

Outreach Brings Hot Topics to Community

WOMEN'S HEALTH: CUTTING THROUGH THE STATIC

—By Lisa Rapaport '06

Susan F. Wood was driving home after quitting her job as women's health director at the Food and Drug Administration when she nearly wrecked her car, stunned to hear news of her own resignation make the day's top stories on *National Public Radio*.

Wood quit in August 2005 to protest the agency's indefinite delay of a decision on whether to allow over-the-counter sales of the emergency contraception drug Plan B. It came after most of the medical community, including the FDA's own scientific advisors, had already decided the morning-after

pill was safe for non-prescription use. In this instance, the FDA "disregarded quite clearly the scientific and medical evidence and abused the regulatory system," Wood said.

"It was related to sex so it got more press. Women's health is so much broader than reproductive health. But sadly, it's so often reproductive

health issues that catch fire," she said, setting off spirited debate with her keynote address at "Women's Health: The Press and Public Policy," a conference sponsored by the Knight-Wallace Fellows at Michigan, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the University of Michigan Health System Women's Health Program.

There were few ground rules for the talks that followed. Charles R. Eisendrath, director of the Knight-Wallace Fellows, asked only that reproductive health and abortion not dominate discussions. "I think abortion overshadows everything because it is no longer just a health issue for the public, [but] a political issue as well," he said.

Talk among some of the nation's top regulators, doctors, scientists, activists and journalists at the conference touched

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HOVEY LECTURE: MAKE WAY FOR THE CITIZEN JOURNALISTS

—By Dan Gillmor '87

Let's take a look ahead, say to April 2007. The Pulitzer Prizes have just been awarded for work done in 2006. Fresh off its almost heroic efforts in the days and weeks after Hurricane Katrina, the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* wins its second consecutive Public Service medal.

The 2007 award is for the paper's powerful exposés of corruption, cronyism and other malfeasance, not to mention sheer ineptitude, in how billions of dollars in federal taxpayers' money was stolen, wasted or went unaccounted for.

The Pulitzer jury takes special note of the paper's methods. The citation for the medal cites "an innovative collaboration with 'citizen journalists' in reporting and telling stories of wrongdoing."

What has gone into that collaboration? Many things. But the essential one was this: involvement of citizens as journalists. As the

Times-Picayune writes in its Pulitzer contest entry form: "Our citizen reporters were as essential to this coverage as our staff, and more essential than the standard human sources we have always relied on to tell us what is happening, and why. The citizen journalists, responding to our invitations and consistent guidance throughout the process, did enormous amounts of original reporting. They examined local, state and federal records, and documented what they'd found. They conducted interviews. They told us, and the rest of the world via blogs and online forums, their personal stories. We shared preliminary findings with them, and they responded with a flood of corrections, clarifications, data and new topics to pursue."

The entry continues, "We were, of course, responsible for

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Susan Wood, former director of the FDA's Office of Women's Health, on why science should be strong and free.



Hovey Lecturer Dan Gillmor '87: Citizen journalists are the future.

Steve Kruma

Steve Kruma

From the Head Fellow

—By Charles R. Eisendrath '75

TELLING ROTARY ABOUT THE NEWS BUSINESS

We in the business have known its ills for decades. Only recently, however, have Main Street groups invited me to explain what's going on in American journalism. Its serial implosions mystify them. To my civic-minded Rotary hosts, it seems like a sudden tornado that slams into the store without warning.

More like Wal-Mart, I tell them, a commercial neutron bomb that sucks the life out of downtown while leaving the buildings intact. I start with simple questions.

● **Citizenship:** How many think democracy needs an informed public? How many read a newspaper or check broadcast news on a daily basis? Everyone.

● **Civic affairs:** Who can name two bills being discussed in city hall before there's a vote, i.e., when there's time to register opinions with their representatives? Not many. How about at the statehouse? Practically nobody. Congress? Between crises, only a half-dozen or so feel informed about even a couple of bills circulating through Congress.

Audiences seem baffled by their shared unawareness. So I explain that most news organizations don't have their reporters just hanging around important places waiting for something to happen anymore. Nor do they cover much of the daily humdrum of public life. Broadcasters choose stories for ratings over news value, a practice that has helped make Comedy Central's fake news look, well, a lot like actual news. With audience temperature rising, it's time for pop quiz #3.

● **Business practices:** How many of you business people, I ask, make a profit of five percent on sales? Lots. How about

ten percent? One or two. Twenty percent? Nobody, and some giggles of disbelief. Well then, how about 50 percent? At that point, somebody asks whether the speaker is putting them on. So I tell them what everyone in journalism knows:

Fifty percent is what prosperous television stations make. Some newspapers also earn profits in that range but in recent years they've averaged 20-25 percent. That's still double what they earned for several decades ending in the mid-1980s, when the steadily increasing profits engineered by corporate owners replaced steady community coverage as the must-do goal of all but the very best, exceptional few.

On Main Street, these figures are incendiary and there's gasoline close to this fire—right down the road in Detroit. A five percent profit is what auto companies (U.S. or foreign) make in banner years; usually it has been half that. Their margins are slim because of what it takes to make the product reliable.

What would have to come out of, say, a minivan, to enable its manufacturer to make twice as much money? How about ten times more? What would happen to the tires? Brakes? Gasoline tank? Would anyone want soccer moms relying on those things to drive the team around?

Cheapening the journalistic machinery produces just the results you'd expect—freaky collisions, frequent breakdowns and fraudulent claims. Faked newspaper circulation figures are one direct result of emphasizing profit over product. So, I argue, are many of the editorial scandals. Their root cause is a stampede for sizzle, which is supposed to build audiences and, thus, advertising. Columnist Dave Barry captured the morale crash by imagining the new ideal newsroom—one reporter reduced to looking out the window because actually leaving the building to look for news might

cost money. At this point, someone usually asks, "Who let this happen?"

Media concentration has simplified the answer. Thousands of individual owners have been replaced by a handful of corporations. Fewer than a dozen CEOs control most of what a nation of 300 million sees, hears and reads as news. Although what has happened to journalism on their watch is simply terrifying for the public life of the country, those who run these companies are not evil. Like the rest of us, they merely respond to a reward structure. Theirs, they say, is determined by Wall Street, which tells them "More profit in good times and more profit in bad times; less profit and you're gone."

I take them at their word. Wall Street, however, isn't the only street that matters to media moguls. Main Street is also important because it represents advertisers. After bemoaning media concentration for decades as a board member of every do-good group that invited me (Committee of Concerned Journalists, Project on the State of the American Newspaper, Project for Excellence in Journalism, etc.), I've found something to like about it. To reach all the people who matter, you only need ten e-mails. I offer them.

Of course these e-mail addresses are only the ones generally available; each magnate doubtless has private channels. But somebody in each shop has the job of telling the boss what's going on out there. Editors get letters to the editor; why not letters to the CEO? Ten thousand e-mails every week (Rotary alone has 400,000 American members) politely asking for more quality news might enable Main Street to talk back to Wall Street. Conditions seem favorable. Media flop is one of America's few non-partisan social issues.



'God's Assistant' from Rwanda Lunches at Wallace House

—By *Graham Griffith '06*

In April 1994, when Rwanda was a charnel house of genocide, one man opened the door to refuge—and helped spare a man who would become a Knight-Wallace Fellow, Thomas Kamilindi. Eleven years later, they met for lunch at Wallace House.

The film *Hotel Rwanda* tells the story of Paul Rusesabagina, a hotel manager who, during the height of the genocide, used savvy and remarkable courage to convert the Hôtel des Milles Collines in Kigali into a de facto refugee camp. In doing so, he saved the lives of hundreds of his fellow Rwandans, including Thomas, defying the genocide in a manner that was only too exceptional.

For his heroism, Rusesabagina was awarded the 2005 Wallenberg Award by the University of Michigan, and during his visit to Ann Arbor in October, the Fellows were honored to meet with him over lunch. We watched *Hotel Rwanda* in anticipation of Rusesabagina's visit, and as we watched, we not only gained a portal into the horror of the genocide, but also began to understand, in some small but profound manner, the personal strength of one of our own colleagues.

Thomas joins us through funding provided each year for a journalist who is "under credible threat of death for telling the truth." Those words alone are chilling enough, but every time Thomas spoke in our first days together, we recognized that here, with us at Wallace House, for our lectures, our dinners, our discussions, was a man for whom the pursuit of journalism was no mere professional career choice. Thomas's research at the university—hate media and its impact—likewise, is no mere academic exercise.

Thanks to *Hotel Rwanda*, Paul Rusesabagina's story is well known. And because of the film, Thomas's story is public knowledge as well, even if the name Kamilindi is not yet internationally recognized. As we watched *Hotel Rwanda* with him, we realized we were watching more than a portrait of horrific events that took place halfway around the globe. We were watching a piece of Thomas's life.

Thomas resigned from state-run radio, controlled by the Hutu-dominated government, a few months before the worst of the genocide began. He refused to deliver news reports in which Rwandan Tutsis were referred to as cockroaches. Himself a Hutu, Thomas is married to a Tutsi (as is Paul

Rusesabagina), and, after Rwanda's Hutu president died in a plane crash, he was accused of sympathizing with the Tutsi rebels. While in the Milles Collines, he phoned in a report of the genocide to European radio. As a result, Hutu forces arrived at the hotel and demanded that Rusesabagina hand over "that dog [Kamilindi]." Rusesabagina refused. It was one of three times that spring when Thomas was nearly killed.

Thomas tells us that he is thankful for every day he is alive, and calls Rusesabagina "God's Assistant." But Thomas is understandably reluctant to speak of some of the worst horrors of that time. He lost family members, including a daughter, and one recognizes in any conversation about Rwanda with Thomas that he is living with images exponentially more horrific than any we see on a movie screen. And so, at the close of the film, Wallace House was silent. Even a room full of journalists, who make their living from words, was speechless when confronted with the depths of Thomas's loss. Thomas, our colleague, our friend, may himself be called "God's Assistant," because he lives to bear witness.

—*Graham Griffith '06 is a senior producer with WBUR (Boston).*

Thomas Kamilindi '06 of Rwanda (standing left), among the first to break the Rwandan genocide story, introduces Paul Rusesabagina, the real-life manager of Hotel Rwanda.



Martin Vogel, UM Photo Services

—Women's Health, continued from page 1

on everything from mammograms to marketing scams while examining media coverage of women's health in the United States and around the world.

Gina Kolata, medical and science reporter for *The New York Times*, laid down a simple rule for health journalism that became the refrain of the day. "If you don't ask the right question, you might end up with something that is not the whole story."

Take breast cancer. We have all heard that catching cancer early is always best, and we have all heard that women need mammograms and breast self-exams. "The risk of screening is almost never discussed by the media," Kolata said. Reporters have to ask, "What is the risk of over-diagnosis?"

All cancers are not equally lethal—some aren't lethal at all. But when screenings turn them up, people want them treated, and all treatments carry some risk, she said. And if it wasn't really bad cancer you have to ask, "If there is a risk and no benefit, what is the point of this treatment?" Kolata said.

Sometimes, though, the question is whether the media covers a story to much.

Joanne Silberner, health policy correspondent for *NPR*, offered an oft-told joke to explain why certain stories sometimes dominate the news: "News is something that happens to editors. It's a cynical view of the world, but there's something to it."

Silberner told the story behind the stories *NPR* did on hormone replacement therapy. In July 2002, scientists abruptly halted a study of this menopause treatment. Millions of women were taking prescriptions mixing estrogen and progestin to ward off brittle bones, heart disease and even wrinkles. Then, researchers said hormone replacement therapy could increase risk for blood clots and breast cancer.

"This was something that was happening to women around the office and everyone wanted to know more about it," Silberner said.

Vivian W. Pinn heads women's health research at the National Institutes of Health. She was in charge of quickly getting word out to women and their doctors when the hormone therapy study was stopped. "In this case, the media helped us," Pinn said. It was a moment when reporters were first responders to a public health crisis.

Sometimes, though, the media can create the perception of crisis where none

and "getting yelled at for writing that smoking was a risk for women taking oral contraceptives." Back then, *Cosmo* had a lot of tobacco advertisements.

Times have changed, at least with respect to the prevalence of tobacco ads in the media. However, Cynthia A. Pearson, executive director of the National Women's Health Network, said reporters must persist with questions about money. "Journalism today is inextricably targeted with marketing to women," Pearson said. Reporters must always ask: "Was the story provided by somebody with financial



Cynthia A. Pearson of the National Women's Health Network, Frances M. Visco of the National Breast Cancer Coalition, and Michigan Surgeon General Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom (left to right) field questions from the audience at the Women's Health Conference.

exists, lamented Myrna Blyth, author and former editor of *Ladies' Home Journal*. "We see women as victims of stress," Blyth said. "There's a word coined for the holiday season—'Stressmas,' as if women can't cope with stuffing a turkey and wrapping a few presents."

An idea like Stressmas makes news, Blyth said, because pharmaceutical companies see an opportunity to sell drugs that treat this made-up malady. "Without pharmaceutical ads, many magazines wouldn't exist and there would be no evening news," she said.

Joann Ellison Rodgers, author and director of media relations for the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, recounted one story altered to avoid annoying an advertiser. She recalled doing an assignment for the women's magazine *Cosmopolitan*

and "getting yelled at for writing that smoking was a risk for women taking oral contraceptives." Back then, *Cosmo* had a lot of tobacco advertisements.

interest in the outcome? Is there a creation of disease where none exists?" Marcia C. Inhorn, professor of health behavior and director of the University of Michigan Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies, said that, too often, reporters create the impression that certain medical conditions are more prevalent than they really are.

Inhorn said the media misses many of the "mundane realities" of women's health in the developing world to focus on "headline grabbers that harm far fewer women." There's too much news of relatively small problems—genital cutting, honor killings, dowry deaths and obstetric fistulas—and too little news of widespread medical issues—lack of access to high-quality reproductive health care, reproductive tract infections and maternity and pediatric health services.

Activist and cancer survivor Frances M. Visco, head of the National Breast Cancer Coalition, offered a powerful motivation for reporters to do all they can to get medical stories right. "These issues are complex. They cannot be reduced to sound bites. Individual women often make the wrong decision based on misinformation in sound bites."

—Lisa Rapaport '06 is a reporter with the Sacramento Bee.

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what we printed, so we applied journalistic principles and practices to this project. We explained to our citizen journalists that they were responsible for their words, that the laws of defamation applied to them as they do to us. We verified identities. We did extra fact checking when potential legal questions might have arisen.

“With few exceptions, we found the citizen journalists’ work to be of exceptionally high quality. They cared, because this story was in the end about their own lives as citizens of this region and this nation. In the end, we could not have done this work without them.”

Oh, and by the way, one more report from the future. The voters who read these stories got mad. When the 2008 elections came around, they got revenge. And in a region of the country where good and honest government has frequently been an oxymoron, things began to change.

OK, nice story. I’m frequently accused of naïveté. I may even be nuts. But I’m definitely an optimist.

I don’t know if something like this will occur as soon as I’d like. But I do know that something like this scenario is coming.

It’s coming because of the way media are evolving. If we’re both smart and lucky, the media will be an ecosystem that is vastly richer and more diverse than we have today. It will become a multi-directional conversation.

The grassroots activities that I find so inspiring are happening not just in journalism, but all across society.

In business, for example, the web and open source concepts are transforming not just software development but the relationship companies have with their customers and other constituencies. In the arts, the democratization of once-unaffordable tools of production and distribution are unleashing creativity on a fantastic scale. In war zones, smart leaders are pushing information and much of the decision-making out to the edges and away from central commands. They’re learning, often the hard way, that agility can outfox brute force.

I could talk for days about the potential for aggregating the stand-alone folks—bloggers, podcasters and the like—into a coherent news medium. Smart people are working on this right now, and making progress.

But I don’t want the Big Media to disappear. The work they do is too important. It’s essential for professional journalists to adapt to what’s happening. They can bring valuable principles and practices to this table. And they can serve society’s interests—and their own—in the process.

Bringing more voices into the conversation strikes me as an obviously good idea from a journalistic point of view. The long-range financial salvation of what some people sneeringly call the MSM, or mainstream media, may depend—at least in part—on a collaboration with what I like to call the “former audience.”

We all know that in some ways journalism has never been better. In print and broadcast and on the web, the best people in our craft are doing brilliant work.

But if we agree that democracy requires an informed citizenry, we should be furious at the wider failings of journalism in recent years. I’m glad that Big Media people seem to have located their spines in the coverage of the Katrina disaster.

As Bill Moyers said recently, “The quality of journalism and the quality of democracy are inseparable.”

We all know the reasons for the quality problems. Financial pressures from Wall Street. A short public attention span. Competitive instincts that go wrong. I’ll add one: For the past century, we in mass media have been giving lectures when we should have been having conversations.

The collision of journalism and technology will enable the conversation. We can thank—or curse, depending on our view of these shifts—the Internet’s increasing reach and the availability of low-cost and easy-to-use communications tools.

All three of journalism’s major constituencies are feeling the impact.

The most important is the former audi-

ence—the people who until recently were our readers, listeners, viewers. They don’t have to be satisfied with a single source, and they’re learning how to use their newfound choices. More important for today’s topic, the former audience can now become part of the journalism process, whether by communicating with professional journalists or, if they wish, by producing their own content with a variety of techniques.

Keep in mind that this is not only about weblogs. Blogs are getting most of the attention today, but they are only part of what is happening. Think of blogs as a proxy for an explosion of citizen-media tools, including audio podcasts, wikis, interactive presentations such as user-annotated web maps and increasingly sophisticated amateur videos.

This is more about people than gadgets. Citizen journalism is made possible by what’s new. It will be made excellent because of what people do with it.

The second major constituency of journalism fits into a category we call newsmakers, the people and institutions that journalists cover. Something new is being done to them. Where they once dealt with a finite number of media observers, now they must deal with bloggers, podcasters, online chat rooms and a variety of other ways in which people are talking among themselves.

At the same time, newsmakers have powerful new ways to deliver their own messages. They can, and should, use these tools to have conversations with their own customers and others.

The third constituency of journalism is, of course, the professional journalists. We have a lot to learn. If we accept the idea that we are moving toward a more conversational system, then we must remember that the first rule in having a conversation is to listen. We don’t listen very well.

When I went to Silicon Valley to write about technology, I learned quickly a fact of life that has been at the heart of my grassroots journalism notions ever since. It was simple: my readers—many of whom were in the technology business—knew more

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2005–2006 Knight-Wallace Fellows



Philip Dattilo

John U. Bacon, freelance (work appearing in *ESPN* magazine, *Fortune*, *The New York Times*, *Time* and other publications); The American Institution of Collegiate Athletics

Vanessa Bauza, Havana bureau chief, *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*; Challenges Facing Democracy in Latin America

Jamie Butters, business and auto industry reporter, *Detroit Free Press*; China's Economic Transition from Communism to Capitalism

Christopher Carey, business reporter, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*; Criminal Subculture in the U.S. Securities Industry

Charles Clover, Middle East and Africa page editor, *Financial Times*; The Russian Idea of "Eurasianism"

Gail Gibson, national correspondent, *The Baltimore Sun*; The Supreme Court and Free Speech in Wartime America

Vindu Goel, business editor, *San Jose Mercury News*; The Impact of Religion on Politics

Graham Griffith, senior producer, *WBUR* (Boston); The Impact of the 1994 Republican Revolution Ten Years Later

Thomas Kamilindi, freelance (Kigali, Rwanda); Hate Media and its Impact

Min Ah Kim, deputy editor, *The Kyunghyang Daily News* (Seoul, South Korea); Women Leaders in Korea and the United States

Drew Lindsay, features editor, *The Washingtonian*; Education and the "New" Civil Rights Movement

Tony Norman, columnist and associate editor, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*; Rumor, Religion and Reform in the African-American Experience

Semiha Öztürk Pişirici, reporter, *CNN Türk* (Istanbul, Turkey); The Impact of EU–U.S. Relations on Turkey

Lisa Rapaport, reporter, *Sacramento Bee*; The Business of Healthcare for Immigrants and the Uninsured

Gerard Ryle, investigations editor, *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney, Australia); The Business of the Human Body and the Trade in Body Parts

Stephen Titherington, editor, *BBC World Service News* (London, England); How Science is Covered

Luis Vinker, executive editor, *La Razón* (Buenos Aires, Argentina); Free Newspapers and Newspapers for the Young

Fara Warner, freelance (work appearing in *Fast Company*, *The New York Times* and other publications); China as an Automotive Superpower

Our Great Geniuses

Jerry Morton '77 heard his photographs set to music at a chamber music concert in Miami in September. Morton taught at the University of Timisoara, Romania, as a Fulbright Journalism professor in 1993–94, and, two years later, published *Romania*, featuring pictures and stories about the people and places he encountered. The musical project was through Miami Chamber Music, which used his black-and-white photos to accompany the selection “Perpetual Tales: Romania,” written by Cristian Macelaru.

Elizabeth Pond '77 was awarded the Bundesverdienstkreuz (the Federal German Service Medal) last October, for her work in promoting good transatlantic relations, both in writing books and in editing the English-language foreign-policy journal *Transatlantic Internationale Politik*.

Patrick Malone '78 is the 2005–2006 president of the Trial Lawyers Association of Metropolitan Washington, D.C. He was also just selected by his peers for the publication, “The Best Lawyers in America.”

Dan Wascoe '77 has joined the education team at *The Star Tribune* in Minneapolis-St. Paul, covering issues that cut across district boundaries in the metro area. As a “new” education reporter he attended a Hechinger Institute seminar at Columbia University last summer.

Kitty Caparella '83 won a fellowship to a five-day seminar, “Covering Islam and Muslims in America,” at the Western Knight Center at the University of Southern California in November. The fellowship followed two years of reporting for the *Philadelphia Daily News* on a corrupt, politically connected imam. This year, her lithographs, etchings and monotypes were exhibited in five art shows in the Philadelphia area, including one national competition.

Eleanor McGrath '85 continues to publish books at her “little company,” McWitty Press. The third book, *Just Gus: A Rescued Dog and the Woman He Loved*, by Laurie Williams, will be published in February 2006.

Gary M. Pomerantz '88 published his third non-fiction book, *Wilt, 1962: The Night of 100 Points and the Dawn of a New Era*, a period-piece narrative about race, small towns, and the legendary night Wilt Chamberlain scored 100 points in a basketball game against the New York Knicks. *The New York Times Book Review* named it an Editor’s Choice book, while *Entertainment Weekly* placed it on its “Must List” and called it “a slam dunk of a read.”

Send your doings to
Birgit Rieck at brieck@umich.edu

Jack Kresnak '89, reporter at the *Detroit Free Press*, is the 2005 winner of the Toni House Journalism Award, honoring outstanding reporting that improves the administration of justice and enhances the public’s understanding of the courts. Kresnak won for his cumulative efforts in 16 years of covering juvenile justice issues. He is currently working on finishing a book on the Rev. William Cunningham, founder of Focus: HOPE.

Nadine Epstein '90 is editor and executive publisher of *Moment* magazine, an independent national magazine about Jewish politics, culture and religion based in Washington, D.C. Co-founded by Elie Wiesel in 1975, it has 120,000 readers and a website at www.momentmag.com.

Susan Manuel '92 is the chief of the Peace and Security Section, Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York.

Mike Brennan '93, continues to build his specialized publishing company, Mltechnews.com. The portal site covers the technology industry in Michigan and the Great Lakes area, as well as provides news and information by and for entrepreneurs and small business. Mltechnews.com also publishes six newsletters, including Weekly Summary, Security and Entrepreneur’s Corner, plus co-branded e-zines with the Ann Arbor IT Zone, MichBio and GLIMA Connections, a state-wide technology networking group.

Deborah Caldwell '94 is the new managing editor at *Beliefnet*, (www.beliefnet.com), the online magazine about spirituality with a daily audience of five million. She was one of the founding members of the website.

Barry Yeoman '95 won a 2005 Mature Media Award for writing about involuntary guardianships that rob the elderly of their independence and life savings. The article ran in *AARP: The Magazine*. Yeoman also writes regularly for *Discover*, *Mother Jones*, and *Attaché*.

Robert McClure '97 is serving on the board of directors of the Society of Environmental Journalists. As liaison to SEJ’s First Amendment Task Force, he recently oversaw and edited a September 2005 report entitled, “A Flawed Tool—Environmental Reporters’ Experiences with the Freedom of Information Act.” Coincidentally released around the time of the Katrina coverage, it “ended up helping make our point that FOIA is in trouble,” he says. McClure covers the environment at the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. This year he wrote “A License to Kill,” a project examining how the federal government has essentially given up on enforcing the Endangered Species Act on private land.

Mark McDonald '97 ended his three-year posting as Knight Ridder’s Moscow bureau chief in May. He is currently the Howard R. Marsh Professor of Journalism at the University of Michigan, teaching two senior seminars on the future of the news and the coverage of war, conflict and terrorism. Mark will return to Knight Ridder’s Washington bureau in the spring.

Tom Grant '98 left his position as news director and anchor at KTWO-TV in Casper, Wyo., to become editor of *Metro Spirit*, an alternative weekly in Augusta, Ga.

Jim Bruggers '99 was a science journalism fellow at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Mass. for ten days in June, and as part of that program was sent to a national long-term ecological research station operated by MBL at Toolik Lake, Alaska. A reporter for *The (Louisville) Courier-Journal*, he stayed there for ten days learning about arctic research into climate change, and witnessing firsthand the melting of Alaska.

Susan Hooper '01 joined the administration of Pennsylvania Gov. Edward G. Rendell last year as deputy director of communications. She also serves as press secretary for the secretary of the budget, Michael J. Masch.

Jiri Nadoba '03 now runs the Business and Economics desk at *MF DNES* in Prague, Czech Republic. He oversees a team of nine people, and, he writes from “a nice cubicle room with a view over an ugly office-construction area in the booming capital of new Europe.”

Vince Patton '04 has been elected to the board of directors of the Society of Environmental Journalists. He is environmental reporter for *KGW-TV (NBC)* in Portland, Ore., and has served as co-chair of the SEJ Awards for excellence in environmental reporting for the last two years.

Cynthia Barnett '05 signed a contract with the University of Michigan Press (UMP) to publish her first book. *Mirage: Florida and the Disappearing Water of the American East* will be published by UMP’s trade division in spring 2007.

Bill Duryea '05 became the *St. Petersburg Times* national editor in August. He oversees a staff of five senior writers—the Latin America correspondent, the foreign correspondent, the national affairs reporter, the Florida state reporter and the national media critic.

Christine Tanaka '05 is the new news director of *KIMT-TV*, the CBS affiliate in Mason City, Iowa.

**SAVE THE DATE:
BIG REUNION
September 15–17, 2006**

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than I did. They told me things I did not know. They made my work better.

I believe this concept is true for all journalists. No matter which topic you are writing about, your collected readers know more than you about the subject.

The value in this should be clear to all of us. Our audience can help us understand our subjects better. The readers can give us facts we did not know. They can add nuance. They can ask follow-up questions. And, of course, they can tell us when we are wrong, or at least raise vital questions, as *CBS News* and its "60 Minutes" team found out so dramatically last year.

We are fond of holding everyone else to account. More scrutiny of our own methods and motives is not a bad idea. I'm glad to see that *CBS News* now has a resident blogger whose job, in part, is to explain what's happening behind the scenes.

But the biggest jump for journalists is not just opening up, or creating blogs or letting people comment on our sites.

No, the crucial leap, I believe, will be helping our audience become involved in the process much more directly.

The democratization of information is radical. In technology we call it "peer to peer"—a break from the top-down model of the past.

If we journalists bring more average citizens into the process at any level—commenting, reporting, taking pictures, you name

it—we are turning them into participants.

We can start with simple ideas, like linking to the best local blogs covering issues we don't have enough staff to cover. Or give readers their own blogs to cover things we don't bother with.

The web is an increasingly versatile platform. Some Canadian papers are about to set up interactive maps that readers will annotate with all kinds of useful local information. How about a map showing potholes, street by street, annotated with readers' photos? If news organizations don't do these things, don't worry. Yahoo, Google and Microsoft will.

At the very least, with more reader action, people become engaged with the news, which is an improvement all by itself. When enough of them do it with our assistance and recognition, and with the benefit of the very real resources a local media organization can bring to bear, they can be part of a virtual town square.

When you give power to what has been a passive audience, and they start using it, you start people on the road toward being even better citizens.

Democracy is not a passive activity, not if you want an outcome that preserves justice and liberty and honest government. It takes work. Instead of lecturing our audiences, let's ask for their help—and offer our own.

—Dan Gillmor '87 is the founder of *Grassroots Media, Inc.*

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Kathleen Horn, Designer
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Mike and Mary Wallace House
University of Michigan, 620 Oxford Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2635
Telephone: 734-998-7666
FAX: 734-988-7979
www.kwfellows.org

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