

## KWF Reunion 2010

### TRIUMPH OF INFORMATION AND DEATH OF MEANING

—By *Ralph Williams*

The danger to which my title points is not yet fully realized, but it is real nonetheless. The scope of the danger is global, for the passage of information knows no boundaries, and information is limited in quantity only by the (vastly enhanced) capacities of the machines of our beyond-Gutenberg world. The threat is that the chaotic superfluity of information rapidly transmitted arguably so distracts and exhausts the attention of even the diligent and more-than-usually intelligent that little time and mental space are available for the creation and testing of meaning.

The fundamental threat is to the possibility of principled and



*Ralph Williams spreads wisdom at the KWF reunion.*

rational consensus in our democracy-as-Republic. What was envisioned in this radically Enlightenment undertaking was a union of citizens with equal rights, in which governance was to be by the will of the people, a corporate will determined by the consent of the governed. The word “consent” operates today within an impoverished

field of meaning in relation to Enlightenment usage, often entailing now a simple “yes” or “no,” as in a survey, rather than an agreement reached through deliberation, whose characteristic forms were then the essay, tract, treatise, or letter, and (when not written) the extended debate or oration. From the eighteenth to the later twentieth centuries, the newspaper was, alongside the forms mentioned above, a principal site for the elaboration and discussion of the consensus sufficient for corporate peace and progress.

Especially from the early 1960’s onward, the media of “image”—television and “moving pictures,” with their enormous power of giving the impression of immediacy—progressively relocated the site for the creation of a public sense of things. Information

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### FORGING NEW PATHS: PANELS HIGHLIGHT INNOVATORS

—By *Emily Richmond '11*

While consistency has long been a hallmark of the American newspaper, the industry is facing an unprecedented level of uncertainty that demands continual change, said KWF board member John Costa '93.

“We are reinventing ourselves every day,” said Costa, editor of the *The Bulletin* in Bend, Ore., who moderated a panel discussion on “New Patterns at Traditional Places” at the KWF Reunion, held September 11 at U-M’s Michigan League.

Innovation doesn’t necessitate forgoing the traditional elements of quality journalism, the panelists agreed. But protecting them requires vigilance.

Panelist Yvonne Simons '03 said that, at WBTV in Charlotte, N.C., where she is assistant news director, her most recent hires have to be “one-man bands”—capable of shooting and editing video, writing copy and producing their own news segments. As veteran television journalists leave the field, “the people who replace them are going to be compensated less and do more,” Simons said.

And the shifts in attitude aren’t limited to American journalism. At the BBC World Service, where Joanna Mills '09 is head of news, the large team of more than 70 journalists knows they “need to think multi-platform about everything they do,” Mills said. Her role is to protect the organization’s unique viewpoint—the “value-added” element that is a trademark of its reporting.

The changes in technology have revitalized and reshaped international reporting, said Fred de Sam Lazaro '89, a correspondent and documentary filmmaker with PBS “NewsHour” since 1985. The concept of the news industry as a “portable business ... is both terrifying and very exciting,” he said.

Small newspapers are alive and well in the age of the internet,

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*Eve Byron '99, Fred de Sam Lazaro '89 and John Costa '93 talk innovation.*

# From the Head Fellow

—By Charles R. Eisendrath '75

## STRANGERS TO NO ONE

Each year, we try to make strangers into a group that has trouble remembering life before knowing one another. Increasingly, we're extending that thinking in the obvious direction—to the entire body of alumni.

The reunion marking the 38th year of the program was a great observation post for deciding how far we have already gone and how much further we have to go. From the 200-odd bits of data at hand—meaning Fellows and spouse/partners who attended—I'd say the job won't be like most beginnings, where you stand at the foot of the mountain and are out of breath just thinking about clambering halfway up.

Bonding within classes has obviously spilled over. The act of gathering reflected and extended it, of course. It was the quality of mind on display that most powerfully drew us together. Gerard Ryle '06 and Kimberley Porteous '06S, respectively among Australia's leading print and online editors, traced the problems and opportunities of those members of an uneasy journalistic union in their joint Hovey Lecture, "The Odd Couple." Reunion panels on how journalists are living their lives in a professional maelstrom not only identified the stresses but—more strongly—opportunities never before available.

For me, one of the big moments came Saturday during Ralph Williams' talk on "The Triumph of Information and the Death of Meaning." I found his quotation from Thucydides a marvelous illustration of how great teachers can make past illuminate present, in this case, how corrosive political discourse in 5th century B.C.E Athens resembles our own.

Twenty-five hundred years before

political correctness, blather talk shows and wars for fabricated causes, Thucydides wrote:

"To fit in with the change of events, words, too, had to change their usual meanings. What used to be described



as a thoughtless act of aggression was now regarded as the courage one would expect to find in a party member....If an opponent made a reasonable speech, the other party, so far from giving it a generous reception, took every precaution to see that it had no practical effect."

Thus Athens lost its republic, Ralph pointed out, as the weakening of American public discussion, abetted by the demise of so much of American journalism, is endangering our own.

The mere act of coming together for a reunion will add steam to the KWF history project, part of a University-wide effort to assemble the informal stories of individual units. Last year, we queried all 600

alumni for their memories. We will follow up with targeted questions, with the aim of putting together anecdotes illustrating an overall theme: How a program built on suggestions from participants has changed over the years while also staying the same. The core remains unapologetically liberal arts education, which I translate as meaning the ability to think clearly about an expanded range of subjects. The mission, again without embarrassment for a new-agey sound, is still individual growth.

That said, we are equally unabashed about the narrowly professional trade skills training being added. Last fall it was multi-platform training, obligatory for all. Spring term brought a partnership with the business school for journalism entrepreneurship. I expected a half-dozen to sign up; instead, it was nearly everyone... including me. All this in addition to the seminars, writing workshop and occasional foreign language training.

What's next? I'll be listening.

Meanwhile, the reunion left me thinking about the number of people who traveled remarkable distances across the U.S., Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and South America at their own expense. What was it exactly that made doing so seem attractive in times of lean finances? I didn't ask because I didn't have to, being part of it, myself. "Fellowship, small f" includes making strangers a part of one's own growth when everyone involved is celebrating quality of mind. For many, staying away from our celebration of that process would have required an effort.

# Graham Hovey, Margaret DeMuth Remembered: Exceptional Lives in Service to Others

—By Charles B. Fancher, Jr. '82 & Diane Brozek Fancher '82

We were honored to have been asked to play a role in connection with the 25th annual Graham Hovey Lecture on September 10 by offering a tribute to the late Graham B. Hovey, for whom the lecture series is named, and the late Margaret DeMuth, the Fellowship's program assistant for 16 years.

Graham, who directed the Fellowship from 1980 to 1986, died at 94 on February 20, just weeks after Margaret, who passed away on January 2 at the age of 83. Those of us who knew them are confident that our lives were immeasurably enriched by the association.

We can say with absolute certainty that we have known few other individuals with greater personal integrity, zest for life and love for their fellow humans than Graham and Margaret. Both were blessed with the rare ability to make new acquaintances feel immediately at home and to be genuinely interested in the thoughts and opinions of others.

And as much as they seemed to enjoy the company of each new class of Fellows, Graham and Margaret were at their best when they were with their respective spouses, Mary Jean Hovey and George DeMuth—both of whom became good friends of each new class.

In our remarks before this year's Hovey Lecture, we sought to remind former Fellows of what made Graham and Margaret special and to introduce them to others who missed the opportunity to be touched by their exceptional lives.

In Graham's case that meant, among other things, a look back at an extraordinary career in journalism that began at the *Waterloo Courier* in his home state of Iowa, took him to Detroit as a sports reporter and to Europe to cover World War



Graham Hovey, KWF Director Emeritus



KWF's beloved Margaret DeMuth

II. With a few other stops along the way, Graham eventually made his way to *The New York Times*, where he joined the storied editorial board led by John B. Oakes. He later covered foreign affairs for *The Times*' Washington bureau.

Graham even had a brief fling with broadcasting, notably with his "Letters from Italy" show, a weekly program on U.S. public radio stations affiliated with

the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, a forerunner of NPR. He broadcast the show while living with Mary Jean in post-war Rome as the recipient of a Fulbright research grant.

He also had a serious academic career at the Universities of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan, and even in retirement in Allentown, Pennsylvania, he taught at a local college and conducted an annual lecture series, "New Challenges for U.S. Foreign Policy," at Luther Crest, the retirement community where he and Mary Jean lived.

Margaret was neither a journalist nor a professor, but she lived a life of service. She was active in her church as a deacon and as an elder, and she served as president of a group called International Neighbors, which reaches out to foreign women who live here to offer friendship and support.

She and George raised four children, including Leslie, a successful artist whose oil painting, a wedding gift from Margaret and George, hangs in our home. Besides the vast administrative duties she tirelessly managed, Margaret also brought a quiet vigilance, a watchful eye, to the program, ever on the lookout for signs that a Fellow might be troubled, and she would always have words of wisdom to help him or her through any crisis.

Graham and Margaret were people of genuine accomplishment, but in our view their greatest achievement can be measured in the scores of former Fellows who have completed the program feeling that their lives have been enriched, not only by their exposure to the academic offerings of the university, but also by the outstanding experience the two of them provided. ▀

# The Odd Couple: Newspapers and the Internet—Will They Ever Get Along?

Gerard Ryle '06 and his wife Kimberley Porteous '06S—respectively, news editor and multimedia editor of The Sydney Morning Herald—delivered KWF's first joint Hovey Lecture on September 10.

## THE INTERNET: NEWSPAPER'S GREAT CON MAN

—by Gerard Ryle '06



Gerard Ryle '06

It is precisely the dramatic changes in the ways journalism is being delivered to the community through the internet that should allow us to see the possibilities of the change in our relationship with the community.

Having recently written a book about a con man I can't help thinking that, in many ways, the internet appeared as a kind of con man to the world of newspapers.

The thing about a con man is that he can find his way into all the facets of your life that you have tried to keep hidden—what assumptions are loose, which postulations may not hold. The con is brutal. It recognizes our weaknesses and what we hold dear and exploits the concealed truths that we most shrink from.

But the power of the con is not just about greed and manipulation. The con

man also often appeals to certain impulses in people. He not only steals money from his victims, he also steals their trust. And that makes them feel ashamed. And with that fear of admitting the truth, a slow and painful financial loss continues for the victims involved.

The internet exposed all the vulnerabilities of the newspaper business—what circulation figures were loose, which revenue streams would not hold. It found its way into all the areas of our profession that we have held dear; our right to decide for the public what is and what is not important, our right to sway political opinion and, most of all, our God-given right to make a profit from whatever form of journalism we dish up.

The internet also appealed to the impulse that resides in most newspaper managers to eliminate costs. They fell for the con that the internet was simply a new form of the printing press. And by simply putting the content of their old product up on-line, they became aggregators of news instead of generators of news.

In doing so they forgot one fundamentally important thing: information has value, but it is only of value if you are the only one with it.

This condescension that newspapers showed for their readers became an even bigger problem because of past condescension.

For though we like to blame the internet for all our current woes, long before the internet came along newspapers had already begun to move away from the resource-hungry area of what I call Real Journalism. This cutback in investigative reporting and hard skeptical analysis had

in turn seen media outlets increasingly—and unquestioningly—rely on a flow of news from governments, big business and a booming public relations industry.

Somewhere along the way some newspapers simply began pretending to do Real Journalism. They figured if they just tagged it the right way, the public wouldn't really notice the difference.

The saddest part is that some newspaper reporters enjoyed having things on rails. They were largely content to follow a formula that could be pushed like a cart down the tracks of the 24-hour news cycle, all the while forgetting that by the time it reaches its destination—someone's doorstep tomorrow morning—it has become old and stale.

The sad reality is that long before the dawn of the internet we had so moved away from our core mission that something was always going to come along to call our bluff. We lost our passion. We forgot about our primary obligation to the public: to act as a watchdog, to shine a light into dark places, to right wrongs, to represent the unrepresented and to stand up for truth and integrity, that we suddenly found we had lost much of our relevance—and much of our credibility.

The internet truly exposed the fallacy of pretending to be a thing that we were not.

By not recognizing the challenge for what it was, newspapers were left feeling ashamed. And with that fear of admitting the truth, a slow and painful financial loss continues for everyone involved.

But despite the speed and magnitude of the decline of the newspaper empire it should not be forgotten in all the hand wringing that most newspaper companies

are still in a good position to overcome this latest threat.

Despite declining circulations, many daily newspapers still produce profits that other industries eye with envy. The content of newspapers is still followed by television and radio and it now provides the basic material for numerous independent bloggers and news aggregation websites.

The display advertising and classified advertising that powered the newspaper business model for decades may be under threat. But, when you stop to think of that, it only shows that there is a real commercial value in delivering accurate and timely news and information.

The form of delivery may change in the future, but by building new communities the potential audience for our content will multiply many times over. And you would have to think that profits would too.

Without a doubt an old order is dying, but a potentially larger, more complex and vital new order has every chance of emerging from the wreckage, through the delivery of news on our web pages, through an altered print product, through RSS feeds and paid searchable databases, through delivering customized news and advertising to mobile phones and other hand-held devices.

And we should feel a sense of great excitement rather than great fear to be given a chance to fundamentally alter the course of the future.

Here is what needs to be done: The existing newspaper newsroom needs to be rent asunder. The formula-driven way of doing things needs to be torn apart. We need to free ourselves of the daily grind of morning meetings and afternoon meetings and unstructured planning meetings and instead greet each day as an opportunity to greet the community we represent, using the technology that up to now we have viewed mostly as a threat.

We have to free ourselves of daily deadlines as much as possible. That might mean less volume, but what we do will be done better. The change should start with

how journalists think about their readers. We have to stop our condescension. We have to look to the past and ask ourselves what made us relevant and compulsory in the first place.

We have to identify the issues that people really care about. And concentrate on those. And we need to embrace the internet as a new tool that allows us to achieve that.

The internet allows more means to communicate than could ever be imagined by that mainstay of modern journalism—the telephone—and yet many modern newspaper journalists blindly ignore the new reality. Instead they use the technology to try to produce bad television and bad radio, in the mistaken belief that this is what is required in the new internet environment.

We should embrace the concept of reverse publishing—where we tell our communities what we intend to publish before we publish it, so they can contribute and improve the final product.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of WikiLeaks, newspapers need to quickly wake up to the message it poses. Every newspaper should immediately develop its own form of WikiLeaks that would openly court and seek to protect whistleblowers big and small, because good sources are

the lifeblood of agenda-setting journalism.

Every newspaper should construct databases of information that rival national security agencies. And we should apply that accumulated knowledge in every single piece of journalism the newspaper produces.

We should reconsider the relevance of that mainstay of newspaper journalism—the beat reporter. Not that they should be wiped from the future. But the question should be asked: how many are merely a legacy of the past?

We should ensure that a majority of reporters in every newsroom be managed separately but intensely off-diary—employed to get stories that nobody else has. The approach adopted should be about making judgments on what is important several days or even months in advance and where all the work you present is adding real value to the lives of the community you serve or is setting an agenda for that community.

We should re-embrace long-form journalism, recognizing that the technology that allows people to rediscover the joys of this form are already here. The “yesterday” events should be presented only in enough detail to satisfy the minority of readers who want their newspaper to be one of record.

*A record-breaking crowd spills out of the tent and packs the lawn.*



## THE AGE OF RESTORATION: AN ONLINE PRESCRIPTION

—by Kimberley Porteous '06S

When was the last time a newspaper website (apart from *The New York Times* or *The Guardian*) thrilled you about the possibilities of journalism? Newspapers have failed to live up to their promise online.

How can newspapers regain their power and primacy and return to profitability? I offer a prescription: marketable solutions through strong web presence to make newspapers once again essential to communities, act as public watchdogs and help readers participate in political life. This can be an age of Restoration.

I develop and produce online journalism—within a newspaper newsroom. Journalism that echoes the values of our print masthead. To print editors, I champion multimedia for bringing stories to life and reaching new, younger readers. I explain ways to extend reporting via audio, interactivity and web documentaries.

Unfortunately, many online newspapers are substandard versions of their print mastheads. If newspaper publishers want to erect a paywall around digital properties, they need to provide a product worth paying for.

The first reason newspaper sites fail is that usability and reader experience is poor. Not much has changed since the 1990s, when newspaper sites were simply the print edition text shovelled onto a computer screen.

Where are the contextual links, where is the interactivity? Newspapers haven't rethought how they can improve the reader experience.

The first problem? No flexibility in layout. Imagine putting out a newspaper every day with the same page template. Every story gets the same headline size, same newshole shape.

Templated web pages are our enemy.

Also, multi-page stories presented in photo slideshow format force readers to click through to a new page after only one



Kimberley Porteous '06S

paragraph of text. It's a shameless way to inflate page views—and it's a huge turnoff.

And some newspaper websites still insist on auto-play video and audio when you try to read a story.

Having great content isn't enough. If a reader's experience is less than great, they leave for another site. Can we afford to throw readers away?

Too many newspaper websites ignore two of the greatest strengths of the online medium: context and hypertext—links to stories or supporting information. Often readers can't find other stories in a series, or the related comment piece. Newspaper sites should help readers follow continuous coverage of an issue.

The other strength newspaper websites ignore is interactivity. The hottest web properties involve interaction between readers sharing information, looking for restaurant informations or information about a local elected official. Newspapers have ceded this ground.

When technology and information intersect, when people can explore data, they go deeper into a story and understand it better. They're more likely to be engaged and affected by it. It increases the time readers spend on websites, allowing advertisers to be charged more.

Until newspaper websites rethink their offerings, they can't be said to be practising online journalism.

Problem two: the 'race to the bottom' tone. The push for page impressions and web traffic usually overrides journalistic integrity. There's an obsession with continuously remaking the homepage so readers

have something new to click on to. This buries the good stuff.

The continuous appetite for something new is fed by wire services, so each site ends up running the same stories on their homepages. It's also fed by "churnalism"—fast rewrites without leaving the newsroom. For every exercise in "churnalism," a story in our own backyard goes unwritten—a story that could have a big effect on the local community, but which would earn fewer clicks. When clicks are the new currency, guess which story gets published?

The third reason newspaper sites fail: editing by web analytics is dumb. Up-to-the minute data on which stories are being read, and by how many becomes the web editor's crack. If readers are more interested in sex scandals or celebrity misbehavior, the temptation is to serve up more.

Lighter stories get the most clicks. That's human nature. But just as governments shouldn't make decisions strictly on populist sentiment, nor should news editors. Just because more people are reading about celebrity scandal than a controversial city-planning decision doesn't mean they aren't also invested in that story. So give it to them. Run it high up on the site. Don't demote it after 10 minutes when you check your stats and it isn't in the top five. You have to back these stories.

If we're going to continue our role as public watchdogs, we need to trust our professional news judgment.

Reason four: video is not the answer. It may help carry more advertising, but it won't improve the quality of newspaper websites. Or at least, not its current form. Mostly, video sucks.

Video is given priority online because ads in a video are more lucrative. News site staff are pushed to place video on every page possible. The video is typically produced on the fast and cheap, or else lifted from TV or radio. It's the online equivalent of filling your paper with poorly copy-edited newswire stories.

Why insult readers this way? Do you think they'll stay loyal to your masthead

if this is what you serve up? Do you think advertisers are happy paying for this?

There are exceptions, of course. We do see well-crafted storytelling, imaginative use of still photos and cinematic vision. But the imperative to produce video is commercial, rather than editorial. It's mostly an advertising vehicle. Often it doesn't help tell the story or complement the text. This doesn't help the newspaper brand.

Unless you are producing high-quality video journalism or web documentaries, news website video is best used only for the two things it does well: either showing motion of an exceptional event or emotions between individuals.

The fifth reason newspaper sites fail is that they're poorly integrated into the print newsroom.

Ideally, when a paper's print and online departments merge, junior web staff are mentored by newsroom talent. News editing and story selection on the homepage improve. There's an appropriate separation between church and state on the website—commercial interests don't overrule editorial. And the entire newsroom is inspired by the possibilities of innovative and interactive journalism.

Unfortunately, what often occurs is that digital natives are pushed aside by mid-level print managers. Innovation slows down. And talented and visionary multimedia journalists are let go as the staff shrinks because new management doesn't value their work and prefers traditional story forms.

At a time when innovation in journalism is critical, it makes no sense to cut back on interactivity and multimedia. So what about solutions? How can newspaper sites become great? Solution one: use the strengths of the online medium. Tailor journalism to it. Explore new ways of producing serious investigative journalism.

Compile and analyze data and public records to create the new reporting possible when technology and journalism intersect. It's datajournalism—computer-assisted reporting taken to the next level.

Use interactive technologies to help readers understand complex issues and participate. Let communities grow, and host them on your site. If you let readers participate, they remain loyal to your newspaper.

Consider crowd-sourcing for certain stories—inviting the public to contribute data to your reporting. Use context and hypertext to serve your readers. Create packages of related stories and Wiki-style subject pages. Curate links of the best reads from around the web.

Produce web documentary—a hybridized form of reportage native to the online medium. It combines the best aspects of radio, television, photojournalism, graphics, interactivity, newspaper archives and the written word to create and present something fresh and utterly engaging. If your paper is working on an investigative piece, produce the web documentary simultaneously. Once published, this stuff has a life of its own, recommended by friends and shared through social media.

Solution two: redesign your user experience. Newspaper sites require a design overhaul, born from understanding how people read online, interact with technology to get information, and then share it.

Rethink the way you present news stories to give them context. Display multimedia and interactives better. Incorporate social media. Devise tools to improve readers' lives, like event calendars they can sync with their own.

Solution three: print and web teams must collaborate smarter to bring about quality storytelling. There's too much secrecy between print and online departments. Multimedia presentations and data-based projects are the future of newspapers. Developing these stories together is the only way to go.

Solution four: stop editing by analytics. Don't be "click addicts." If you can't trust your editorial judgments, how can you expect readers to trust you? If your serious stories aren't rating well, sell them differently for the web or repackage them. Good journalism shouldn't be abandoned.

Solution five: develop a mobile strategy. Now. The convenience of news delivered to phones and iPads makes it marketable, so papers should consider charging for the app or for a subscription. At the very least, newspaper sites must be optimized for viewing on mobile devices.

In summary, it's vital newspapers maintain editorial standards, no matter what the platform. Tailor reporting to capitalise on the web medium. Use technology to commit acts of journalism. Work together for a common purpose.

It's not too late, yet. Our newspaper brands still mean something. We should be poised to grab back our authority, our quality. To restore our mastheads and our fortunes. But the time is now. ▶

*Charles B. Fancher, Jr. '82, Tom Hovey and President Mary Sue Coleman enjoy the Hovey Lecture.*



# Fellowship, Fun & Food: A Weekend Recipe for Success

—By Matthew Power '11

After a day of lectures and discussions, more than 180 Fellows and spouses got fancied up and made their way to the Michigan League's grand ballroom. During dinner, each table was instructed to confer and select its best Knight-Wallace story. While some recollections may not have been fit to be reprinted in a family newspaper (the bar had been open for hours, after all), an array of past fellows stood and shared their stories. There were common threads, mainly involving international incidents. The Mystery of Mikhail Gorbachev's Missing Microphone was related by Jonathan



Bright Flick

Some Fellows' memories, while perhaps less exotic, left a deep impression. For Brad Schrade '08, an investigative reporter at the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, his moment came at a bowling alley late one night, singing "Friends in Low Places" at the top of his lungs. "We forged these incredible friendships," recalled Schrade. "And all of us left feeling better about ourselves as journalists and human beings."

When the stories ended, an eight-piece band struck up, with Fellows old and new hitting the dance floor. The talented Eisendrath cut a rug late into the evening, and was spotted dancing with two women at once.

While the band played on, preparations were already being made for the next day's festivities. Dan "The Pigman" Huntley '03, working with Zingerman's Roadhouse chef Alex Young, was prepping for an extraordinary barbecue. By 10:30 Saturday night, a pig raised on Young's nearby farm was beginning its long, slow-cooked journey towards deliciousness.

The barbecue commenced the following day on the lawn behind Wallace House, with bell-clear early autumn weather. The menu featured lamb, chicken and pork, cooked under the direction of Huntley; 2011 Fellows Chris Sherman, Justin Pope and Ted Mellnik were conscripted as "Meat Serfs."

Under a fragrant cloud of hickory smoke, Huntley held forth on his Fellowship year. He entered the Fellowship as a reporter for the *Charlotte Observer*. "I was just a middle-aged journalist writing about politics, but this Fellowship gave me the confidence to follow my dreams," said

Huntley. "I thought everyone would laugh if I did a barbecue book."

But that's exactly what he did, writing "Extreme Barbecue," a travelogue and cookbook of regional barbecue traditions, with '03 classmate Lisa Lednicer. "I didn't realize it at the time, but Charles and the Fellowship prepared me for a life outside of daily journalism," said Huntley.

Eisendrath introduced him to the legendary *New York Times* reporter and food writer R.W. "Johnny" Apple Jr., setting Huntley on a new course. "People are hungry for the stories behind food. Newspapers about beat that out of me," he said.

When Huntley was laid off from the *Charlotte Observer* in 2009 after 27 years, he didn't miss a beat. He has teamed up with the former *New York Times Magazine* food critic Molly O'Neill for a nationwide series of community feasts to support local farmers and markets, called "One Big Table Across the Country."

The Fellows and their families stayed at the barbecue throughout the afternoon. There were a host of renewed friendships and many new connections made, but there wasn't much food left over at all. ▶

## HUNTLEY'S MOJO GRILLO, A TRADITIONAL CUBAN MARINADE

- Mix together:
- 2 cups sour orange juice (2 parts orange juice, 1 part lime juice)
  - 2 tbs cumin
  - ¼ cup minced garlic
  - 1 cup chopped savory herbs (thyme, cilantro, basil)
  - 1 tbs key lime zest

Reserve ¼ cup to use as a dressing/dip later. Marinate chicken parts for no more than 10 hours in a closed container or Ziploc. Makes enough for two chickens.



Dan Huntley '03 keeps the journalism troops fed.

Martin '09. Wayne Drehs '11 recalled a visit in Moscow to the Russian baths, where Knight-Wallace Director Charles Eisendrath demonstrated the traditional technique of *venik*: beating his Fellows with a bundle of birch twigs. There is purportedly photographic evidence to support this version of events.

Fara Warner '06 told of being thrown from a horse on the Argentina trip and breaking her arm. A classmate took her to the hospital and explained the situation to the doctors in perfect Spanish.

—The Triumph of Information, continued from page 1

transmissible by electronic means flooded the World Wide Web, where it is linked to further sites of information endlessly. "Meanings" themselves often arrived (and arrive) as information in the shape of a survey: "x% of the American Right (or Left) agree, disagree, or have no opinion about the following issue..."

At its most distracting, news is now transmitted in clipped units accompanied by visual clips; debate about opinion arrives split-screen, the "host" on the left, with two or more hostile experts talking atop each other's statements on the right of the screen.

Print-on-paper journalism in this country is going through an agonizing death, with electronic versions readable on one's Kindle, each article to be ordered up. A screen on a Kindle is importantly different from a page of the paper version of the *New York Times*, though here there is neither time nor space to parse out these dif-

ferences and their significance.

The debilitating volume of information available; the rapidity with which information is revised—deleted, augmented or reworded; the pre-sorting of opinion into "Left," "Right," "LGBT..." as in the scores of channels on Sirius-XM radio; the reduction of debate to the debased form of querulous controversy: such forces and more are in danger of paralyzing the formation of the consensus on which the Republic relies.

Even initiatives of noble intent—as with the "Fairness Doctrine" of 1947, finally repealed some forty years later, have had, in their application, an unintended vicious consequence. It is often supposed, for example, that "fairness" dictates that if there is a program on developments in evolutionary biology, a creationist must be given equal time to refute "Darwinism."

The distracting and diffracting forces acting against public consensus are enormous. In the absence even of an effective site for coming to consensus, our tendency

is to refer all major issues to the courts, with the inevitable consequence that the citizenry is divided into cliques of triumphant winners and incensed losers.

The urgent need, as we slip further into a functional plutocracy, is to find a site for the negotiation of a civic consensus where information is sifted and tested, and where meaning is debated with special regard for sustained chains of inference. Beleaguered journalists, in whatever medium, must be allowed time (and space) to find in issues under consideration the spots of deep ethical and political consequence, and to expose the logics which sustain them.

Whether we can save or retrieve—or truly develop—a Republic of consent/consensus/common sense is itself debatable. If we are to do so, we desperately need a site and appropriate practices for the redevelopment of a civic consensus, especially in the face of the tensions attending the rapid decline of the American hegemony. ▶

—Forging New Paths, continued from page 1

said Eve Byron '99, special projects editor and natural resources reporter for Montana's *Helena Independent Record*. The paper's team recently beat out *The Seattle Times* for a first-place award for its use of the internet in a five-week series on mental health services.

Micki Maynard '00 told of resigning from *The New York Times* to take on a new project as the senior editor of the Upper Midwest Local Journalism Center, a multi-year project funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, focusing on efforts to revive manufacturing states.

In the second panel of the afternoon, KWF alumni shared how they've remade their careers—often, several times—in the years since Wallace House.

For some, that has meant giving up security to forge new paths. Rona Kobell '09 left *The Baltimore Sun* for a staff writer position at the monthly *Bay Journal*, which focuses on issues related to the

Chesapeake Bay. Her Fellowship year taught her to be assertive and capitalize on multimedia opportunities, Kobell said.

Some of the paper's funding comes from federal grants, but that doesn't mean its voice is muted. "We're happy to take the government's money and then criticize them," Kobell said.

Clarence Page—KWF board member, Pulitzer-prize winning columnist and editorial board member for the *Chicago Tribune*—moderated the panel on "Innovations." Page described blogging, tweeting and posting video to supplement his reporting. "The downside is I don't have any time to think anymore," Page said.

One casualty of newspaper's shrinking news hole has been the obituary page. But that turned into a uniquely successful business model for Legacy.com, where panelist Hayes Ferguson '99 is chief operating officer. The site aggregates obituaries and death notices from about 900 newspapers, preserving stories that would other-

wise be a few scant inches, Ferguson said.

Christopher Carey '06 spent more than 20 years as a business reporter, primarily at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Adept at digging through SEC filings and court records, he founded Sharesleuth.com, where he is editor and president, followed by BailoutSleuth.com and the forthcoming JunketSleuth.com. The sites uncover important stories, but "we have to promote ourselves," Carey said, to gain recognition in mainstream media.

Dan Gillmor '87, director of the new Knight Center for Digital Media Entrepreneurship at Arizona State University, said given his experience at several start-ups, he is often asked whether there's a blueprint for online success.

"The best model is sustainable," said Gillmor, who was a columnist at several newspapers, including the *San Jose Mercury News*. The good news is the field is wide open for experimentation, Gillmor said, and "it doesn't cost you anything to try." ▶

# Celebrating the Past and Present



Wallace House, all gussied up and ready for the reunion!



Our fearless leader, Julia Eisendrath and Charlie Wolfson '75.



Attendees held rapt at Saturday's panel discussions.



Triumphant and exhausted chefs serve up the best BBQ in town.



A family affair: Marcelo Barreto '99, wife Simone and their children.



A giant crowd mixes and mingles after the Hovey Lecture.



Saturday's dinner & dance brings together friends from the classes of '82 and '93.



Little Fellows, big appetites: Harry and John MacGillis '11 chow down on Sunday afternoon.



Miguel Winazki '03, Birgit Rieck and Dante Ballario enjoy a perfect fall day at the BBQ.

# Our Great Geniuses



Molly Ball

**Molly Ball '10** joined POLITICO in Washington D.C. as part of the politics team covering the midterm elections. Ball was previously freelancing in the D.C. area.



Bruce DeSilva

**Bruce DeSilva '81** published his first novel, "Rogue Island," from Forge Books. It was selected by *Publishers Weekly* as one of the ten best debut novels of 2010.

**Carol Guensburg '10S** has joined Scripps Howard News Service as a desk editor/project editor in the Washington bureau.

**Mary Lockhart '98** is now general manager for CreativeNewsGroup in New York, a subsidiary of WNET.ORG that produces public television programs. Previously, Lockhart was supervising producer at Worldfocus, CreativeNewsGroup's flagship program.

**Micheline (Micki) Maynard '00** left *The New York Times* to launch Changing Gears as senior broadcast editor. Changing Gears is a new public radio local journalism project that will look at ways to reinvent the Rust Belt.



Joanna Mills

**Joanna Mills '09** has been promoted to editor of the BBC World Service newsroom, overseeing 80 journalists who provide newscasts for BBC World

Service radio and content for the BBC's 30-plus language services. Mills previously served as a duty editor in the newsroom.

**Jill McGivering '10** has published her first novel, "The Last Kestrel." Currently available in the UK and Canada, it goes on sale in Australia and New Zealand in October.

**Jon Morgan '01** is now editor at large for Bloomberg government at Bloomberg News. Before that, Morgan was senior editor at the Project for Excellence in Journalism.

**Jonathan Martin '09** co-authored "The Other Side of Mercy: A Killer's Journey Across the Great Divide," published in September. The book is based on the *Seattle Times* series that won the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Reporting. Martin was a reporter on the winning team.

**Maureen O'Hagan '00** and **Nick Perry '11** were also part of the *Seattle Times* team that took the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Reporting. The winning series covered, in print and online, the shooting deaths of four police officers and the manhunt for the suspect.

**Kyle Poplin '10** and his wife **Myra Poplin '10S** have launched *The Ann*, a new monthly magazine and accompanying website dedicated to covering local issues in Ann Arbor.

**Tim Wendel '96** published "High Heat: The Secret History of the Fastball and the Improbably Search for the Fastest Pitcher of All Time" in March, from De Capo Press. The book, Wendel's eighth, was featured in a June *New York Times Sunday Book Review* round-up of new baseball books.

**Andrew Whitehead '04** has been named editor of World Service news and current

affairs at the BBC. Before his new appointment, Whitehead served as the organization's editor of Core News. ■

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\*Includes gender identity and gender expression

Send your doings and a print-resolution photo to Birgit Rieck at [brick@umich.edu](mailto:brick@umich.edu)

# KWF

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*Some of the KWF 2010 reunion revelers pose for posterity, following the Saturday panel discussions at the Michigan League.*

