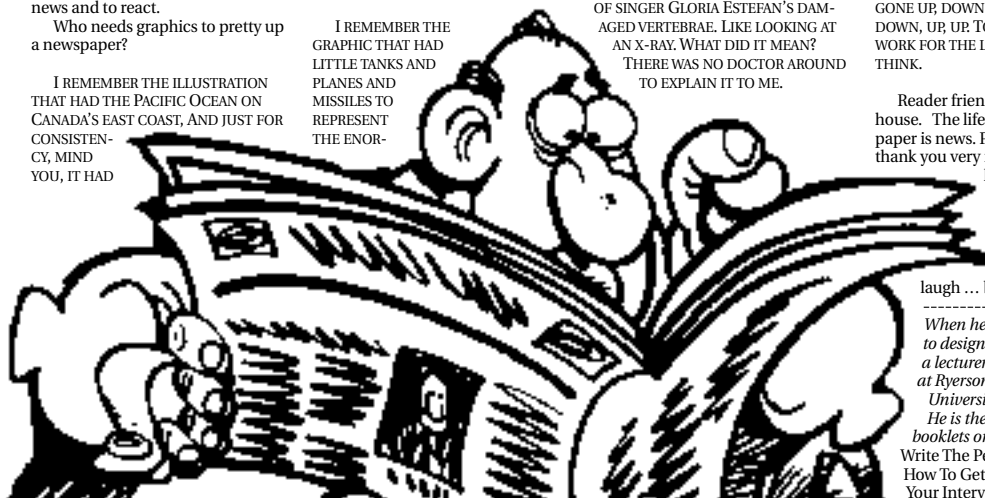
■ "Newspapers are where television people get their information." — *Garrison Keillor, 1995*.

■ "My father hated radio, and could not wait for television to be invented so he could hate that too." — *Peter De Vries, novelist, 1964*.

■ "Television is democracy at its ugliest." — *Paddy Chayefsky, playwright, 1923-1981*.

■ "Seeing a murder on television ... can help work off one's antagonisms. And if you haven't any antagonisms, the commercials will give you some." — *Alfred Hitchcock, film director*.

■ "Television is a device that permits people who haven't anything to do to watch people who can't do anything." — *Fred Allen, comedian, 1894-1956*.



## BOOK EXCERPT / Denis Beckett

*"On Monday morning I swanned cheerfully into the coalface, virtuous as can be, and deposited not 44,9 cms, not 45,1 cms, but 45 cms right on the nose into the awaiting electronic desk. To improve the shining hour I even popped my head past the door of the page editor, a curmudgeonly character who had once been a big-shot somewhere and was now resentfully working out the hours until he qualified for a pension"*

**T**he cock-ups at [Johannesburg daily] *The Star* were truly heroic. Sometimes you'd expect to find them in joke-books or satires, and some deserve their tiny place in history, such as the time the Deputy Ed, Rex Gibson, persuaded me to write a piece about a survey on the parties' political support. At this stage I was 45 years old and supposedly some sort of asteroid in the journalistic firmament, and this was the kind of job usually done by a junior reporter between lunchtime and sundowner.

However Rex's case was logical and indeed derived from my own oft-repeated insistence that our business was meant to be the business of making the written word a joy to read.

I had argued that we couldn't always give people in the morning the information that had been on the radio news yesterday at 1 pm and 2 pm and 3 pm and 4 pm, and on the box at 6 pm and 9 pm and at 7 am. It had washed through them all those times anyway, when they were imbibing it through that most unfriendly of organs, the ear. Now we expected them to apply the rigorous discipline of the eye to reading the same stuff, usually put together as if designed by a Goldfinger commissioned by the electronic media to kill off the press.

Political support surveys were washouts for the newspapers, as the juicy bits were lightly gutted in the radio bulletins and the public cared not a whit for the refinements. So, said Rex, here was a day to put sermon to practice.

Okay. It was a challenge. Give it a go. I just had one little problem, which was the mangling that invariably took place at the hands of the sub-editors.

The subs were used to receiving copy that was too long for the space they had to put it in. They were also used to copy that left gaps and questions and non-sequiturs, and to panel-beating it ferociously.

My practice was to do the stuff in exactly the way I expected to see it published, down to the last comma. With the subs who subbed my column, I had a perfect relationship. The column was 50 cms. I would do it to 50 cms. They would normally put it through unaltered. Where they did want to alter it, they would give me a ring and say, in varying degrees of politeness or forthrightness according to personality, where they thought I'd screwed up. We'd discuss it, we'd agree, and Bob's yr uncle. Where I wasn't in reach and there was a problem, they'd apply discretion, and because of the satisfactory basic relationship the discretion was almost always satisfactory discretion.

Of the hundreds of columns I've writ-

ten for *The Star*, the number that led to writer-sub conflicts can be counted on my thumbs. Unconventionally and paradoxically, this procedure led to the subs arguing about my copy more than anybody else.

In general, on receipt of copy from news reporters they would groan the ritual groan, mutter the ritual mutter about declining standards and where did these people go to school, roll up their sleeves and slash the hatchet until they had a brand of order.

The copy they got from the panoply of Eds — Asst Eds and Dep Eds and Eds-in-Chief and whathaveyou — they would groan about less frequently albeit sometimes more deeply, and employ a diplomatic scalpel or, at most, rapier in preference to the hatchet. Mostly, though, they would not even think of discussing the Eds' copy with the Eds at all, let alone challenging the Eds in terms of "this point could be better made" or "the middle bit here is floppy and confusing" or "damn somber, couldn't we have a joke or two on the way."

The column relationship I had with the subs is the way the writer-sub relationship ought to work, and one of the reasons the print media are in the dwang is that it is so rare. (Of course my own little publications, where I vigorously practice the editorial side of the same rela-

tionship, are endemically in worse dwang than anyone else in print, but that is for different reasons.)

My copy, they'd readily argue about anything from the overall message to the stylistic flaws of paragraph eleven to where I could use non-English expressions without the obligatory italics (it being a deliberate habit of mine to incorporate bits of indigenous languages into a Seffrican English). They did it because I embraced it and actively asked for it. Sometimes I'd agree, and as a rule it was my fingers on my keyboard that made the changes. Sometimes I'd privately disagree but make a change anyway, in appreciation. Sometimes, of course, no change, but even then the listening and discussing would have done wonders to deflect the subs' instinct as reflected on a poster on my office wall:

**The strongest drive is  
not Love, or I hate, it is  
one person's need to  
change another's copy.**

Unfortunately the column relationship was seldom carried over to other ar-





Rui Romalheiro

titles, where the sub with X amount of space would inevitably have X + Y amount of copy to fit into it. For this reason I had by this time already flatly stopped writing anything but my column, and for this reason Rex's challenge gave me a dose of collywobbles,

"Rex," I said, "how much?"

"Make it 45 centimeters," he said,

I said: "Rex, if I write 45 cms will you make sure that the whole 45 cms appears intact?"

"Of course," said Rex in the airy way favored by very senior mahogany editors when they talk of their influence over the conduct of lowly coalface editors. "I'll see to it."

It was a Friday and I worked most of the weekend at the task of making survey figures sing. By Sunday night, they sang. I had a piece I was quietly content to hand in. I awaited with more glee than I like to admit Rex's grudging congratulations to come.

On Monday morning I swanned cheerfully into the coalface, virtuous as can be, and deposited not 44.9 cms, not 45.1 cms, but 45 cms right on the nose into the awaiting electronic desk. To improve the shining hour I even popped my head past the door of the page editor, a curmudgeonly character who had once been a big-shot somewhere and was now

resentfully working out the hours until he qualified for a pension. (He quit on the very day, I believe.)

He looked at me and said: "It's five past nine." I looked at my watch and affably seconded this assertion. "Yes," I said, "it is indeed five past nine."

"Deadline," he said, "is 9 o'clock. I need time to edit this stuff."

Alarm bells rang, but I let it be. The day was bespoken by another activity. Any case, once he'd read it he'd be happy. I crossed fingers and hoped for the best, unconvincedly telling myself that I was too old and ugly to worry.

But the piece would have my name on it, and one does get jumpy about taking the public rap for someone else's anonymous incompetence. So come Tuesday I

This excerpt has been taken from *Trekking, In Search of the Real South Africa*, by Denis Beckett, published by Penguin Books. ISBN 0140264817.



took up the paper with a certain anxiety ... and it was worse than the worst possibility.

Among other things, the 45 cms had shrunk to 38. There were jokes that had lost their punchlines. There were intact references to excited sentences. There was one place where some wholly gratuitous monkeying had made me an insular. The list of damage was long and painful.

Also, there was a strange thing. The story had involved a million percentages, which I typed as "%." The published version had them all changed to "per-cent," which, I worked out, had added 7 cms to the length, so that in real terms my 45 cms had shrunk not to 38 but 31.

I enquired. The page editor said "style book." Indeed the style book specified "percent" and not "%." I wondered why, and the page editor said why did it matter why? The style book had spoken, and that was enough for him.

It intrigued me. Given the constant quest to include as much text as design considerations permit, why insist on a 7-character word when conventional usage takes a 1-character synonym for granted?

I went to ask the guy who wrote the style book. He stared at the relevant entry for a very long time as if hoping that an explanatory apparition would appear on the page, and finally said: "You know,

that's a good question."

I tried editors, I tried old hands. Finally I met a guy from the works, who said, simple, there'd been some trouble with a batch of low-grade flong in about 1965 and the intricate "%" had risked coming out as a blur, so the "percent" had been a precaution.

Flong was a cardboardy part of a production process that went obsolete more than 20 years ago.

I was reminded of a terrific tale in the autobiography of Stafford Cripps, who was Brit ambassador to Moscow in World War II.

One day Cripps is walking with Stalin in the grounds of the Winter Palace. They come upon a sentry on duty in the middle of nowhere. Cripps says: "What's he doing here?" Stalin asks the sentry "What are you doing here?" The sentry says "Corporal told me to stand here." Stalin calls the corporal who says the sergeant told him to have someone there; the sergeant says the lieutenant told him; the lieutenant says the captain; and so on, up to the general. Stalin invokes the army historians, who discover that one morning in 1768 Catherine the Great found an early spring flower at that spot. "Ooh, commander," she said, "what a lovely flower. Make sure nobody stands on it." And 175 years of round-the-clock protection ensued. ☺

## NEWSPAPER STORIES / Bob Gallagher

# Simple solution to a very silly problem

*The curious dilemma of balancing corporate childishness with operational stupidity*

Right after Gannett purchased the *Green Bay (Wisconsin) Press-Gazette* and began infecting the product with corporate ennui, our management team was introduced to a new form of institutional water torture known as the annual regional meeting.

These meetings were gatherings of groups of their newspapers, at which each department head was expected to detail recent accomplishments for their Gannettoid gurus.

As the editor, I spelled out a series of what we considered our most significant achievements, awards, and innovations, then leaned back expectantly for questions about our operation.

There was only one.

It came from a porky little fellow who, all during my report, had been thumbing hurriedly through a week's worth of our newspapers. How come, he demanded, on Saturday morning you had the west coast result of the Brewer game on the front of Sports, but back in the agate, there is no score?

When I investigated this trifling anomaly, I discovered that it was a composing room problem involving one of the typesetting machines. It could be solved by keeping a part-timer on an extra half hour.

No dice, said my publisher, Mike Gage, when I explained the problem. So I promptly forgot about it until I was jumped on again by the same fellow for the same thing at the next regional

meeting a year later.

Faced with compromising my unsupportive boss, I took the criticism. "Fix it," snarled Gannett's senior editorial officer, John Quinn.

Back at the office, I again raised the issue with my publisher. "No," said Gage.

That gave me a year to solve the curious dilemma of balancing corporate childishness with operational stupidity.

The solution was simple: I just ordered my sports department not to print any west coast scores on the two Saturdays before the next regional meeting.

My report that year was unusu-

ally impressive. We had established the legal right of limited shield in Wisconsin, produced several new revenue-generating supplements, and completely redesigned the newspaper. Any questions?

The porky little fellow looked up smiling from the Saturday sports section.

"Congratulations," he gushed, "I see you corrected the west coast agate problem."

"Just like you told me to," I replied, swallowing the rest of my sentence, "... you twits!" ☺

*Bob Gallagher is a consultant and former newspaper editor.*



Master Series

## WRITING / Don Gibb

## Don't forget the dog

Laboring over that lead? Worried about how to tell the story in a manner that is informative and interesting? Here are three tips to simplify the process:

### 1. Take readers to the scene.

If a man was saved from the swirling river by his dog, take him back to the riverbank to show us how he was rescued. Don't forget to take the dog, too.

### 2. Read your leads aloud.

Don't worry if other reporters give you strange looks. You get to hear how it sounds. If you trip over some of your own words, get rid of them. Readers will stumble, too.

### 3. Think about readers when you write — not about what the editor, other reporters or the people you interviewed will think.

What impact does my story have on ordinary people? That question alone should change how you focus and write your story and how you ask your questions. ☺

*"If only I'd given that job to those guys at News Design Associates, I guess my life would still be worth living"*



# NDA

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## IMPROVING YOUR NEWSPAPER / Tony Sutton

# There are no easy fixes

*Find space for new content by chucking out the stuff that doesn't work. This will have as great an impact on your readers as all the trendy new things you've decided to add*

THERE'S a continual drone from the newspaper industry's chattering classes about ways to improve newspapers to make them more relevant to their long-suffering readers. I got involved in the subject a few weeks ago when I was invited to talk to a bunch of managing editors on the subject.

As you probably know, my first response when asked to do these sessions is to head with much haste in the opposite direction. But it's amazing what an airline ticket, rubber chicken, and with luck a check will do to convince me of my duty to contribute to the debate.

Part of my apprehension stems from the fact that most editors and managers don't want to face the reality that remaking newspapers takes hard work and costs money. They expect trendy, easy-to-implement solutions to deep-rooted problems that have often developed over decades of editorial neglect.

I'm not against the idea of acknowledging and adapting trends, but I believe that before we start looking at all the new and exciting things we can give readers, we ought to cast a glance over our shoulders and fix some of the old and boring things that we're giving them right now.

Where to start? Make space for new content by chucking out the stuff that doesn't work. That single action will have as great an impact on your readers as all the trendy new things you decided to add. Then, when you've done that, look at all the things you do badly — and fix 'em. If you can't fix 'em, kill 'em.

So, what should you remove? Here's a list:

## 10 READER TURNOFFS

1. **Stale, dull and boring news.** It's guaranteed to persuade even

the most benevolent readers that newspapers have no place on their kitchen table. Stories, especially those on the front page, should be interesting, relevant and exciting. And if they're not, you have a serious problem. If you find your own newspaper too boring to read, you're in the wrong business.

2. **Meaningless heads, subheads and pullquotes.**

This is often the result of boring news. If a story is so dull that the editor can't find a decent headline or pullquote, it's a fair assumption that it should be rewritten or thrown into the reject bin, not placed at the top of one of the few open inside pages in your paper.

3. **Page 1 promos for boring stories.**

It's the "excuse-me-while-I-shoot-myself-in-the-foot" syndrome. So you've got a blank space in the Page 1 skybox. What do you do? Draw attention to that long, badly written council report on Page 5. Then you wonder why churn is heading for 100 percent.

4. **Briefs that aren't brief, indices that aren't indices.**

A seven-inch story is not a brief, no matter how little copy you've got or how close you are to deadline. If you can't find enough snippets for your Page 3 column of briefs, take the head off and run two stories in the space instead.

5. **New York Times editorial pages in cramped hometown news papers.**

Devoting a full page to columnists, cartoonists and editorials from national wire services doesn't make a lot of sense, especially if the local newshole has been gradually eaten away by a corporate demand

for exorbitant profit margins.

6. **Charts and graphics that are impossible to comprehend.**

Simple is always better, especially in charts and graphics. Why would anyone try to read complicated detail in a badly drawn graphic that is awash in color?

7. **Appalling use of color.**

Here's a good rule: If you can print color well, do it. If you can't, print everything in black ink.

8. **Photographs jammed into pre-determined holes.**

News pages, especially the front page, ought to be flexible enough to change to accommodate great photographs. Pre-determined formats are an aid to consistency (and lower staffing quotas), but they should never be a straitjacket that prevents exciting presentation of stimulating stories or photographs.

9. **A redesign that doesn't look any different from the original.**

If you're telling readers that their newspaper is going to be reborn in a brand-new, much-improved style tomorrow, make sure that reality matches the hype.

10. **Bland, pointless — but very colorful — section fronts.**

If a feature's pointless, pedantic or old hat, a full-color illustration, lots of white space and a big head-

line won't make it better.

*Those are just a few of the things that should be addressed before you even start thinking of introducing new elements to your newspaper. Once you've done it's time to consider this next list:*

## 10 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR NEWSPAPER

1. **Get more news into the A section.**

Most advertisers demand space here because it's the most important section, the one that everyone looks at. But if there's no space for editorial, it gives customers the impression that there's nothing to read in the newspaper.

What's the solution? Simple. Kill one of the other subsidiary sections, make the A section twice as big, and distribute the ads through those pages. Losing a section front won't upset readers, and the pressures on editors and photo and art staffs will be eased if they have one less full-color section front to pull out of their magician's hat every day.

2. **Read stories before you place them on the page.**

So, a reporter sat through a dull meeting and then wrote 28 boring inches about it. That doesn't mean it's worth 28 inches of precious space. Edit for readability and interest.

3. **Cover stories that are relevant to the lives of your readers and seek their involvement.**

If someone is being ripped off or threatened by a soulless corporation, public utility, government or private business, report the story. And ask readers if they have been similarly abused. Let them know you're on their side: that's called leadership.

4. **Encourage photographers to look for different, off-beat shots.**

Then give those pictures the display they deserve. Our customers read pictures before they read stories, so grab their attention. Encourage photographers to produce at least one off-beat shot with every assignment; if the picture has impact, give it precedence over a static image.

5. **Display each day's front page in the newsroom under a sign saying, "Would (or did) you read this?"**

Ask members of other departments the same question. If they answer, "No," you've got a problem.

6. **Develop a great letters page. It's your lifeline to your readers.**

A good, interactive letters page will be a must-read, and you'll pick up plenty of story leads from it.

7. **Make your newspaper look good.**

Design is not the most important part of the newspaper — content is. But a good-looking, cheerful, bright and entertaining design will enhance the quality of the newspaper.

8. **Improve a different part of the newspaper each week.**

It's often hard to make a lot of improvements all at once, so why not tackle one aspect of your newspaper each week? Start, for example, by asking editors and photographers to concentrate on outline writing, analyze them at each morning's news conference, and make an effort to improve them. Then move onto headlines and so on. After a few weeks, the overall quality of every aspect of the newspaper will start to improve.

9. **Continually seek ways to improve your newspaper.**

Change is natural and desirable. Add new elements to the newspaper, and don't be afraid to throw them out if they don't have the desired effect. Don't be afraid to experiment, but don't repeat the same mistake twice.

10. **Have fun.**

Give the readers something to smile about. Perhaps you should write that phrase at the top of your editorial mission statement. ☺



## DESIGN / Mario Garcia

## Five tips for better color

The best philosophy to remember about color is that less is best, and that mixing too many colors detracts.

Color gives the newspaper an identity, a sense of personality and visual continuity. So, it's best to use it intelligently. But what represents intelligent use? The best answer to that question may vary from newspaper to newspaper. Regional idiosyncrasies, the demographics of the newspaper, its purpose and mission statement contribute to formulate a correct philosophy for the newspaper.

For example, the colorization of a conservative newspaper that has just made the transition to color should not include too many loud colors. The following guidelines will help make the decision-making easier:

**1. Create your own color palette.** Mix hues to achieve certain individualized shades, especially for logos and other identity elements.

**2. Try to identify certain sections of the newspaper with a specific color.** This contributes to visual continuity.

**3. Color works best** when it helps to move the reader from top to bottom.

**4. Be precise and conservative in the use of color tints.** Aesthetically speaking, the overuse of color screen or tints can be counter-productive. I believe that the best use of color screens is reserved for short canvases on the page. A one-column short box in a color screen always looks better than the page that is entirely painted. But, of course, there are exceptions on pages that have been designed by experienced art directors and designers. In their hands, the rules are meant to be violated.

**5. Show respect for black and white.** We have learned that the best use of color is that which includes 60% of the page in black and white (and shades of grey). It is the presence of white, especially, that brings out the best qualities of color. ☺

Mario Garcia is a newspaper design consultant and author based in Tampa, Florida.

## BRAINSTORMING / Dave Cox

## Just thinking

*It's the easiest way to make our newspapers better*

If we force ourselves to question our own work, if we think about the work we are doing, the way we treat others, the actions we take, the challenges we have before us, the professionalism that we must employ, the cooperation we must have, the creative talents we must tap and the work required to be the best that we can be, then we will be able reach our goals, our readers will await us anxiously each day and our newspaper will be ... Superb!

**THINK** about what you are doing. Is it right? Are you making your decision based on purpose or are you acting only to finish your task?

**THINK** about content. Are we supplying the news that our readers need to know or have? What could we be doing differently?

**THINK** before you make an assignment. What obligation are we trying to fulfill? What readers are we trying to reach? Is there a better, brighter, more efficient way to meet the obligation? Is the assignment challenging? Is it reasonable? Will it provide readable, exciting, provocative, material? Is it boring? If so, how could it be improved? Would pictures or graphics enhance it?

**THINK** before you write. What message are you trying to convey? Are you checking the right sources? Are you checking all sources that might contribute to your story? Is it fair? Is it accurate? Is it meaningful? Could it be done better? Do you

need a sidebar? Have you worked to coordinate photo/graphic support? Is it the best it can be? What would it take to make it better?

**THINK** before you take that picture. Is the lighting right? Is the background right? Are the subjects in the photo in proper position? If it is an enterprise photo, is it creative enough to capture reader attention? Does it have the best content possible, or can it be improved? Is it the best it can be? What would it take to make it that way?

**THINK** before you turn your work in. Have you double-checked your facts for accuracy? Have you checked the content for fairness and thoroughness? Is it free of typographical errors? Can a colleague assist you with a second read? Is your artwork or graphic ready? Is your story/package the best it can be? What would it take to make it better?

**THINK** before you edit that story. Have you read it first to get a sense of its meaning, its purpose? Are the changes you are making warranted? Are any changes altering the content or original meaning? Is the story ready to use? Would holding it for a day for additional work make it stronger, more meaningful? Is it the best it can be? What would it take to make it better?

**THINK** as you lay out that page. Does it have an element of sur-



prise? Does it invite readership? Does it get the reader into the page, through the page, and out? Are the stories relevant? Is the art sized and cropped appropriately? What could be done to enhance it? If your page is a front page, do you have the best story and the best photo of the day on it? Do you have stories and pictures that appeal to varying tastes? If you have a section front, do you have the most important material

of the day on it? Are you presenting it in a creative fashion? Do you have material appropriate for all interest levels? Have you used your artwork properly? Have you edited the news to make it more concise? Have you selected material that appeals to a wide range of interests? Have you developed a package of news briefs to get as much news in the paper as possible? Is your page the best it can be? What would it take to make it better?

**THINK** about your role as a journalist. Are you doing everything you can do to help the newsroom reach its goals? Are you supportive of your co-workers? Do you cooperate when asked? Do you volunteer ideas or offer feedback? Do you look for creative opportunities? Do you double-check your work? Are you challenging yourself? Are you working to your best potential? Do you read your own newspaper every day? Do you read other newspapers daily? Do you study concepts other newspapers use and try to visualize how those might work for your newspaper? Are you having fun along the way? ☺

Dave Cox is editor of The Tribune-Star at Terre Haute, Indiana.

## Why?



**WHY** ask why? Each staff member needs to develop his or her own strategies to meet challenges. Some of those strategies include:

**WHY** have I assigned this story? Am I missing a more important story? How can we enhance this report to make it stronger and more exciting?

**WHY** have I chosen to pursue this angle in this story? Is there another angle that is more meaningful? Is it factual? Is it easy to understand?

**WHY** have I written this lead? Am I missing the point? Does it grab reader attention? Does it tell the reader what the story is about? Can I do better?

**WHY** have I written the story to this length? Can it

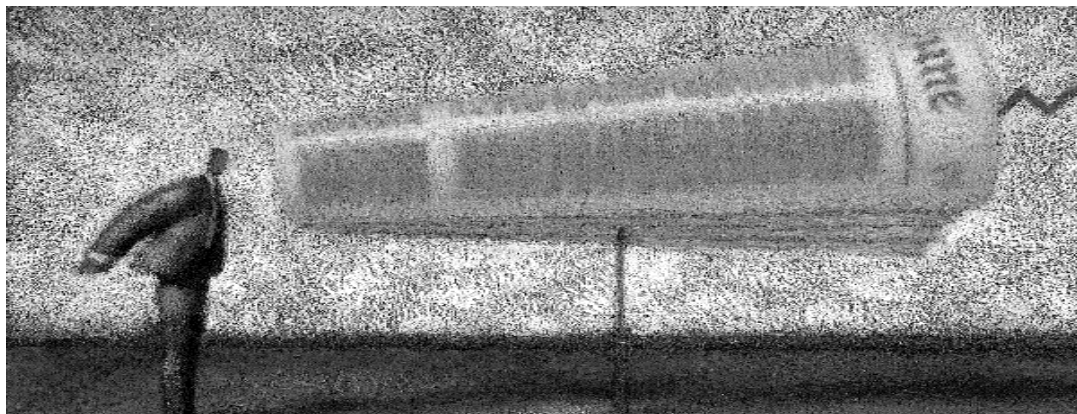
be shorter and brighter?

**WHY** have I chosen to use this picture? Does it have good, readable, content (yes, pictures are "read" by readers)? Have I sized it properly? Have I cropped it properly? Does it tell a story or help to tell one?

**WHY** have I dummed the page this way? Is it effective? Does it have an element of surprise? Is it balanced? Have I prepared this page so it has solid content and a healthy appearance? Does it have impact?

**WHY** have I decided to use this story/picture? Is it important? Am I using it to fill space quickly?

**WHY** have I written this headline? Does it grab attention? Is it easy to understand? Does it tell the obvious? Is it boring?



Master Series

## ADVERTISING AWARDS

# It's an ad, ad, ad, ad world

*Celebrating the advertising industry's most dubious achievements of the year*

While the advertising industry toasts itself at the 38th annual Clio Awards — the Oscars of commercials — leading media critics and scholars were giving the same industry a set of awards that were undoubtedly less welcome.

"The average American sees more than 1,500 ads every day, yet we like to think that we're not influenced by advertising. That's just not true," says Schmio Awards spokesperson and ad critic, Jean Kilbourne.

"We organized the Schmios to call attention to the pervasive power of advertising, and its inappropriate role as a transmitter of cultural values."

The first set of Schmio Awards included ones for Excellence in Blaxploitation, Finest Auto-Eroticism and The Hype-ocrisy Award.

In addition, several advertisers received the distinction of membership in the *Ms.* magazine *No Comment!* Hall of Fame.

The Schmios were led by Neil Postman, media critic, educator, and author of *Amusing Ourselves To Death*. The event was held at New York University and Postman was joined by presenters, including *Village Voice* columnist and 1996 Pulitzer Prize finalist Leslie Savan, and Marcia Ann Gillespie, Editor in Chief of *Ms.* magazine.

Other presenters included Mark Crispin Miller, author of *Boxed In: The Culture of TV*; co-directors of the Center for Media Education, Jeffrey Chester and Kathryn Montgomery; and John Stauber, author

of *Toxic Sludge Is Good for You: Lies, Damn Lies & the Public Relations Industry*.

The Schmio event was a prelude to the second annual Media & Democracy Congress at New York University which brought together more than 1,000 journalists and educators who were concerned about the content, commercialization and concentrated ownership of media.

## AWARD WINNERS

**Excellence in Blaxploitation:** *Miller Lite*.

"[Miller Lite's 'Dick the Adman campaign'] looks like a very funny, hip spoof of blaxploitation movies, but when you boil it all down, it's a post-modern minstrel show."

**Aldous Huxley Award for most disarming vision of totalitarianism:** *Time Warner*.

"Here is Time Warner celebrating the sad fact that we can't get away from them — that Time Warner, and its products, are embedded in our minds. Not too long ago, this would have been the premise for a horror film — now it's the corporation's boast in these appalling ads."

**Hype-ocrisy Award:** *Johnson & Johnson*.

"Though Johnson & Johnson is familiar with the gay community and promotes its HIV detection kit in the gay media, it chose not to advertise on *Ellen*'s coming out episode. Not your run-of-the-mill act of cowardice, Johnson & Johnson deserves the Hype-ocrisy

Award for its inability to commit common human decency on prime time. And we'll share with them a slogan we just heard on Capitol Hill: 'A Spine is a Terrible Thing to Waste.'"

**Last Tango on Madison Avenue Award for most deviant use of a dairy product:** *Haagen-Dazs and Kibon*.

"As thinness has become the equivalent of virginity, food in ads is increasingly sexualized. An ad featuring spermlike spoons swimming into a perfect egg-shaped scoop of ice cream is one bold example."

**Toxic Sludge Is Good for you Award for advertising best disguised as journalism:** *National Association of News Directors*.

"For annually airing as 'news' thousands of video news releases. VNRs are biased and deceptive propaganda disguised as TV journalism and provided free by PR agencies."

**Jimmy The Greek Big Black Buck Award for the most demeaning targeted marketing campaign:** *Sir Benni Milles clothing*.

**Oh What A Tangled Web Site You Weave Award for the web site which most craftily ensnares children:** *McDonalds and Budweiser*.

**History is Bunk Award:** *Pizza Hut*.

**The More Things Change, The**

**More You Ensure They Stay The Same Award:** *10 print ads from Ms. 'No Comment! Hall of Fame.'*

"Feminism has done a lot to improve the portrayal of women in advertising, but as 'No Comment!' has eloquently been demonstrating for 25 years, the many anti-woman themes persist."

These awards went to:

- "Now there's a nice pair of jugs." — *The Leather Bottle, restaurant*.

- "Priceless possessions...your wife and children." — *Knights of Columbus Insurance*

- "A child is the ultimate pet." — *Joop! Jeans*.

- "When was the last time you shot your mother-in-law?" — *GAF Movie Cameras*.

- "Take your mother-in-law out and shoot her." — *Wix Pix disposable camera from Fuji*.

- "Have some fun. Beat your wife tonight." — *bowling at the BPA Fun Center*.

- "Bitch." (A graphic of a man holding a gun to a woman's head) — *Bitch Skateboards*.

**Lifetime Achievement Award:** *Phil Knight, Nike CEO*

"In 1996, Nike had no trouble finding \$1.8 million a day for advertising — lauding the strength of women who only need a chance — yet in the real world Nike can only find 20 to 30 cents an hour, true starvation wages, for the more than 200,000 young women making Nike sneakers in sweatshops in Indonesia, Vietnam and China." ☹

## ON TYPE / Rolf Rehe

## Ten steps to better text type

Perhaps the most important decision in newspaper design is the selection of the text type. How the newspaper is perceived (quite literally) depends largely on that choice.

Here are ten points you need to consider for the selection.

**1. Type design:** The selection is simple — serif type faces have better legibility and reader appeal. Sans-serif type is a good selection as supportive type, for captions, tabular material, and the like.

**2. Type tone:** What flair is the type face to reflect? Formal, informal, relaxed, conservative, classic, modern?

**3. Type weight:** Newspaper fonts need to be slightly heavier than "normal" type faces to compensate for the weakened contrast caused by the grey paper background.

**4. X-height:** In many cases, a tall x-height\* works best for newspaper text type.

**5. Type size:** That selection depends on the x-height of the font. Readers always welcome a larger text type size.

**6. Leading:** Type faces with tall x-heights need more leading than those with a low x-height. Long line widths also require extra leading.

**7. Letter dimension:** Moderately condensed type faces work best. Some can be condensed digitally, but not too much as that weakens legibility.

**8. Intra-letter spacing (kerning):** This too is a "touchy" matter. Often you can reduce the kerning minutely. But make sure the letters do not touch as it will adversely affect legibility. When in doubt, be conservative.

**9. Bold and italic versions:** You need italic and bold for your text type. Look at those versions carefully. Usually all the variations of a type family work well. But it is not always the case.

**10. Test print:** What looks beautiful and legible on a laser printout may not on a page printed with an old press on greyscale newsprint stock. Hence make test prints on news stock. ☹

\* x-height? It's the relationship between lower-case letters without ascenders or descenders, like the letter 'x', and capital letters.

Rolf Rehe is a newspaper design consultant based in Vienna and Naples, Florida.

## LAST WORDS

## How to be a good wife!

Excerpted (honest) from a 1950s high school home-economics textbook:

**Have dinner ready.** Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal — on time. This is a way of letting him know that you've been thinking about him and are concerned about his needs. Most men are hungry when they come home and the prospect of a good meal is part of the warm welcome needed.

**Prepare yourself.** Take fifteen minutes to rest so that you will be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your makeup, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh looking. He has just been with a lot of work-weary people. Be a little more interesting. His boring day may need a lift.

**Clear away the clutter.** Make one last trip through the main part of the house just before your husband arrives, gathering up school books, toys, paper etc. Then run a dust cloth over the tables. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order and it will give you a lift, too.

**Prepare the children.** Take a few minutes to wash the children's hands and faces (if they are small), comb their hair and if necessary change their clothes. They are little treasures and he would like to see them playing the part.

**Minimize all noise.** At the time of his arrival, eliminate all noise of the washer, dryer dishwasher, or vacuum. Try to encourage the children to be quiet. Be happy to see him and greet him with a warm smile.

**Some don'ts.** Don't greet him with problems and complaints. Don't complain if he is late for dinner. Count this as minor compared to what he might have gone through that day. Make him comfortable. Have him lean back in a comfortable chair or suggest that he lie down in the bedroom. Have a cool or warm drink ready for him. Arrange his pillow and offer to take off his shoes. Speak in a low, soft, soothing and pleasant voice. Allow him to relax and unwind.

**Listen to him.** You may have a dozen things to tell him, but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first.

**Make the evening his.** Never complain if he does not take you out to dinner or to other pleasant entertainment. Instead, try to understand his world of strain and pressure, his need to unwind and relax.

**The goal.** Try to make your home a place of peace and order where your husband can relax in body and spirit. ☺

*You can shoot the swine later.*

# "We Make Good Things Better"



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