

THE BUSINESS JOURNALIST

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CHAIR'S CORNER

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Resources

Check out www.sabew.org

Twists to chaos coverage

Sources to add to your stories when disasters hit

JOURNALISTS DO THEIR best work in disasters. The adrenaline rush crystallizes their talents, resulting in headlines and prose that memorialize a landmark event for their readers. Their work in the midst of chaos is the stuff of which careers, and Pulitzers, are made.

For the business staff, chaos may mean a temporary reassignment covering the ravages of hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes or floods.

As I write this, Florida is mopping up from hurricanes Charley and Frances and fearing that Ivan will live up to his terrible name. The first reports of damage estimates appeared early. Those estimates of the financial toll of wind and water changed with the slowing of the winds or shifting of the storm's direction.

Reporters were busy writing stories about what insurers were expected to pay out for these disasters, and of course, what those payouts meant to the value of the company's stock. Other business-side reports focused on the profit and loss of business — such as the effect on tourism or on price-gouging for plywood.

In June, I attended the 29th Natural Hazards Conference of Disaster Experts in Boulder, Colo. Despite its name, the conference covered both natural and manmade disasters. My focus in Boulder was on discovering ways we

can do our jobs better in covering these community-changing events.

I learned how new satellite imagery makes it possible for observers in England to accurately estimate the damage based on photographs snapped miles above the earth. Without the benefit of land communication, it's possible for rescue personnel to immediately determine which area is in greatest need. Clearly it's a way to reduce casualties by rushing medical aid during that "Golden 24" period when precious moments save lives.

Technology, such as the proliferation of global positioning (GPS) devices, also can reduce the cost of emergency aid by helping pinpoint the location of victims.

Many questions came to my mind. The business aspects of disaster are long lasting. Are jobs replaced, or does a company use the disaster to not rebuild or to send jobs offshore? Do the promised federal aid or disaster loans cover the cost of business recovery? Does the disaster encourage a new economic path by local industry — one that makes it more "disaster proof," as the experts like to call it? Will the cost of building new public infrastructure like roads or water systems be a benefit to the local economy?

Some observations

- We struggle to cover or even

ignore the economic impact of "slow onset" disasters, such as heat and cold spells, winter storms, droughts, widespread crop disease or flood cycles. In the NOAA list of billion-dollar weather-related disasters, the 1988 drought and heat spell caused damages of \$66 billion in the Midwest. To access the list: www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/reports/billionz.html.

- In the same vein, we need to redefine the meaning of disasters. For example, geomagnetic solar storms cause massive outages of electricity. According to NOAA, solar disruptions can also wreak havoc on communication and disrupt air and space transportation, costing billions a year in losses.

- We fail to look at the economic impact of a disaster by gender, race and income, according to studies by the University of South Carolina. The first to lose their jobs after a disaster are hourly service workers. It's why the unemployment rate jumped in the wake of Hurricane Charley. Also, women living alone and non-English speaking populations are more likely to move rather than rebuild.

We need to understand how communities rebound or recoil from disaster. It's another story of the value of wealth. The communities that have high incomes and high property values are likely to be insured and to rebuild; poor

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Dunphy resigns in Seattle following plagiarism investigation

BY BILL BARNHART

Stephen Dunphy, a columnist and associate editor at the Seattle Times and a former SABEW board member, resigned from his newspaper in August, faced with evidence of plagiarism.

An investigation by the newspaper, based on a recent complaint from a reader, uncovered text from the Journal of Commerce used without attribution in an article in 1997.

"I took careless shortcuts that constitute plagiarism," Dunphy said in an email exchange with TBJ. He apologized "to the Blethen family (owners of the Seattle Times), Times readers and my former colleagues for the betrayal of the trust placed in me."

Dunphy had been reprimanded in 2000 for using material from a book without attribution. At that time, Dunphy brought the incident to the attention of his editors and wrote to the author, saying, "My only defense, and it is a lame one, is that it was unintentional. ... I lost track of what I had from where."

The second incident, although it dated to 1997, came to light through an e-mail sent to the Times earlier this year. Michael Fancher, executive editor of the Times, disclosed Dunphy's resignation Aug. 22. At the time, he said an investigation has uncovered "additional problems" and promised a full accounting.

In a follow-up Sept. 12, Fancher told readers that the paper had examined 200 of Dunphy's articles and found 13 stories with significant portions that constituted blatant plagiarism. In those, Fancher wrote, Dunphy "lifted language and used another writer's style, analysis, explanation and even personal observations without any attribution."

He said there were six other stories in which Dunphy used smaller sections of copy inappropriately, and there were eight stories in which Dunphy did not adequately attribute material from other publications. Fancher also said that the findings should be considered a baseline, not a conclusive accounting, given logistical problems.

Dunphy, a 37-year veteran of the Times who was a SABEW board member for most of the 1990s, said that his situation illustrated "how easy it is to be sloppy."

"Sloppiness is not an intent to plagiarize," he said in an e-mail the week before Fancher's follow-up column was published. "Should I have known it was inappropriate? Yes. But there was often a period of time between reporting a story and writing it, often with weeks of daily columns in between the two. It was easy to lose track of what I had from where."

Rex Seline, SABEW president, served with Dunphy on the SABEW board.

"On a personal level, this is very sad," Seline said. "Steve is not only a nice guy, he was a dedicated and diligent member of the SABEW board. When he stepped down, he said his plate was too full. Now we can fully grasp the consequences."

"Clearly," he added, "this is a cautionary tale."

In his September column, Fancher called Dunphy's behavior indefensible, but he said the problems don't reflect the totality of Dunphy's work.

"From 1997 to today, he wrote more than 1,200 daily 'Newsletter' columns and about 180 Sunday 'Economic Memo' columns, in addition to hundreds more bylined stories," Fancher said. "Dunphy points out that he also served many other functions — counselor to the business editor, mentor to staff members, public speaker and contact point for readers."

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The Knight-Bagehot Fellowship

Columbia University is now accepting applications for the Knight-Bagehot Fellowship in Economics and Business Journalism.

Administered by the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, the Knight-Bagehot program offers experienced journalists a full academic year of study at Columbia University in New York City. It includes courses at the Columbia Business School and other University departments, plus seminars and informal meetings with prominent guests.

The nine-month fellowship is open to journalists with at least four years of experience. Applicants need not be business specialists, but they should be able to demonstrate that greater knowledge of economics, business and finance could add depth and understanding to their reporting.

The ten Fellows selected for the 2005-2006 academic year will receive free tuition and a living-expense stipend of \$45,000. Qualified Knight-Bagehot Fellows may be eligible for a Master of Science in Journalism upon completion of this rigorous program.

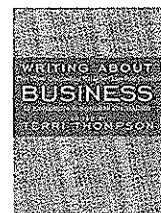
Deadline for the 2005-2006 academic year is March 1, 2005.

FOR APPLICATIONS, CONTACT:

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Knight-Bagehot Fellowship
Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism
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New York, NY 10027
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Writing About Business: The New Columbia Knight-Bagehot Guide to Economics and Business Journalism, edited by Terri Thompson (480 pp.; \$27.50 in paper; ISBN 0-231-11835-X). Available from online and regular bookstores, or from Columbia University Press: www.columbia.edu/cu/cup or 1-800-944-8648.



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Steffens: Covering chaos

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

areas don't. For example, if floods destroy rental houses in a poor area, absentee owners may not care to rebuild. If insured luxury homes are destroyed, then the sound of hammers can be heard within days of disaster's end.

Some resources

The University of Akron runs a project, Business Continuity and Resumption Partnership, at its Center for Emergency Management and Homeland Security Policy Research. It specializes in helping businesses recognize risk, and offers seminars designed to help business and industry resume operations after a disaster. Contact: David H. Hoover at dhoover@uakron.edu or 330-972-7789.

The Earthquake Engineering Research Institute in Oakland, Calif., helps create ways for structures to withstand earthquakes. Go to www.eeri.org or call 510-451-0905.

Insurance companies such as State Farm have research labs that test ways to curb loss, such as wind resistant roofs and building techniques, roofs that resist hail damage (a surprising huge payout), as well as road surfaces, highway marks and other construction details that can reduce accidents. Always a fodder for stories. Among others, contact the Insurance Information Institute at www.iii.org/media/hottopics/.

The Hazards Research Lab at the University of South Carolina has done research on poverty and vulnerability. The staff also can talk about agriculture damage. Its Web site — www.cla.sc.edu/geog/hrl — offers a downloadable map of previous paths of tornadoes. Susan L. Cutter is director; its number is 803-777-1699.

The Natural Hazards Research and Applications Information Center has reams of research on all types of disasters and their economic implications. The site is www.colorado.edu/hazards/. Email is hazctr@colorado.edu or call 303-492-6818.

If you have good story ideas on the economic side of disasters, email me and I'll share them in a future column.

Marty Steffens is SABEW Chair of Business and Financial Journalism at the University of Missouri. You can email her at steffensm@missouri.edu

Dunphy: Columnist resigns

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Bob Steele, director of the ethics program at Poynter Institute, has been hired as a consultant by the Times in the wake of the Dunphy revelations.

"The alarm bell is ringing pretty darn loud" for all of journalism, Steele said in an interview. That's especially true for specialty fields like business journalism, he said, because specialists are more likely to use the Internet and other sources to deepen their knowledge of a subject.

Steele declined to discuss specifics of the Dunphy case, but he said recent disclosures of plagiarism and fabrication disprove the notion that only inexperienced journalists are to blame.

"I hear way too often that this new generation, these new folks, don't understand it the way we did," he said.

Dunphy said he had intended to work five more years, but "I will now have to find something in another field to achieve that goal."

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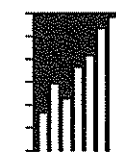
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or contact Andrew Leckey, Director of the Reynolds Center, at
703-715-3329.

"Reading 8Ks and 10Qs and the like can actually be exciting now."

— Patrick Garmoe
The Daily Herald, Chicago

"The exercises were helpful, giving real-world examples of filings we'll run into."

— Carrie Melago
Women's Wear Daily



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Survey results

ETHICS IN ACTION

Ethics survey shows budget cutbacks major concern

Blurring of lines between advertising and editorial still an issue for some

NEWROOM FINANCIAL PRESSURES may outweigh pressure from advertisers for today's business journalists. The recent SABEW ethics survey, which 80 of you patiently completed, found that only 57 percent consider advertising encroachment a growing threat to editorial integrity, but 79 percent consider budget cutbacks a serious concern. Another 12 percent see budget cutbacks as a moderate concern.

In a similar survey of SABEW members in 1992, 80 percent of the respondents said budget cutbacks were a "major" concern but 83 percent considered advertising encroachment a growing threat.

And while 90 percent of the respondents to the 1992 survey said it would be helpful to them if major organizations of journalists took an active position against advertising encroachment, only 83 percent responded positively to that suggestion this year.

The 2004 survey pays tribute to Gary Klott, the former SABEW president who helped spearhead the 1992 survey. Klott, a syndicated tax columnist and online financial journalist, died in 2002; this column is an effort to keep attention focused on the important ethical questions he raised for this organization and profession.

Half of the 24 questions on this year's survey had wording identical, or nearly identical, to the original so comparisons could be made. Additional questions explored issues that have emerged since 1992. (A future column will discuss more of those findings.)

While the survey suggests lessened concern about the line between advertising and news, the issue has hardly faded from our minds. Half of those answering this year's survey said there has been a blurring of the line between advertising and editorial content in recent years and 66 percent believe it has increased dur-

ing the recent economic slump.

Forty one percent of the respondents said direct or indirect pressure from advertisers has affected the way their news organization has reported, edited or displayed business news. That's from 45 percent who felt that way in 1992.

"Advertorials" appear to have grown in the past 12 years. Two-thirds of this year's respondents said their organizations produce advertiser-controlled sections or reports, vs. 56 percent 12 years ago. And fewer today (69 percent vs. 81 percent) feel these sections are properly identified as advertising.

The survey showed that business news organizations still rely on outside experts to provide articles, columns and analysis. But nearly all (96 percent) of this year's respondents felt that such experts are properly identified, compared to only 78 percent in 1992. In both years, however, nearly half of those surveyed felt conflicts of interest still exist, even with proper identification.

Several of this year's respondents noted in write-in comments that potential conflicts from contributors can be easily managed.

"Outside experts should write about issues, trends, ideas, etc.," one said, "not about themselves or their businesses. Such columns cannot be self-promoting. As long as they aren't, I don't have a problem with such contributed material."

This year's survey asked about a dimension of journalism that barely existed in 1992: online and multimedia operations. Nearly all (95 percent) of those surveyed said their staff provides news content for multiple platforms, but only 20 percent had received additional staff to support that work. Only a third said that working for multiple content platforms interferes with quality, though.

While most of those surveyed do not have final say over the appearance of business news on their organizations' Web sites, they do not seem concerned

that readers are confused about what is news and what is advertising on the site.

The 1992 survey was distributed to members attending SABEW's convention in Chicago and had 54 responses. At the time, SABEW membership was smaller than it is today (exact figures aren't available) and the convention was dominated by newspaper business editors.

In the past decade, association membership has swelled to include reporters as well as editors — and more broadcast, wire service and online journalists. This year's survey reached an estimated 3,400 members, via The Business Journalist, e-mail attachments and copies in the convention folders. There were 80 responses, a rate of 2.3 percent. I compiled the results with the generous help of Ronald H. MacDonald, a former broadcaster and retired professor of journalism at Washington and Lee University.

A few of those who completed this year's survey took issue with some of its questions and assumptions.

Asking if it would be helpful if journalism organizations took a stand against advertising encroachment "makes a judgment that may not be true," one complained. "You need to establish the fact first."

"This survey irritated me a bit," confessed another. "Not to preach, but it seems to me that the tension between newsrooms and the business side of journalism is a natural and necessary part of the journalism landscape. We in the newsroom owe our jobs, income and profession to the people on the 'other side' who sell ads against what we do. On the other hand, the business side people depend on us to maintain our independence and credibility because that's what gives their product much of its value to their clients. They need to push for as much as they can get us to give."

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Ethics: Resources a major issue

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But they depend on us to push back effectively."

Still, responses showed ample evidence that the editorial side does not always have adequate power to push back. Only 18 percent said they were aware of articles that have been published in exchange for, or in anticipation of, advertising, about the same percentage (15) as in 1992. Yet several described subtle pressure.

A typical comment: "All reporting staff are aware of importance of advertising and that management expects us to pay particular attention to biggest companies, which are often biggest advertisers. Also advertising staff occasionally pitches client stories a little strongly."

Of equal or greater concern, perhaps, is the sense that resources are being permanently diverted from news in the search for more revenue. Of those who believe advertising encroachment has increased during the recent economic slump, only 12 percent believe this trend will reverse once the economy recovers. In 1992, 25 percent felt the trend would reverse in better economic times.

And in addition to the 91 percent who cited budget cutbacks as a serious or moderate concern today, 87 percent felt the same way about inadequate staff and 80 percent felt that way about space.

One editor fretted that publishers are looking everywhere for revenue because of circulation declines. Yet "instead of promoting the heck out of journalism and building up the news section, they've strayed from the core of newspapering and resorted to special sections, focus sections and events."

"These are not bright days for the Fourth Estate, but I think it's an evolution," he continued. "I think that the modes and venues will evolve toward something more substantial."

Pam Luecke, a former business reporter and editor, is the Donald W. Reynolds Professor of Business Journalism at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Va. Reach her at lueckep@wlu.edu or (540) 458-8435.

SABEW Ethics Survey

Answers to comparable questions from the 1992 and 2004 surveys

(1992 wording) Are you aware of increasing pressure by advertisers to influence the content of business sections?
Yes: 75%
No: 25%

(2004 wording) Are you aware of pressure by advertisers to influence the content of business sections?
Yes: 74%
No: 26%

Has that pressure increased in recent years?
Yes: 30%
No: 67%
Not sure: 3%

Has such direct or indirect pressure by advertisers affected the way your news organization has reported, edited or displayed business news?
1992 2004
Yes: 45% Yes: 41%
No: 55% No: 59%

Has there been a blurring of the line between advertising and editorial content in recent years?
1992 2004
Yes: 60% Yes: 50%
No: 40% No: 50%

Does your publication produce advertiser-controlled sections or reports that contain editorial material produced by news staffs or outside wire services or syndicates?
1992 2004
Yes: 56% Yes: 68%
No: 44% No: 32%

If so, do you feel that these sections are properly identified as advertising?
1992 2004
Yes: 81% Yes: 69%
No: 19% No: 31%

Has the growth of these advertorial sections done any of the following?
Misled the reader?
1992 2004
Yes: 64% Yes: 39%
No: 36% No: 14%
Not sure: 47%

Reduced regular news coverage of those subjects?
1992 2004
Yes: 34% Yes: 26%
No: 66% No: 71%
Not sure: 3%

Taken advertising away from regular news pages?
1992 2004
Yes: 61% Yes: 44%
No: 39% No: 41%
Not sure: 15%

Do you know of articles that have been published in exchange for, or in anticipation of, advertising?
1992 2004
Yes: 15% Yes: 18%
No: 85% No: 82%

Would it be helpful to you if major organizations of journalists took an active position against advertising encroachment on editorial integrity?
1992 2004
Yes: 90% Yes: 83%
No: 10% No: 16%
Not sure: 1%

Some news organizations use outside experts to provide articles, columns and analysis. Does your publication use them?
1992 2004
Yes: 73% Yes: 67%
No: 27% No: 33%

Are such experts properly identified?
1992 2004
Yes: 78% Yes: 96%
No: 5% No: 4%
Not always: 17%

Do conflicts of interest exist, even with a proper identification?
1992 2004
Yes: 48% Yes: 46%
No: 52% No: 51%
Not sure: 3%

Are readers, listeners, and viewers misled into believing these experts are providing objective information?
1992 2004
Yes: 38% Yes: 24%
No: 62% No: 30%
Not sure: 46%

Do you see any problems with any of the following:
A stock broker writing about stocks?
1992 2004
Yes: 72% Yes: 75%
No: 28% No: 24%
Not sure: 1%

Investment managers or financial planners writing about investing?
1992 2004
Yes: 62% Yes: 65%
No: 38% No: 35%

Management consultants writing about corporate management and strategies?
1992 2004
Yes: 53% Yes: 54%
No: 47% No: 46%

Real estate brokers or lenders writing about real estate?
1992 2004
Yes: 74% Yes: 69%
No: 26% No: 31%

Bottom line, do you consider advertising encroachment a growing threat to editorial integrity?
1992 2004
Yes: 83% Yes: 57%
No: 17% No: 42%
Not sure: 1%

If yes, do you believe it has increased during the present economic slump?
1992 2004
Yes: 78% Yes: 66%
No: 22% No: 34%

If yes, do you believe it will diminish once the economy recovers?
1992 2004
Yes: 25% Yes: 12%
No: 75% No: 86%
Not sure: 2%

(1992 wording) Which of these problems facing business journalism today do you consider a major concern?
(2004 wording) How great a problem do you consider the following issues for business journalism today?

Encroachment by advertising pressure on editorial integrity?
1992 2004
58% Serious 28%
Moderate 50%
Small 22%

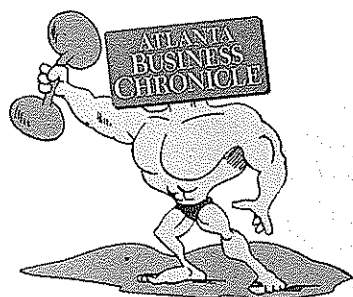
Budget cutbacks?
1992 2004
80% Serious 79%
Moderate 12%
Small 9%

Inadequate space?
1992 2004
76% Serious 37%
Moderate 43%
Small 20%

Inadequate staff?
1992 2004
80% Serious 53%
Moderate 34%
Small 14%

Fifty-four members responded to the 1992 survey at the SABEW convention. Eighty SABEW members responded to the 2004 survey, which was distributed to about 3,400 members via the organization's newsletter, e-mail and other means. With thanks to Ronald H. MacDonald, retired journalism professor at Washington and Lee University, for assistance compiling results.

COVER STORY >> ATLANTA BUSINESS CHRONICLE



Business weekly plays with the big boys

Commitment to community, fearless coverage make Atlanta Business Chronicle a force

By CHRIS ROUSH

IF HARD-HITTING BUSINESS journalism were baseball, then the Atlanta Business Chronicle would be the New York Yankees of weekly newspapers.

Six times in the past seven years, the weekly newspaper owned by Charlotte-based American City Business Journals has won SABEW's Best in Business Award in the weekly category. And in each of the past five years, the paper, which has a paid circulation of more than 30,000 and an estimated readership of 180,000, has won the weekly category in either spot news or enterprise.

No other weekly business newspaper in the country can match that record. Few daily sections have a similar performance.

"Too often, local business publications don't know where to draw the line between comprehensive, independent coverage of business issues and being suck-ups to the whatever corporate heavyweights are in the community," said John Sugg, senior editor of Atlanta alternative newspaper Creative Loafing and a former business journalist. "The Atlanta Business Chronicle demonstrates that a publication can be an invaluable tool for business while still being an aggressive and potent news product."

Current and former editors, as well as former staff writers, credit the publication's aggressive editorial coverage to factors that include a willingness to let reporters loose to cover a major story for weeks at a time; a publisher, Ed Baker, who backs the editorial staff when major advertisers complain; and a newsroom esprit de corps that helps young reporters learn the ropes.

"There was a belief from the very top of the organization down that we were going to prove that a weekly business journal could produce quality, award-winning investigative series," said former Editor David Rubinger. "It



What they're saying

Selected SABEW judges' comments about the Atlanta Business Chronicle:

2000: "Great storytelling, good anecdotal leads and a good use of graphics. A comprehensive, meaty report each week."

2001: "The newspaper is remarkable for its enterprise reporting. The sheer volume of local stories each week is impressive. The paper breaks news on a regular basis."

2002: "In a year when Georgia's revenues from corporate income tax were down, the Atlanta Business Chronicle's Meredith Jordan, working with resistance from state officials, uncovered a secret tax break for a select number of corporations."

2003: "Georgia taxpayers should stand up and cheer for the Atlanta Business Chronicle."

2004: "Enterprising, authoritative, comprehensive, well-presented. So smartly done that the Chronicle should conduct how-to clinics for other journals. ... A news monster that throws its weight around with enterprise reports."



also went above Ed to (ACBJ CEO) Ray Shaw."

Its performance has made its newsroom a prime recruiting spot for other business news organizations. In the past decade, a half-dozen reporters and editors have left the ABC, as it is known in Atlanta, for The Wall Street Journal. Two others have gone on to Bloomberg News. Another former reporter, Dean Anason, is now the Washington bureau chief of American Banker, while yet another, Kent Hoover, is Washington bureau chief for the paper's parent company.

"Even though we covered business, we immersed ourselves deeply into the community," said Rubinger, who was managing editor from 1993 to 1995 and then was editor when Anita Sharpe left for the Journal. "It allowed us to dig deep into our beats. That was partly because we came out once a week, and we had time to get to know these people on a much deeper level."

Rubinger left the paper in late 1998 and is now vice president of communications at Atlanta-based Equifax Inc.

One deep-digging project in 2003 won in the enterprise category in SABEW's contest. In a series of five stories about workers and shoppers being injured and killed in Home Depot stores, writer Jim Lovel exposed the Atlanta-based chain's soaring OSHA violations and the steps it took to keep store accidents secret.

"I routinely troll the Web looking for data sources and found my way to the OSHA site," said current Editor David Allison. "In the fall of 2002, I finally figured out how to use it. I discovered it was possible to look at the safety records of any company in the country. We started punching names in."

Lovel first looked at safety among all large Atlanta-based companies and then focused on the companies with the worst records.

"We knew it was going to be highly sensitive and handled it just so. He spent several months researching before we ever published our first story," said Allison.

Home Depot's reaction? According to Allison, it no longer talks to the paper. Home Depot did not respond to a request for comment on the Atlanta Business Chronicle.

The paper has 25 editorial staffers, including two full-time photographers and eight reporters. Although its staff size is roughly half that of the daily Atlanta Journal-Constitution, the paper prides itself on beating the competition.

"We always felt like it was a David-and-Goliath situation, and we fed off of that," Rubinger said. "We knew they were larger and had the resources. But that just motivated us to try to work harder."

"I cringed picking up the Thursday morning AJC."

The Chronicle, like many weekly ACBJ publications, went to press on Wednesday night and was available Friday morning. But like Rubinger on Thursdays, the business staff of the AJC often cringed picking up the weekly paper when it arrived on Friday morning. If one of them had been beat on a story, they likely would have to follow for the next day.

For instance, the weekly regularly scooped its larger competitor on the Northern Arc, a proposed highway around part of Atlanta.

By digging through county real estate records, reporter Sarah Rubenstein discovered that board members of the Atlanta Regional Commission and the state Department of Transportation and their relatives had bought land near the proposed highway's intersections.

The tedious assignment was given to Rubenstein, a new reporter fresh out of Dartmouth, to help her break into the government beat.

The story ran on the front page of the paper for more than two months until Gov. Roy Barnes, who had publicly supported the highway, held a news conference pulling its plug. (Allison said the Chronicle was not invited to the news conference.)

"Over those nine weeks, all of those stories ran on page 1," said Managing Editor Jim Molis. "It had been discussed to move it inside, but we decided it was a pressing issue and it was important."

Sugg's only criticism of the paper is its commentary.

"It's editorial pages are almost totally dominated by skills for the Republican Party, and it's a big error to assume that Democrats are somehow anti-business," said Sugg, a former business reporter for The Tampa Tribune and one of the original reporters at the South Florida Business Journal, another ACBJ publication. "Some of the skepticism of ABC reporters could add to the quality of its editorial pages."

Still, Allison is working on making sure the paper continues its winning streak next year.

"We can never relax around here," he said. "Week in and week out, we strive for consistent quality. The editors try to actively praise our staff for their successes. We let them know what we want them to do and support them for their efforts and praise them profusely when they accomplish something."

Chris Roush, an assistant journalism professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, competed against the ABC from 1994 to 1997 as a reporter for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

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Armed and capable with knowledge, experience in your bag of tricks

*"You just don't understand ..."
"Our business model is just too
complex to explain in simple terms
..."
"It's a new paradigm ..."*

YOU'VE HEARD THESE lines, haven't you? They might have been spoken during an impassioned pitch for story about a "great" new business.

More interestingly, you might have heard the same words from angry sources complaining about a story.

More problematically, you might have heard the same thing from your publisher or editor, relaying complaints they've heard.

The inflated pitches are easy to dismiss.

The complaints less so, particularly when they're served up as challenges by worried bosses. Sure, the boss probably knows it's mostly bluster when an aggrieved source complains. If not, tell the boss that Enron and Worldcom used the same arguments.

One lesson of all the recent scandals is that if it's truly too complex to be explained, it's probably going to end up in court someday. (Just ask Ken Lay.) After all, an MBA is a valuable advanced degree, but it is not the key to a secret world of special understanding. And a big paycheck, fancy title and slick suit do not guarantee integrity, candor or intelligence.

Indeed, smart people sometimes wear khakis and come armed with nothing more than a reporter's notebook and a quiver of pointed questions. Dedication and diligence don't carry a price tag.

But that doesn't mean the complaints don't sting. And, alas, sometimes we do make mistakes, dedication and diligence notwithstanding.

So what are we up against, and what can we do about it?

Let's start by acknowledging that a big paycheck may not buy credibility, but it can buy polish, presence and

access.

Not only can an angry CEO make a private call to the publisher, he or she can unleash a horde of well-suited soldiers to carry a message. If it's a big company, the soldiers are usually quite capable professionals.

And don't forget that the major corporations employ more people to distribute their message than any paper deploys to cover an industry, let alone a single company. And many of the corporate types — or the additional hired hands from the outside agencies — are better paid than the reporters assigned to the beat. (Remind your boss of that, if you're looking for a little spark.)

None of that makes the corporate types evil or corrupt. It just means that they're capable of mounting a spirited defense. On the surface, it can be an unfair battle.

Fortunately, a little intelligence — backed up with a little knowledge — can level the playing field.

That's where you, as an eager reporter or a careful editor, need to be working strategically. Don't wait for the complaint. Arm yourself with knowledge now.

Seek out training, either through SABEW or any of the many programs that now offer training in business journalism. Look at local resources for expertise. Some papers have found professors to teach accounting or economics to the entire staff. Others have sought out local professionals for topical briefings.

Each method or program has something to commend it. Andrew Leckey, for instance, has been on the road for the Reynolds Center at API, offering a variety of fundamental business lessons for working reporters. Marty Steffens at Missouri, Josh Mills at Baruch and several others are teaching undergraduate classes in business journalism.

But I'll put in a plug here for SABEW. We serve all members through The Business Journalist. We

also offer the annual conference and fall workshops, with a wide variety of sessions.

We've found that the conferences and workshops are a good way for editors to share ideas. They're also a good way for reporters covering common topics — personal finance or technology, for instance — or with a common interest — like investigative reporting — to enjoy advanced training.

Sure, you knew that. I'm preaching to the choir. The catch, as you may already know, is money. When budgets are tight, many papers make the first cuts in training or administrative travel.

Some crustier, old-school editors will wonder why you need to go hang out with a bunch of other editors or reporters anyway. What good is that?

Of course, hanging out with other editors or reporters is exactly the point. No organization can be prescient enough to identify every topic you'll eventually need expertise in. But SABEW offers something just as valuable: contacts.

More than once when I've encountered thorny issues, I've picked up the phone to call a SABEW colleague for guidance. (Thanks, Allan and Randy and Kathy and ...) Without SABEW, I would not have known them.

For those of us who work for newspaper groups, there's also a bonus. Top-down encouragement and newsletter chatter can't foster as much good will as meeting colleagues and swapping tales at a conference. I work for a Knight Ridder paper, and our editors and reporters always gather at the annual conference.

Corporate doesn't plan or sponsor the sessions. But through those meetings, I now know and trust people like Glenn Burkins in Charlotte, Vinu Goel in San Jose, Brad Lehman in Miami, Chris Lester in Kansas City and Mike Sante in Detroit, to name



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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Honoring our best

Contests, fellowships important part of organization's mission

JOURNALISM AWARDS AND fellowships acknowledge the superior talents of an organization's membership. SABEW does this by sponsoring the annual Best in Business contest and fellowships at workshops and our annual conference.

SABEW is not alone in these sorts of activities; most journalism organizations flaunt the best in their field by honoring their members who produce the best stories and projects.

Business is a universal theme that connects all journalism — every industry and organization from the giant corporations to the small non-profits have a bottom line that must be understood to ensure accurate reporting.

Because continued training through fellowships helps advance learning and careers, SABEW routinely seeks sponsors to help defray the costs for selected fellows to attend each of our workshops and conferences.

(For a list of organizations offering journalism contests and/or fellowships, go to www.sabew.org.)

The Best in Business contest recognizes excellence in business journalism. This year SABEW received a record 735 entries, a 22 percent increase over last year's 604 entries. Judges selected winners in four categories distributed over 23 circulation classifications ranging from small to large and including weekly and real time.

It's a great triumph to earn a BIB award, but it's also a huge endeavor to pick the winners. The BIB contest is possible largely because of the enormous efforts of volunteer journalists from all sizes and types of business publications. It all starts at the board level

with contest committee chairs Greg McCune and Gail DeGeorge. They round up seasoned editors and writers to oversee nearly a dozen judging panels who recruit a handful of judges for each panel. This is when the work really begins as they pore over hundreds of the best business stories published, discuss each story and finally provide a critical analysis of each. This process continues until the winners are selected.

All this activity will begin again soon. The deadline for this year's contest entry will be Feb. 1, 2005. Be sure to visit www.sabew.org for more information on the contest and fellowships offerings to future conferences and workshops.

REUTERS Business Journalism Graduate Fellowship at Maryland

People of color interested in business journalism are invited to apply for a fellowship at the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism funded by Reuters, the international news and information company.

The 12-month master's degree program includes a part-time reporting internship in the Washington bureau of Reuters news service during the fall and in the Merrill College's Capital News Service reporting bureau in Washington during the spring. The fellowship covers all tuition and includes a stipend of up to \$14,000.

DEADLINE: FEB. 1, 2005

www.journalism.umd.edu/financial/reuters.html

Contact Associate Dean Christopher Callahan at 301-405-2432 or ccallahan@jmail.umd.edu for more details.



PHILIP MERRILL
COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM

Chair sending three to workshops

The SABEW Chair provided three scholarships to the investigative and personal finance writers' workshops in Atlanta in October, an award of about \$430 each.

The recipients were:

- Mike Lee, an agribusiness and biotech reporter for the Sacramento Bee, who was most interested in the investigative track.
- Mike Ivey, a business reporter for the Madison (Wis.) Capital Times, who was looking to improve his knowledge of personal finance.
- George Hohmann, the business editor of the Charleston (W.Va.) Daily Mail, who planned to attend the agate boot camp.

Marty Steffens, who is the SABEW Chair at the University of Missouri, has made other such scholarships in the past, including sending three writers to the workshops last year in Denver and three other journalists to the annual conference in Fort Worth.



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BIZ BUZZ

New editors at sections in Boston, Baltimore, Miami

FROM BOSTON TO Baltimore to Miami, E-I-Cs have named new biz eds in hopes of jumpstarting coverage of business and luring new readers.

Lisa Gibbs, a senior writer at *Money* magazine, is the new executive biz ed at *The Miami Herald*, a post vacant since last fall when SABEW governor George Haj left to take charge of the business department at the *Houston Chronicle*.

Gibbs' hiring is a homecoming of sorts. She began her journalism career as a reporter for the *Herald* 17 years ago. She later led the *Daily Business Review* in Broward County and was an ed for *Florida Trend* magazine. She's spent the past four years covering a variety of financial subjects for *Money*.

"We were extremely impressed with her caring for the *Herald* and her vision of what we can be as a department and a newspaper," says executive ed Tom Fiedler.

At the *Baltimore Sun*, SABEW governor Bernie Kohn is the new AME for business. He comes to the post after nearly four years as night biz ed at *The Washington Post* and a stint as biz ed of *The Tampa Tribune*.

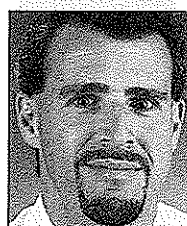
In a memo to employees, the *Sun's* top brass says Kohn possesses "the financial journalism experience, creativity and leadership abilities to build on the momentum" of the biz department during the past few years.

The *Boston Herald*, seeking to increase its metabolism, promotes columnist Cosmo Macero Jr. to biz ed, replacing veteran Ted Bunker, who left the newspaper.

"We are really going to pour high



Lisa Gibbs



Bernie Kohn



Jon Chesto



Cosmo Macero Jr.



David Thomas



Mark Bowder

octane in the engine of this department, and just tear ass after all the exciting business news in Boston," Macero tells *The Boston Phoenix*. He plans to emphasize coverage of young business

"We were extremely impressed with [Lisa Gibbs'] caring for the *Herald* and her vision of what we can be as a department and a newspaper."

Tom Fiedler

Miami Herald executive editor

leaders and add "a little more pizzazz and splash into our business coverage."

Staff reporter Eric Convey is assistant biz ed, replacing Cromwell Schubarth, who has left the paper.

Of the changes, Kevin Convey, the *Herald's* new managing ed and a former biz reporter, says: "The idea was that we felt that the section needed new leadership and that it needs to go in a different direction." (BTW, he's no relation to Eric Convey).

Boss Watch

Herald biz reporter Jon Chesto is the new biz ed at *The Patriot Ledger* in Quincy, Mass. He joins after covering financial services, high technology, utilities and energy for two years at the *Herald* and time with the *Ottaway* newspapers writing about politics and courts.

At *The Press-Enterprise* in California, Mark Bowder moves from assistant to biz ed, succeeding Cindy Allen, who becomes features ed. Reporter Adam Eventov is promoted to assistant biz ed.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

Seline: Training, great coverage not mutually exclusive

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

just a few. In turn, we've worked on projects together, consulted on stories and shared tips.

Financially, the argument against spending on training and travel is more basic: Would you rather use the money to cover

news, or to go to a conference?

That's a terrible choice, and given the amount of money involved, something of a false confrontation. One would hope that a cheap trip or two for training would not undermine the news travel budget.

But if you need to muster an argument

when you're making your annual budget proposal, remind your bosses that they're staking the future of the enterprise on reporters getting it right. Do they want to send them out unarmed?

In short, go back to the beginning and the complaint, "You just don't understand ..."

BIZ BUZZ

CONTINUED

David Thomas, managing ed of the *Financial Post* in Canada, joins *The Globe And Mail* as investment ed. His appointment follows the naming of Stephen Northfield to deputy national ed and David Parkinson to writing a daily column about the financial markets... The *Globe* and *Mail's* biz ed, Giles Gherson, leaves for the E-I-C job at *The Toronto Star*.



Jon Markman

At *The Herald-Sun* in Durham, N.C., reporter Anne Krishnan takes over as assistant biz ed. She's been with the daily since 2001.

On the East Coast

The New York

Times reorganizes its coverage of media businesses, naming media ed Lorne Manly as chief media writer and moving one-time mutual funds reporter Ed Wyatt to the publishing beat.

Michael Cieply joins as movie editor from the *Los Angeles Times*, where he served as a writer and editor in the biz section.

The *Street.com* lands Jon Markman, a portfolio manager and former reporter at *MSN Money* and *LAT*, as a contributor to *RealMoney.com*, where he pens a daily stocks column.

Jason Pontin, former ed at *Red Herring* and *The Acumen*, is named E-I-C of *Technology Review*, a magazine published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to track cutting-edge research. He succeeds Robert Buder, who became editor-at-large... *VARBusinesses* hires Alexander Wolfe and Cristina McEachern as reporters covering technology and the buyers of technology systems, respectively. Marilyn O'Hara is promoted from associate to research director.

In the South

Echo Montgomery Garrett is the new E-I-C of *Atlanta Woman* magazine. A vet-

eran writer about small businesses, she spent six years as an editor at *McCall's* and *Venture* magazines before starting a career as a freelancer. Her work has appeared in *Business Week*, *Money* and *Inc.*

Florida Trend magazine hires Gina Edwards as a project reporter. She's been at the *Naples Daily News* since 1996, most recently directing the paper's daily business coverage. Those duties have been assumed by senior staff writer Laura Layden.

At the *Austin American-Statesman* in Texas, reporter Dan Zehr joins from the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* to cover the computer industry... Reporter Tom Wilemon of *The Sun Herald* in Biloxi, Miss., moves from local news to cover the casino industry. He replaces Tim Boone who left for *The Advocate* in Baton Rouge, La.

In the West

The *Seattle Times* hires Kristi Heim from the *San Jose Mercury News* to be a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

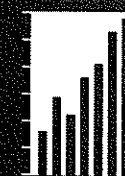
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BIZ BUZZ CONTINUED

technology enterprise reporter. She knows Seattle, having spent four years there covering Microsoft. She also has written for the *Asian Wall Street Journal* and *Asiaweek* magazine.

At The San Diego Union-Tribune, reporter **Kathryn Balint** has returned to biz from metro to cover telecommunications. She succeeds **Jennifer Davies** who took over the sporting goods/tourism/consumer issues beat from **Conor Dougherty** who left for *The Wall Street Journal*. In addition, **Lynn O' Shaughnessy**, author of several personal finance books, is writing a weekly column for the Union-Tribune.

Candice Choi joins the *Los Angeles Daily News* from the *San Mateo Daily Times* to cover retailing and small business.

On The Air

CNBC's **Maria Bartiromo** takes over the weekend hosting duties of "The Wall Street Journal Report" replacing **Consuelo Mack** who remains with CNBC. The change led to the cancellation of Bartiromo's "special reports" program...Public radio's "Marketplace" announces that domestic ed **Cheryl Devall** is joining the Center for the Study of Journalism and Democracy at the University of Southern California.



Cheryl Devall

Back to School

SABEW governor **Joshua Mills** reports an expansion of the graduate program in business journalism at *Baruch College/City University of New York*, which he heads. This fall, a 15-credit certificate program is being offered to working journalists who already have a master's degree in journalism or on-the-job experience. Also for the first time courses are open to non-degree students.

Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism names 10 **Knight-Bagehot Fellows** in economics and business reporting for the current academic year. They include: **Eleena de Lisser**, who writes about the travel industry for *The Wall Street Journal*; **Jake Keaveny**, who covers Wall Street for *Reuters*; **Carlos Lozada**, managing ed of *Foreign Policy* magazine; **Aparna Mukherjee**, a producer at *Bloomberg Broadcast News*; **Stephen Ohlemacher**, a government reporter for *The Plain Dealer* in Cleveland; **Sally Sherry**, a reporter at *KGTV* in San Diego, and **Richard C. ten Wolde**, who writes about mutual funds for *SmartMoney* magazine.

Andrew Leckey, director of the **Donald W. Reynolds National Center for Business Journalism** at the *American Press Institute*, joins the Knight-Bagehot advisory board.

In addition, the J-school has hired former *Wall Street Journal* page-one editor **James B. Stewart** to be its first

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

SABEW 2005

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BIZ BUZZ CONTINUED

Bloomberg Professor of Business and Economic Journalism. Stewart, a staff writer for the *New Yorker* magazine and author of eight books, has been "one of the journalism school's most popular adjunct professors for years," says Dean **Nicholas Lemann**.

News Looks

The *Sun Herald* in Biloxi, Miss., moves its business report from inside the sports section to the back cover of that section Tuesdays through Saturdays. It also cut markets agate to one page, promising to use the extra space for more news, says biz ed **Lisa Monti**. There are daily themes such as personal finance on Wednesdays, the casino industry on Thursdays and real estate on Fridays...At the *Alameda Times-Star* in California, personal finance is getting more attention on Fridays...A redesign at the *Houston Chronicle* has meant more advice on investing, personal finance and careers.

After an absence of 13 years, *The Buffalo News* has brought back **News Power**, its consumer protection column begun in 1967. The latest incarnation is written by local new reporter **Karen Robinson** and appears in *The Link*, a new Monday section devoted to personal finance and technology, says editor **Margaret Sullivan**.

And The Winner Is...

The *Wall Street Journal's* **Joel Millman** was among this year's recipients of the **Maria Moors Cabot Prizes** from *Columbia University* for reporting on Latin America. Millman was recognized for his reporting from the U.S.-Mexico border, in particular, economic issues in the region...**Minnesota Business**, **Mainebiz**, **Los Angeles Business Journal** and **Arkansasbusiness.com** took top all-around honors in the 2004 *Association of Area Business Publications* awards.

Life After Journalism

Tom Nuttle, who wrote for the *Boston Herald's* biz section from 1987 to 1996, now heads up a big band in Massachusetts, playing the clarinet and saxophone as well as directing, reports his old paper.

Passings

Richard Dilsaver, business editor of *The Wichita Eagle and Beacon* in Kansas and later a business reporter for *KWCH-TV*, died at age 77.

Paul Kemezis, 57, who wrote about energy issues for several publications through his company, **Kemezis News**, died in an automobile accident.

Karen Southwick, 53, author of five books and reporter/editor for the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *San Jose Mercury News*, *Forbes ASAP* and *CNET News.com*, died of cancer. Her brother **Ken** tells the *Mercury News*, "She just had a tremendous amount of energy, and was able to focus that into things she liked to do."

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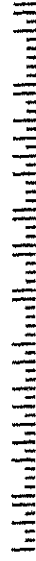
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