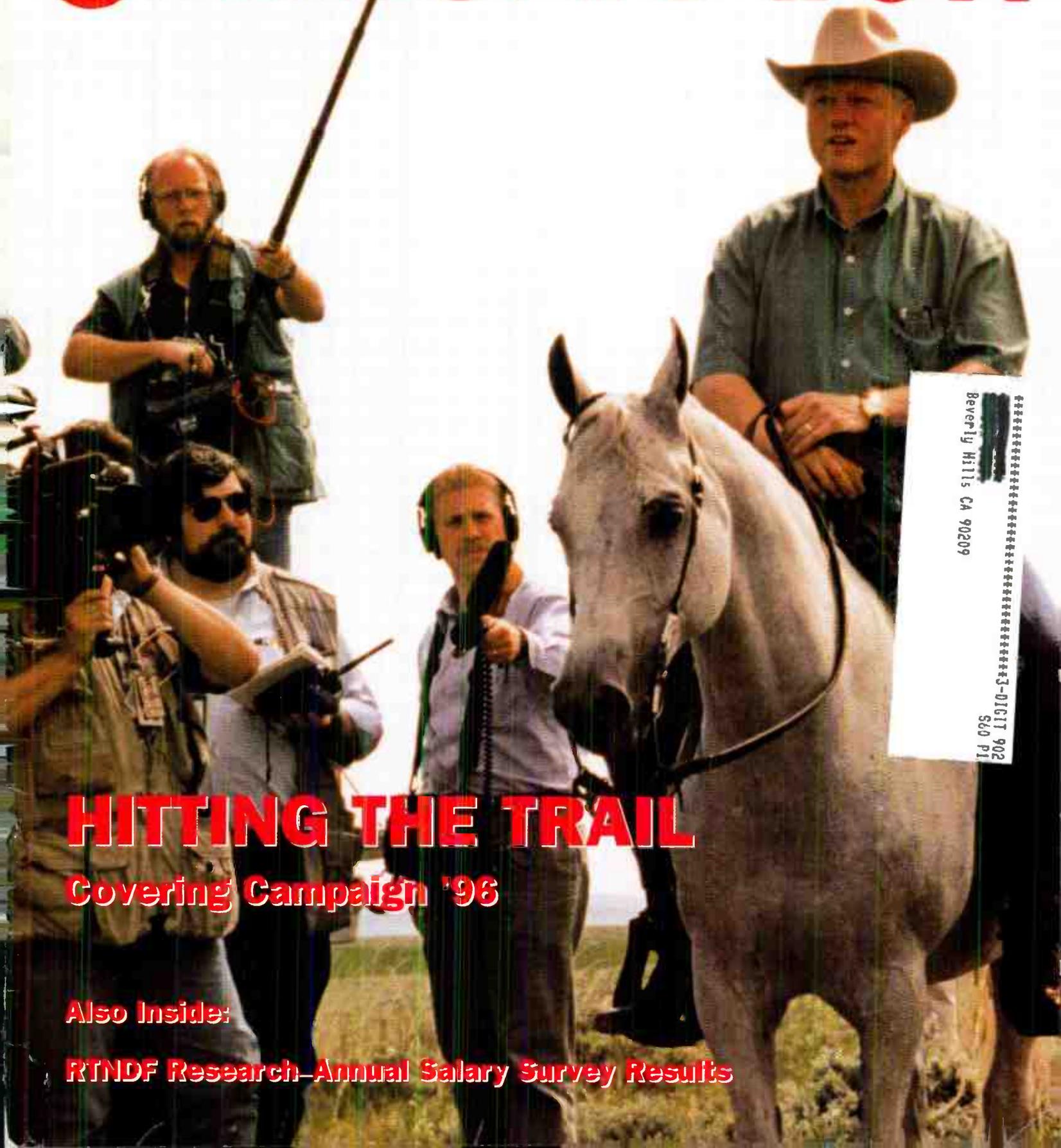


# COMMUNICATOR



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## HITTING THE TRAIL

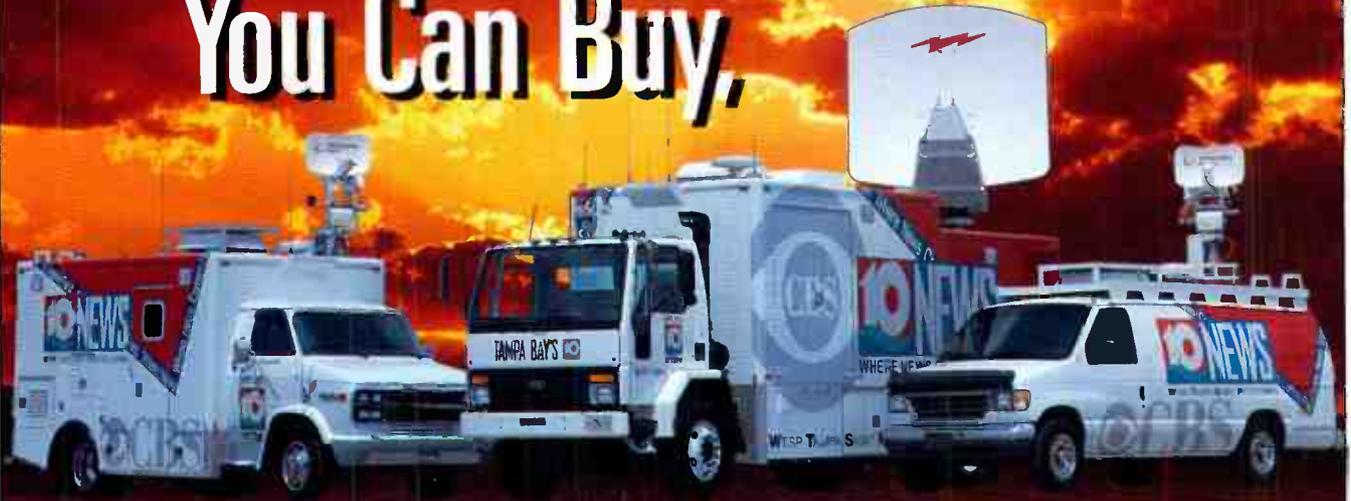
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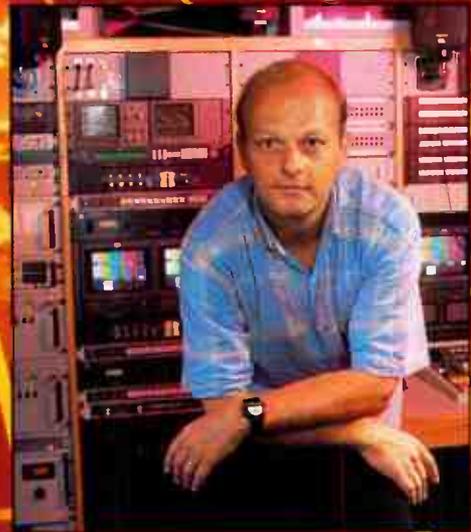
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# ◆ RADIO REPORTING ◆

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Volume 3 No. 1

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF RTNDA

February 1996

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**“EVERYONE  
FROM THE  
GENERAL  
MANAGER TO  
THE NEWEST  
INTERN HAS TO  
DO  
EVERYTHING  
THEY CAN TO  
HIT THE  
BULLSEYE.”**

## **25-54: THE ELUSIVE NEWS-TALK DEMO**

*by Dan Shelley, news director, WTMJ Radio, Milwaukee*

**S**it down behind the news microphone at WTIC in Hartford, and two of your listeners stare at you — in the form of large photos hanging in the studio. One is a woman, the other a man, both between 38 and 42 years old. Program manager Paul Douglas doesn't want his staff to forget whom they're talking to.

“You can't sit there and do traditional Edward R. Murrow stories,” he says. “You've got to be younger and hipper.”

That's one way one news-talk station encourages its anchors to aim for the golden 25-54 target, the demographic most advertisers — and, therefore, most general managers and program directors — lust for. It's unrequited love for many stations in the format. But not WTIC, one of a relatively small number of news-talkers consistently ranking number one 12-plus and in the top five among baby boomers and older “generation x'ers.”

Sure, there's a lot more to it than what's in the newscast. Everyone from the general manager to the newest intern has to do everything they can to hit the bullseye. But there's not much question news programming helps make a station's aim true.

Another news-talker that does a good job reaching the demo is KDKA in Pittsburgh. Diane Cridland, director of programming and news, says her staff is successful because it uses emotion and entertainment to tell stories. The emotion comes from the “real people” reporters use in as many actualities as possible. As for the entertainment, there's a flashback segment in KDKA's 7:30 a.m. newscast. It features what Cridland calls “nostalgia from the '50s and '60s.” She's convinced that pulls people in the demo from other stations to hers.

And it doesn't stop there. Cridland insists that at each step of the newsgathering process her reporters make their stories people-oriented. Everything from angles to production to writing must pass a big test: Does this impact people in the target audience and can they relate to it?

“If a newscast is too sterile, if it feels like an old-time newscast, that tends to be a turn off to 30 to 45 year olds,” Cridland says.

News Director Ken Berry at KGO in San Francisco, an ABC o-and-o, tries to turn on people even younger than that by having his staff understand and talk their language. It's a plan that works. After a summertime dip blamed on O.J. fatigue, KGO's 25-54 ratings are back on top in the country's fourth largest market.

Berry's station succeeds even though both morning anchors are 30-year veterans. Obviously, they're older than the target demo. So he tells them to keep up on popular culture without trying to fake it.

“People who are 25 to 54 don't necessarily want to get their news from someone who's 25 to 54,” Berry explains. “They do want to get their news from someone who understands their life.”

A few weeks ago the morning anchors did a live interview with former Nirvana bass player Krist Novoselic, who'd just written a song about women being raped in Bosnia. You could tell the anchors knew about Nirvana but they didn't pretend to like the music. After playing an excerpt, their on-air reaction was to complain to Novoselic that they couldn't understand the words.

The interview speaks to another part of

SUPPLEMENT TO COMMUNICATOR

**"PEOPLE WHO  
MANAGE  
NEWSROOMS  
SHOULD KNOW  
WHAT THEY  
WANT AND  
HAVE  
'MANIACAL  
ATTENTION TO  
DETAIL'"**

Berry's philosophy: Don't shy away from complicated stories, just tell them so people in the demo care about them. And sometimes that involves using words you wouldn't dare use just a few years ago.

"We don't have any problem going on the air and saying something 'sucks.' That's the way people talk." Some people curse, too, so does that mean KGO would air that kind of talk? If it contributes to the story, you bet.

Not long ago Berry found someone editing "son of a bitch" out of an actuality about an emotional criminal case in Oakland. A deputy district attorney was expressing frustration, and Berry thought those four words told the story better than any others could. He ordered them put back in.

Yes, some listeners complained. But Berry was a little relieved that almost none of the complaints came from younger people. Not that he wants to alienate others. For 17 and a half years KGO has been San Francisco's number-one station 12-plus.

"I don't want to be the guy who loses that," Berry says. "I don't want to jettison older listeners, but I'm not afraid to talk about younger issues."

He focuses on that by holding twice-daily assignment meetings in the middle of the newsroom. It's an open process. Veterans and interns are encouraged to offer ideas. As a result, KGO's stories tend to skew toward issues like working mothers, health and computers.

You might think it's easier to score big 25-54 on the west coast, where the perception is that things are more hip. But 3,000 miles away in Boston, WBZ does exceptionally well, too.

Brian Whittemore, director of news and programming, "dayparts" his news product. Early-morning drive is fairly traditional while late-morning drive tends to have more news interviews and treat stories with more depth.

Another key for WBZ is interjecting warmth and energy into stories. Whittemore does that by interjecting warmth and energy into his people.

"You've got to hard manage but not manage hard," he says. "You've got to give them passion."

Whittemore explains to his staff why it's important to aim for people 25 to 54. He shows them how to do it. He shows them the ratings, the evidence of success. Then he gets excited about it. And that excitement spreads to virtually everyone in the newsroom.

Hard work is important, too. Whittemore says people who manage newsrooms should know what they want and have "maniacal attention to detail." But that does not mean they should micro-manage their people. "I like to build a football stadium then let the team play. I don't call in plays from the sidelines."

You might say Cridland at KDKA manages from the sidelines, but only to reward creativity. Those rewards lead to even better performance. "Anchors and reporters like to do a good job. They like to feel they're being creative." So Cridland singles them out for praise.

But that's about the only way Cridland wants them singled out. She doesn't want them working alone to shoot for the ideal age group. That's got to involve everyone in her department. News people have to work with talk show hosts and producers to come up with topics that resonate with those in the demo.

That's also Douglas' approach at WTIC. "We try every day to come up with one topic that people are going to talk about." His hosts discuss it on their shows and his anchors report on it during their newscasts.

And so the staff doesn't forget, there are always those two large photos of the station's typical listeners.



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# LEGAL NOTES

Volume 5 No. 2

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF RTNDA

February 1996

## ELECTION YEAR COVERAGE: UPDATE ON LAW & POLICY

by Kathleen A. Kirby, attorney, Reed Smith Shaw & McClay

**"MUCH OF THE  
CONFUSION  
SURROUNDING  
CAMPAIGN  
COVERAGE  
CENTERS ON  
THE FCC'S  
POLITICAL  
PROGRAMMING  
POLICIES...."**

**A**s campaign '96 gathers momentum, the lofty ideal of ensuring a fair democratic process becomes, for broadcasters, the nuts and bolts reality of the rights and obligations stations have under FCC political programming law. During the political season, as surely as sales managers will struggle to calculate the lowest unit charge, newsrooms will grapple with questions such as whether certain programming will require giving equal time to opposing candidates, when to air campaign ads or whether the station must respond to charges that ballot issue coverage is lacking in balance.

With 1996 upon us, it is important for newsrooms to have a working familiarity with the murky and ever-changing law governing the answers to such questions, whether making on-the-spot decisions, working with their sales departments or conferring with counsel.

Much of the confusion surrounding campaign coverage centers on the FCC's political programming policies, which require broadcasters to allow certain candidates access to their station's facilities. In addition, if a candidate for office is allowed to use the facilities, in some circumstances all other candidates for that office must be afforded "equal opportunities." While the law is most frequently triggered by commercial time paid for and controlled by a candidate, the right to equal time is also triggered when station programming involves a non-exempt "use" by a candidate.

The FCC's definition of a candidate "use" has changed over time. Currently, a "use" is any "positive" appearance of a candidate's identifiable voice and/or picture. The requirement that a use be positive excludes ads where an opposing candidate or organization includes a candidate's voice or picture in a

negative fashion. Under the revised definition, however, appearances that are unrelated to a campaign (such as the airing of an old Ronald Reagan movie during a Reagan campaign) will be deemed a use. A finding that programming is a "use" triggers not only the equal opportunities obligation to opposing candidates but also a station's obligation to afford the lowest unit charge, the "no censorship" rule and libel/defamation protection.

Fortunately, from a newsperson's perspective, the FCC's rules exempt a large chunk of news programming from its equal time requirements, particularly programming where the broadcaster controls the type of coverage and the content. These exemptions were designed to permit ongoing coverage of non-political news during campaigns without unduly burdening broadcasters with political time demands and without subjecting viewers and listeners to the potential for non-stop political information.

The mayor of a city, for instance, is the subject of news coverage in many capacities other than his candidacy. Candidates' appearances on bona fide newscasts, bona fide news interviews (including programs such as Today, Donahue and Good Morning America), bona fide news documentaries (if the appearance is incidental to the subject of the documentary) and on-the-spot coverage of bona fide news events (including coverage of debates in their entirety) are not considered "uses" under the FCC's definition, and therefore create no obligation to afford opposing candidates equal time.

There was a time when stations were required to present programming on controversial issues of public importance and to present contrasting viewpoints if one side of a

**"MANY ARE  
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controversial issue was broadcast. As most broadcasters are aware, this fairness doctrine was repealed in 1987. But many are confused about which of the fairness doctrine's ancillary policies vanished with it. In brief, as a result of the repeal of the fairness doctrine, stations are no longer required to present contrasting views as concern referenda, initiative and recall propositions, bond proposals and constitutional amendments, so-called "ballot issues." However, the FCC's personal attack and political editorial rules, as well as its political spokesperson doctrine remain in effect.

The personal attack rule establishes a personal right of reply when the honesty, character or integrity (but not the competency) of a person or group is attacked on a station during the discussion of a controversial issue of public importance. If a personal attack has been made on the air, the station has an affirmative duty to offer the person who was attacked a reasonable opportunity for reply. This rule does not apply to attacks by a candidate or his associates against another candidate, attacks that occur during a candidate "use" and personal attacks which occur on a bona fide newscast, bona fide news interview program or actual coverage of a bona fide news event.

The political editorializing rule gives a candidate the right to reply when opposed, or

when his opponent is endorsed by the management of a radio or television station. The political spokesperson doctrine is similar to equal opportunities, except that it pertains to spokespersons rather than candidates. If a supporter of candidate A uses station time to support candidate A, then the station must be willing to provide time to a supporter of candidate B.

Another time issue revolves around when to air political ads. Must you air these ads during newscasts? Simply, no. A station can refuse to sell advertising time during all news programs, some news programs or during any portion of a specific news program. A station may exclude candidate ads from the hard news, but include them in weather or sports, if it chooses to do so.

Stations which do not sell political advertising during news programs are not required to create and sell to candidates a "news adjacency" class of time. If they have such a time slot or create one, the station must not charge more than the lowest unit rate for the same type of time that otherwise would be offered during the news program itself. If advertising time during news adjacencies is sold as part of a regular program rotation, candidates may be charged the lowest unit rate which applies to that class of time.



These notes are intended as a general overview of the topics addressed. They should not be relied upon as a substitute for legal advice. RTNDA's *Legal Notes* is published monthly and distributed free to RTNDA members. ©1996 RTNDA, 1000 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 615, Washington, DC 20036; Phone: (202) 659-6510; Fax: (202) 223-4007. To order back issues of *Legal Notes*, call Leslie Sansom Emery, Director of Communications; (202) 467-5203; e-mail: [lse@rtnda.org](mailto:lse@rtnda.org). Please direct comments and suggestions regarding this publication to Leslie Sansom Emery.

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by Gary Griffith

Covering campaign '96 creatively and intelligently may help you stake a claim as the most serious news station in your city. The surveys say that viewers want to know enough about the campaign to make informed choices in the voting booth. But how do you get the right mix? Leading television consultants provide some suggestions.

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by Charles Lewis

Relationships among political candidates and their career patrons can be extremely revealing and yet are generally unknown. Discovering the connection requires some investigative digging, but the rewards can be golden.

## SALARIES MOVING UP ..... 16

by Bob Papper, Andrew Sharma and Michael Gerhard

According to researcher Bob Papper, virtually everyone he talked with labeled 1995 a better year for salaries than 1994. In addition to affiliation changes, start-up news operations and expanding news departments affecting salaries, bringing up the low end of the salary ladder and longer-term contracts also had an impact on paychecks.

## SENDING IN THE TROOPS ..... 25

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The arrival of American troops in Tuzla was supposed to be the big story. Instead, there were delays—first the snow, then the fog and floods, and then camera crews started covering themselves covering the news. Here's the story of how the U.S. television networks and international news agencies lined up for the best coverage.

## MANAGEMENT DIVERSITY ..... 27

by Lillian Rae Dunlap

Since 1992, the RTNDF and University of Missouri Management Seminar for Women and Minorities has worked to bring home one loud message: Diversity is not just getting one of each. Diversity is acknowledging, valuing and benefiting from each one.

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**FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

**PEOPLE WHO  
MATTER**

**M**y thoughts this month turn to people in the news. Not the ones we cover, although I'm sure we all have some great stories to tell in that area. This time I'm thinking about the people behind the scenes—those who have helped shape what we do in our profession and how we do it.

The end of 1995 brought change, and that has caused me to reflect on some people who have made a difference not only in our craft but also in the way I do my job. So here are some thoughts about three of those individuals: Larry Scharff, Eric Ober and Tom Pettit.

**Larry Scharff**

As I talk to people about renewing their RTNDA membership, they always mention two things—the *Communicator* magazine and the monthly *Legal Notes*. The Larry Scharff byline on *Legal Notes* has become very familiar to all of us associated with RTNDA. The newsletter has helped all of us at one time or another. I usually post them in my own shop. Reporters don't always think about the legal ramifications of what they do, and Larry's words of advice have caused us to be careful and to do things right the first time.

For more than 30 years he has been the legal force behind RTNDA. Larry has spent countless hours tracking legislation and potential changes in the law or its interpretation. As we enter 1996 Larry is stepping down as a partner in the Reed Smith Shaw & McClay law firm. Our relationship with the firm continues and so will *Legal Notes*. We will miss Larry and all he has done for us. Larry, there is no way to really thank you for all you have done. Know that you will be in my mind often.

**Eric Ober**

Almost five and a half years ago, Eric Ober took over the reins as president of CBS News. Now new network owners have implemented a change at the top.



Eric has been around long enough to understand that this is an unfortunate part of our business. He did much for CBS, despite ratings numbers that many wish were better. He is a solid newsman with a passion for our craft and compassion for those who do it. The eye web will be fine, but CBS was better for having Eric Ober at the top for a while. Thanks, Eric, for all you have done for CBS, the affiliates and RTNDA. Your support will long be appreciated.

**Tom Pettit**

I was saddened to read of the passing of longtime NBC reporter Tom Pettit. He is probably best remembered as the only broadcaster to witness and provide live coverage of Jack Ruby shooting Lee Harvey Oswald. But I will always remember Tom for his reports that brought insight to listeners and viewers. From March 1982 to October 1995, Tom served as executive vice president of NBC News, but soon he went back to what he really loved—reporting. Tom will be missed, and I can only hope that future journalists will look at his work with an eye toward someone who knew how to do it the right way.

**Loren Tobia**

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## ON THE MOVE

**Robert Garcia** named general manager, CNN Radio, Atlanta, from executive producer for CBS Radio Stations News Service, Washington.



**John Matthews** promoted to news director at WMAL-AM, Washington, from managing editor at the station.



**Roberto Vizcon** promoted to news director at WSCV-TV, Miami, from executive producer for the station.



**John Armand** named executive producer at WTOG-TV, St. Petersburg, FL, from same position at KPWB-TV, Sacramento, CA.

**Doug Crary** to news director at KTKA-TV, Topeka, KS, from executive producer at WDAF-TV, Kansas City.

**Chris Gordon** to anchor at Court TV Network, New York, from co-anchor at WUSA-TV, Washington.

**Lisa Hudson** has been promoted to assistant news director at KTVK in Phoenix, from executive producer.

**Eason Jordan** promoted to head of CNN International, Atlanta, from senior VP of international newsgathering.

**Drew Levinson** to reporter at WCAU-TV, Philadelphia.

**Brian Loring** named manager, news system and planning at KCBS-TV, Los Angeles.

**Wayne Lynch** promoted to vice president of news and programming at News Channel 8 in Springfield, VA.

**Vicki Montet** to senior executive producer of news and special projects at WUSA-TV, Washington, from assistant news director at KCNC-TV, Denver.

**Jeff Newpher** to executive news director at KJAC-TV, Beaumont, TX, from producer at KPRC-TV, Houston.

**Beth O'Connell** promoted to director of political coverage at NBC News' Decision '96 in New York.

**Krista Roberts** to managing editor at KSHB, Kansas City, from executive pro-

ducer at KTNV, Las Vegas.

**Michael Sipes** to news director at WLKY-TV, Louisville, KY, from same position at WJTV, Jackson, MS.

**Rob Sunde**, former chairman of RTNDA, named senior editor, CNBC, Fort Lee, NJ.

**Gary Whitaker** named GM at KSPR-TV, Springfield, MO, from news director at KDNL-TV, St. Louis.

**Arthur Wood** named news director at WTVH-TV, Syracuse, NY, from executive producer at WBRC-TV in Birmingham, AL.

**Kim Wright** to director of news coverage at NewsChannel 8, Springfield, VA, from assistant news director.

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By Gary Griffith

# BRINGING IT HOME



**Dozens of local television stations will send news crews to New Hampshire and Iowa this month, and a hundred or more local stations will send personnel to the two national political conventions this summer. Are they doing the right thing?**

**W**ith so many Americans fed up with politics, and with so little apparent suspense this year, are local television stations wise to invest so much time and money in a national story that is usually predictable and inherently dull?

The answer, according to several leading news consultants, is yes.

Local television stations will find not only that their viewers are interested in national politics but also that those viewers are counting on stations to provide meaningful coverage.

The smart money for 1996 is advising news directors that leadership opportunities exist for stations that cover the campaign intelligently and creatively.

"The issue is not that people are not interested in politics," says Frank Graham, a principal with the consulting firm of McHugh & Hoffman. "What they have written off is the way many stations have chosen to cover it." Too often, he says, stations concentrate on personalities and staged events rather than the issues the voters would like to know more about. "In a presidential election there is a real story to tell," he says. "It changes the way the country is going to be."

Local television viewers, rather than being turned off by politics, want to know enough about the campaign to make informed choices in the voting booth. The most recent national survey on this subject was taken early this fall by Frank N. Magid Associates. It focused on those who said they watched local newscasts and found that there was considerably more interest in national politics (41 percent) than in sports (30 percent).

"There is no such thing as boring politics," says Magid's research director, Dick Haynes, "just boring approaches to interesting politics." The Magid study also found that viewers say that their local stations are their leading source of information on national politics, signifi-

cantly ahead of both network television and newspapers.

Political consultants also note that most presidential campaigns, no matter how predictable they seem at the beginning, become interesting. At this point in the 1992 campaign, for example, George Bush was leading every Democrat in the national polls and Jerry Brown was running dead even with Bill Clinton for the Democratic nomination.

Presidential politics hates a vacuum, and when boredom starts to set in, the vacuum fills, as it no doubt will in 1996. Perhaps the most prescient of the 1995 year-end round of pundit predictions for 1996 came from NBC's Lisa Myers, who says, "Something's going to pop up." It always does.

**I**ndependent television consultant Ron Tindiglia advises local stations to welcome the presidential election with open arms. "This is the largest shared experience in America," he says. "It is about people and character as well as about issues. To think you can pass on it is nuts."

For stations in some areas, including those where there are important primaries or local candidates, campaign and election coverage can be especially important to a station's perception by its audience. "Some stations will be able to use it as a way of staking their claim as the most serious news station in a city," says Joe Rovitto, vice president of news at Clemensen, Sheehan & Associates.

Much of the specific advice from the consultants is familiar to most news directors—localize the issues and report the stories relevant to viewers. But doing that is harder than saying it. One of the most difficult tasks—and one of the most important—is finding out what the local issues are.

"People who work in newsrooms are often very different than the typical viewer," says Bob Kaplitz, director of consult-

ing development for Audience Research & Development (AR&D). Local television reporters and producers are likely to be young, single and from out of town and don't know what the older, married, hometown audience feels is important.

Although the consultants advise stations to undertake the kind of professional survey research they sell, they also suggest that stations can find out a lot by conducting in-house surveys and town meetings. Talking to real voters in your area should be a large part of your off-camera preparation.

Looking at the election from the voter's point of view is stressed by several consultants. "Build the stories from the customer back," advises Larry Rickel of The Broadcast Image Group, "rather than from the rhetoric down." Too often, he and others say, local stations initiate stories based on appearances by candidates—events that are essentially sterile, managed and manipulated. Rickel tells political reporters to think and act like consumer reporters. "Every single story in your newscast is a consumer story," he says.

**N**o set of advice will fit every station. Whether to travel to primaries, conventions, debates and election nights will be decisions based largely on station size and budget. Here's a summary of what leading television consultants are telling their clients this year:

**Cover the Issues.** There is nearly universal agreement on this. "The solid interest in the campaign really takes off when you link it with issues and events," adds Magid's Haynes. Some 93 percent of viewers, he says, "want specifics on issues." The top five in his national survey are education, health care, environment, economy and crime.

**Localize, Localize.** This should be obvious, but it often gets ignored in covering the national presidential cam-

*(continued on page 12)*

## "Build the stories from the customer back rather than from the rhetoric down."

(continued from page 11)

paign. "You can't 'outnationalize' the networks," says AR&D's Kaplitz. Your viewers count on you to learn where the candidates stand on the issues that are important to them.

**Don't Peak Too Early.** One of the mistakes that many stations make, according to McHugh & Hoffman's Graham, is that their producers and reporters follow the national timetable rather than the local one. "They need to be reminded," he says,

"that the viewer is often not involved until just before the election."

**Promote, Promote.** "Name it, claim it, and be visible all the way through," advises Ron Tindiglia. Use a consistent theme and graphics for your coverage, but concentrate on what you are doing that the others are not and on what makes your coverage important.

**Character Matters.** While you should avoid reporting on superficial per-

sonality quirks or "charisma," your viewers do want to know about the candidates and their records. While issues rate highest, the Magid survey shows that 58 percent want to know about each candidate's "character and personal life." To this Tindiglia adds, "Our politicians and movie stars are our royalty."

**Set the Agenda.** The campaigns will try to tell you what is important by using speeches, press conferences, debates and advertising. That's what they want you to report, but it's not usually what your viewers want to hear. "Be proactive in determining what the agenda is," says Graham, "rather than letting the candidates set it."

**Cover, Cover.** Don't be afraid to tell your viewers what is happening. While you shouldn't concentrate only on the horse race, your viewers want to be informed about how the race is changing. Consider doing a section of "briefs" on polls and developments. If you don't have a reporter who is identified as a political reporter, consider naming one. Use your other specialists (your health and education reporters, for example) to look at candidates' stands on health and medicine.

**Red Flags.** One of the subjects that turns voters off is mudslinging, which 88 percent believe is "out of control," according to the Magid study. But viewers also believe that local television often "makes politicians look worse than they are."

**Be a Watchdog.** "Truth squads" that look into campaign promises and "ad watches" that examine the truth or appropriateness of political advertising can give your coverage a consumer-oriented edge. Viewers believe that most politicians lie in order to get elected. Viewers this year are particularly interested in how their tax money is being spent.

**Include Real People.** "Put a face on it," says Broadcast Image Group's Rickel, "not just m-o-s's, but real people." Consider tracking a group of families or interviewing on camera the same people who have answered polling questions or participated in focus groups. Ask the candidates the questions that actual voters want explained or cleared up.

**Be a Leader.** Be creative but substantial. You may want to be the station that creates a campaign home page on the Internet or the one that partners with a cable or PBS station to provide wall-to-wall coverage. Let your viewers know that you are the station providing them with the news they need to vote intelligently—and then live up to the claim. ■

**Gary Griffith is Washington bureau chief for Hearst Broadcasting.**

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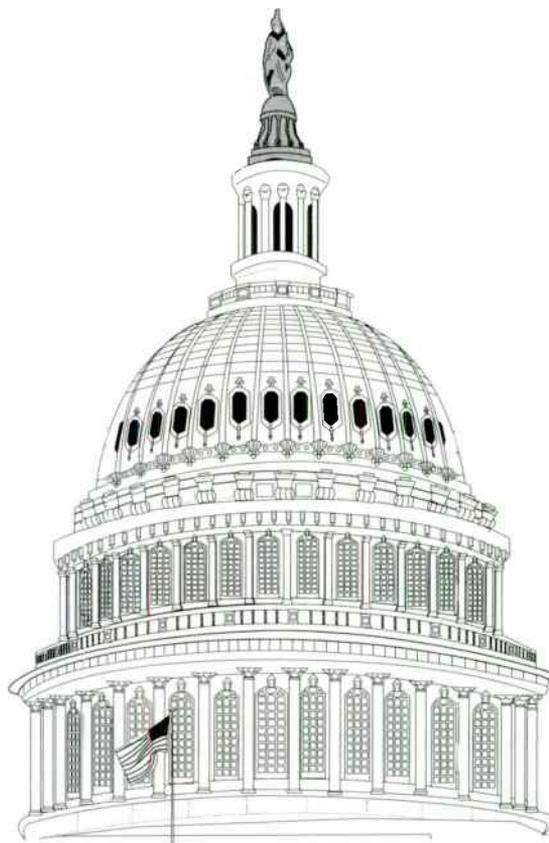
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By Charles Lewis

# FOLLOW THE MONEY



**Journalistic sophistication at dissecting broadcast political advertising generally is improving. But it may be revealing to take an even closer look behind the advertising itself—at the candidates, their campaign money, who produced their commercials and what exactly it has bought.**

**T**elevision stations have recently been praised for taking local political reporting to a new level by analyzing candidate commercials and separating “fact from fiction” in news-cast ad watch campaigns. But more needs to be done to find out where the money for the advertising comes from—and who raised it.

This requires investigative digging and some creativity in visually presenting the information for TV audiences. But the effort is well worth it, sometimes netting terrific stories. For example, two local stories in late 1995 that became national curiosities came from understanding and reporting the confluence of money and politics.

One was the strange “honeymoon’s over” saga of Rep. Enid Waldholtz (R-UT), her husband and the mysterious influx of \$2 million in the closing days of her 1994 campaign. Another story concerned the hundreds of thousands of dollars spent by the re-election campaign of Democratic Gov. Lawton Chiles via bogus elderly organizations to scare elderly Florida voters about “Republican cuts in entitlements” just before the 1994 election. Print journalists have in the past pursued these investigative stories more aggressively than their broadcast brethren. But perhaps that is changing.

Because of the “live” interview formats that are generally essential to candidates at election time because they are free, broadcast journalists—arguably more so than print reporters—are in a position to substantially turn up the heat, thus enabling viewers to ascertain exactly who is behind each candidate before they vote for them.

Undoubtedly, the 1996 presidential election will go down as the most expensive political campaign in U.S. history. In the year preceding the 1992 election, challenger Bill Clinton raised more

money than any other Democrat, \$3.2 million. In 1995, President Clinton raised \$26 million in roughly seven months, or more than \$123,000 a day! Republican challenger Sen. Bob Dole raised more than \$20 million in 1995. The money is significant, not just because of how it affects our choices but because, since 1976, every presidential candidate raising the most money before the election began, and accepting federal matching funds, has gotten his party’s nomination.

**T**he American people have always viscerally sensed that there is an alliance between politicians and money. But they have a right to know—and journalists have an obligation to report—just which interests have invested in which candidates and precisely to what extent these patrons and their politicians have benefited from the relationship.

Print journalists frequently report the latest incoming receipts from the Federal Election Commission for all of the presidential campaigns, sometimes including fancy charts, convinced that they have done their readers a service in presenting “a money-and-politics story.” The information is in fact new and interesting, but the rest of the story about these unprecedented amounts of candidate cash remains largely untold.

The important thing for journalists to do in this election cycle is to listen carefully to the candidates and what they are saying about themselves. Then look more closely at what they don’t talk about—how specific moneyed interests have underwritten their careers. Politicians, as we all know, rarely tell you the whole story. For example, in the 1980s, Gov. Clinton gave political speeches about the plight of Arkansas chicken farmers, but he rarely uttered the words “Tyson Foods.” Sen. Phil Gramm is far more likely to talk about the right of Americans to bear arms than to brag

that the National Rifle Association has given him \$442,525 since 1979. These relationships of candidates to their benefactors are extremely revealing, yet generally unknown.

An example of this occurred last fall in New Hampshire when millionaire publisher and GOP presidential hopeful Steven Forbes held his first news conference in Bedford. For days, Forbes had been extolling the virtues and policy wisdom of revamping the tax code and instituting a “17 percent flat tax” on all Americans, rich and poor. One local reporter asked Forbes how many millions of dollars he would personally save each year from the enactment of a new flat tax. He dodged the question, but at least it was asked.

**Q**uestions should be asked again and again to politicians, by local and national reporters, until they are responsibly answered. Tarmac photo-ops carefully targeted for local evening newscasts should feature tough follow-the-money questions about each candidate’s “career patrons” and the favors given in return.

Just as many radio and TV stations have determined that political advertising has become an important campaign story in and of itself, it is time to recognize the relevance to viewers and listeners of money in politics today. And it is time to stop using sports metaphors to describe how this democracy selects its national leader every four years. Maybe in 1996, America will see the process for what it really is: a prohibitively expensive, high-stakes, exclusive auction. ■

**Charles Lewis, a former producer for CBS’ 60 Minutes, is executive director of the Center for Public Integrity, a nonpartisan research organization in Washington, and is author of “The Buying of the President,” just released by Avon.**

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By Bob Papper, Andrew Sharma and Michael Gerhard

# SALARIES MOVING UP

**Affiliation changes, start-up news operations and expanding news departments and newscasts made 1995 another good year for people moving into the business and moving up within it.**

Salary "increases are running 5, 6, 7, 8 percent and more," according to Don Fitzpatrick of Don Fitzpatrick Associates talent placement in San Francisco, "primarily because of the amount of hiring and the bidding that's taking place. Two or three years ago, a news director would say, 'It's \$35,000. Take it or leave it.' Now, it's a bidding war—especially for male anchors and reporters. And good producers can just write their own tickets."

Phone calls made around the country, in conjunction with the 1995 RTNDF/Ball State University Survey, showed that affiliation changes, start-up news operations and expanding news departments and newscasts made 1995 another good year for people moving into the business and moving up within it.

Most news directors reported salary increases in the 4 to 6 percent range, with at least some people under contract getting closer to 10 percent if they resigned with their old station. Virtually everyone we talked with labeled 1995 a better year for salaries than 1994. (See graph on page 17.)

Fitzpatrick said more people were hired in each of the last two years than in any other year in the past decade.

"The biggest (hiring) problem is that there are lots more stations doing news," according to Steve Hammel, news director at KMOV-TV in St. Louis. "You must make a decision a lot faster than

you used to because others are looking."

"It's supply and demand," said Fitzpatrick. "We got to the point in the office with news directors in every day looking for the same people. I told them, if they're here, chances are other news directors in similar markets are doing the same thing. If you like the person, call and talk to them—at least get on their dance card."

Some of those competitive forces come from people like Bob Schadel. He's the news director for a start-up news department at KOKH-TV in Oklahoma City (market #43). The Fox

## **Virtually everyone we talked with labeled 1995 a better year for salaries than 1994.**

station plans to start with a half-hour newscast at 9 p.m. on Memorial Day. Schadel didn't want to talk about specific salaries but said his budget allows him to be competitive in the market, and he's having no trouble finding local people interested in moving and talented younger people in smaller markets wanting to move up.

But Schadel noted that it's tougher to find quality talent now than it was before Fox. The demand is going up. "It comes down to the almighty dollar," according to Schadel. "If a station is willing to pay, it can get top news people."

Talent agent Bill LaPlante saw 1995 as a variable year, with many of his people seeing raises in the 5 to 10 percent range. Media Alliance, in Burlington, CT, represents fewer than 50 people. LaPlante saw last year as especially good for people getting into the business, but he's worried about the industry losing good people because of the low starting salaries.

David Crane, whose agency in Ormond Beach, FL, represents 50 to 60

people, said he saw the same 5 to 6 percent increases. News directors usually started offering around 4 percent, said Crane, but "when someone is highly desired, you can negotiate pretty hefty raises of 10 or even 20 percent sometimes."

Crane agreed that the affiliation changes and new start-ups have presented lots of new opportunities and helped salaries, but, he said, there are dangers, too. "These new operations can be difficult places to work, with lots of unformed program concepts. So unless you're extremely versatile, you may have been perceived as a solution (when you were first hired), but six months down the road, you may be perceived as the problem" if the news department changes direction.

"News directors want to keep the increases fairly modest," according to Rick Gevers in Grand Rapids, MI, who moved from news director to talent agent in 1995. "The thing that astounds me is the variance between markets.... Sometimes you can find double the pay in a smaller market."

"Tenure has a lot to do with it," according to Gevers, "and sometimes it's just competitive forces in the market or a union. It varies." Gevers said the increases he's seen have varied from as little as 3 to 4 percent into the low double digits.

As always, with rare exceptions, salaries moved up with size of staff and market size. (See tables on pages 19 and 20.)

Jay Hildebrandt, news director at KIFI-TV in Idaho Falls/Pocatello, ID (market #163), said most of his people got raises of \$500 to \$1,000 a year in 1995. At his salary levels, that translated to 3 to 7 percent.

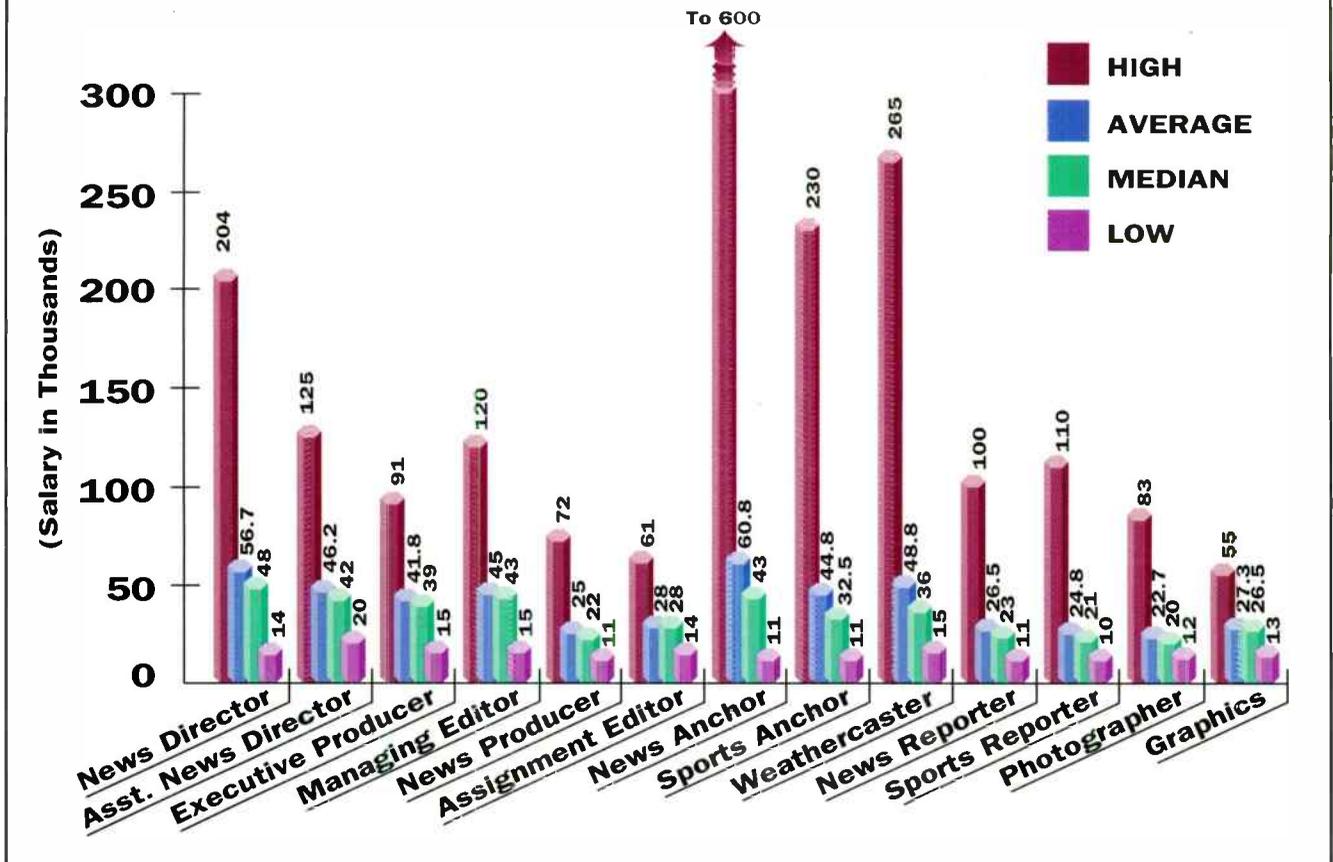
Renard Maiuri is news director at KDRV-TV in Medford, OR (market #145), as well as KEZI-TV in Eugene. Maiuri said raises were around 5 to 6 percent, which is better than past years.

Mary Loftus said last year was at least marginally better than before.

### **About the Survey:**

**The RTNDF/Ball State University Survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 1995 among all 1,196 operating, non-satellite television stations and a random sample of 922 radio stations. Valid responses came from 679 television stations (56.8 percent) and 449 radio stations (48.7 percent).**

## TELEVISION NEWS SALARIES



The range between the low salary and the high salary for each position is enormous. The low end usually means small market and small staff; the high end: major market and the biggest newsrooms. The better indicator of salaries is represented in the median figure—the midpoint of all the salaries.

Raises in her news department at WIBW-TV in Topeka, KS (market #142), were generally 4 to 5 percent.

That's close to what Bruce Cramer saw, as news director at WTXL-TV in Tallahassee, FL (market #116). Cramer said raises ranged from 3 to 5 percent, depending on merit, experience and longevity. "And I've got Florida to sell," said Cramer, and that helps.

A booming economy helped Roger Bell, news director at KVBC-TV in Las Vegas (market #66). Raises there were "in the 5 percent range in general, maybe a little more."

Percentages were a lot higher for some of the people at WHBQ-TV in Memphis, TN (market #42). News director George Tyll brought the new Fox affiliate from 28 news people to 55. And along the way, Tyll said he really brought the low end up to make it a lot more competitive in the market.

Steve Schwaid, news director at WVIT-TV in Hartford, CT (market #26), said raises fell in the 4 to 5 percent range, and "nobody got no raise." That's a good year after the retrenchment his

station (and so many others) had a couple of years ago.

Steve Hammel, news director at KMOV-TV in St. Louis, said his newsroom raises of 3 to 4 percent had been determined a number of years ago. Everyone is union at KMOV-TV, and the 1996 raise of 3 percent has already been negotiated.

### Trends

The biggest trend David Crane sees is more and more longer term contracts—up to five years. Crane said a number of his clients have agreed to smaller raises as a trade-off for greater security, but not everyone wants to be tied down like that, either.

And it isn't just longer contracts. As we noted last year, more and more stations appeared to be signing more and more people to contracts. Larger stations have always had contracts with anchors and reporters. Today, those stations frequently sign producers and assignment editors to contracts, too. So do more and more smaller stations.

"We sign everyone for a couple-year commitment," according to Jay

Hildebrandt at KIFI-TV in Idaho Falls/Pocatello, ID. "That makes it worthwhile to go through the effort to train them. They stay for a couple years, minimum." After a couple years, most go on to larger markets.

"We got hit real hard a year and a half ago" with three people leaving to bigger markets, said Renard Maiuri at KDRV-TV in Medford, OR. "After that, we changed our policy: Most (on-air) people are under contract, and there are no outs in the first year." Maiuri also said he has more multiyear contracts than ever before, some reaching to three years.

Bruce Cramer at WTXL-TV in Tallahassee, FL, said most of his people are under contract—except photographers. "It's very, very hard keeping people," especially producers. "They're gold right now. I've got two under contract, but their contracts are coming up, and I expect them to move on and make more money."

Many news directors told us about 1995 as a year for salary parity—either

(continued on page 18)

**News directors report making as little as \$14,000 a year and as much as \$204,000. The average was \$56,700 and the median was \$48,000.**

*(continued from page 17)*

bringing up the low end in the newsroom or bringing salaries more in line with others in the market.

"Historically, we've been a bit lower than the others," according to Marc Cotta at KJEO-TV in Fresno, CA (market #57). He said their big goal was to bring up their salaries to be more even with the market, especially for those who are "grossly underpaid."

That was a theme echoed by George Tyll at WHBQ-TV in Memphis, TN. Tyll said probably their biggest push in salaries was "on the lower end," people paid well below market.

The short-term future? Rick Gevers thinks this year will be strong, with the Olympics and big elections pouring dollars into stations. Gevers said the year to watch for retrenchment is 1997.

David Crane also sees this year as a strong one, and he thinks that some movement in the syndicated market away from tabloid sensationalism could offer some more attractive alternatives for people in the business.

Bill LaPlante and others are waiting to see exactly what ABC, NBC/Microsoft and Fox do, if anything, in the cable/electronic news business.

"In the back of my mind, a voice says it's slowing up," noted Don Fitzpatrick.

"But it's not. We're as busy as we've ever been."

**News Directors**

The RTNDF/Ball State University Survey found TV news directors making as little as \$14,000 a year and as much as \$204,000. The average was \$56,700 and the median (midpoint of the group) was \$48,000.

Jay Hildebrandt at KIFI-TV said news directors in Idaho Falls/Pocatello, ID, make in the mid-\$20s or so. Hildebrandt is also one of the station's main anchors, so his situation is a little different. He said he and co-anchor Karole Honas got tired of young, inexperienced news directors going through the market, so he and Honas suggested to management that they also manage the department (Honas is now assistant news director)—and split the news director's salary between them.

Renard Maiuri at KDRV-TV said news directors in Medford, OR, get paid between the mid-\$30s and the high \$40s.

In Tallahassee, FL, Bruce Cramer at WTXL-TV said news directors make in the \$40s.

Marc Cotta, news director at KJEO-TV, figured news directors in Fresno,

CA, make anywhere from \$60,000 to \$100,000.

Roger Bell at KVBC-TV said news directors in Las Vegas earn between \$75,000 and \$100,000.

That's higher than George Tyll at WHBQ-TV in Memphis, TN, estimated for news directors there: \$70,000 to \$80,000 or so.

But it's lower than Steve Hammel at KMOV-TV in St. Louis figured for his market. "Over \$100,000, for sure," said Hammel.

**Other News Managers**

Overall, assistant news directors, executive producers and managing editors averaged in the low to mid-\$40s, with median salaries of \$42,000, \$39,000 and \$43,000 respectively. The figure for managing editor is deceptively high because most stations, including medium and smaller ones, have an assistant news director and/or an executive producer, but few stations outside larger and major markets have managing editors. That inflates the average (and median) for managing editors.

Assistant news directors made a bit more than executive producers or managing editors, but the relative pay between executive producers and managing editors varied too much to give either the nod over the other.

At a number of smaller stations, the assignment editor also serves as executive producer or the management equivalent. In Topeka, KS, the assignment editor at WIBW-TV is also the executive

**Median Television News Salaries by Market Size**

	1-25	26-50	51-100	101-150	151+
News Director	\$106,000	\$75,000	\$55,000	\$43,000	\$38,000
Asst. News Dir.	78,000	52,000	42,000	35,000	30,000
Executive Prod.	65,000	45,000	35,000	30,000	33,000
Managing Ed.	60,000	42,000	39,500	38,000	30,000
News Producer	37,000	30,000	23,000	18,000	18,000
Assignment Ed.	38,000	30,000	27,000	24,000	20,000
News Anchor	135,000	76,000	47,000	35,000	28,000
Sports Anchor	93,000	55,000	35,000	29,000	24,500
Weathercaster	100,000	60,000	40,000	32,000	27,000
News Reporter	45,000	30,000	24,000	18,000	17,000
Sports Reporter	45,000	28,000	23,000	18,500	17,000
Photographer	35,000	25,000	20,000	17,000	16,000
Graphics	35,000	21,000	20,000	26,000	17,000

producer, the number two position there. In Tallahassee, FL, the assignment editor at WTXL-TV is also the managing editor, the number two position there.

In Medford, OR, Renard Maiuri said executive producers make in the mid-\$20s to mid-\$30s.

Over \$40,000, according to Roger Bell, news director at KVBC-TV in Las Vegas.

Other news managers in Fresno, CA, make in the \$30,000 to \$40,000 range, according to KJEO-TV news director Marc Cotta.

In Memphis, TN: \$50,000 to \$60,000, according to George Tyll, news director at WHBQ-TV.

In St. Louis, news managers make \$55,000 and up, according to Steve Hammel at KMOV-TV, "but not six figures."

### Assignment Editors and Producers

The RTNDF/Ball State University Survey found similar numbers for both assignment editors and producers, with the low end a bit higher for assignment editors: \$14,000 vs. \$11,000. But the high end was a bit lower: \$61,000 for assignment editors vs. \$72,000 for producers. Both averaged in the mid to upper \$20s, but the median salary for assignment editors, \$28,000, is considerably higher than the median for producers, \$22,000. The difference could be based on the number of assignment editors who also serve as middle managers, especially in smaller stations.

Jay Hildebrandt at KIFI-TV in Idaho Falls/Pocatello, ID, said both positions make in the mid to high teens in his market.

In Medford, OR, Renard Maiuri said both make in the high teens to mid-\$20s, depending on experience. That's the same figure Bruce Cramer reported at WTXL-TV in Tallahassee, FL.

### Pick your salary, any salary, and there's probably an anchor making that somewhere. Our survey found a range (for main news anchors) of \$11,000 to \$600,000.

In Fresno, CA, Marc Cotta at KJEO-TV said assignment editors and producers make in the \$20s and \$30s, depending on experience.

Roger Bell at KVBC-TV in Las Vegas put the range for producers at \$17,000 to \$35,000, depending on show and experience. The assignment desk runs \$25,000 to \$40,000, Bell said.

George Tyll in Memphis, TN, gave similar numbers for assignment editors, but producers run in the low \$30s and up, he said.

Salaries for producers in St. Louis run in the mid-\$30s to mid-\$40s, according to Steve Hammel at KMOV-

TV. Assignment editors run in the mid-\$30s, he said, excluding overtime.

### Anchors

Pick your salary, any salary, and there's probably an anchor making that somewhere. Our survey found a range (for main news anchors) of \$11,000 to \$600,000. The average comes to \$60,800, but that's inflated by the high end. A more realistic number is probably the median, which came to \$43,000. Overall, weather was second, with a median salary of \$36,000, and sports third, with a median of \$32,500.

Jay Hildebrandt at KIFI-TV said main anchors in Idaho Falls/Pocatello, ID, make in the low to mid-\$30s.

Renard Maiuri at KDRV-TV said reporters who do some anchoring make in the low \$20s or so. Main anchors, news, weather and sports, make in the mid-\$20s to mid-\$40s.

Mary Loftus at WIBW-TV in Topeka, KS, gave similar numbers. Reporters who do some anchoring make in the low to mid-\$20s; main anchors run in the low to mid-\$30s and up—depending on experience and longevity.

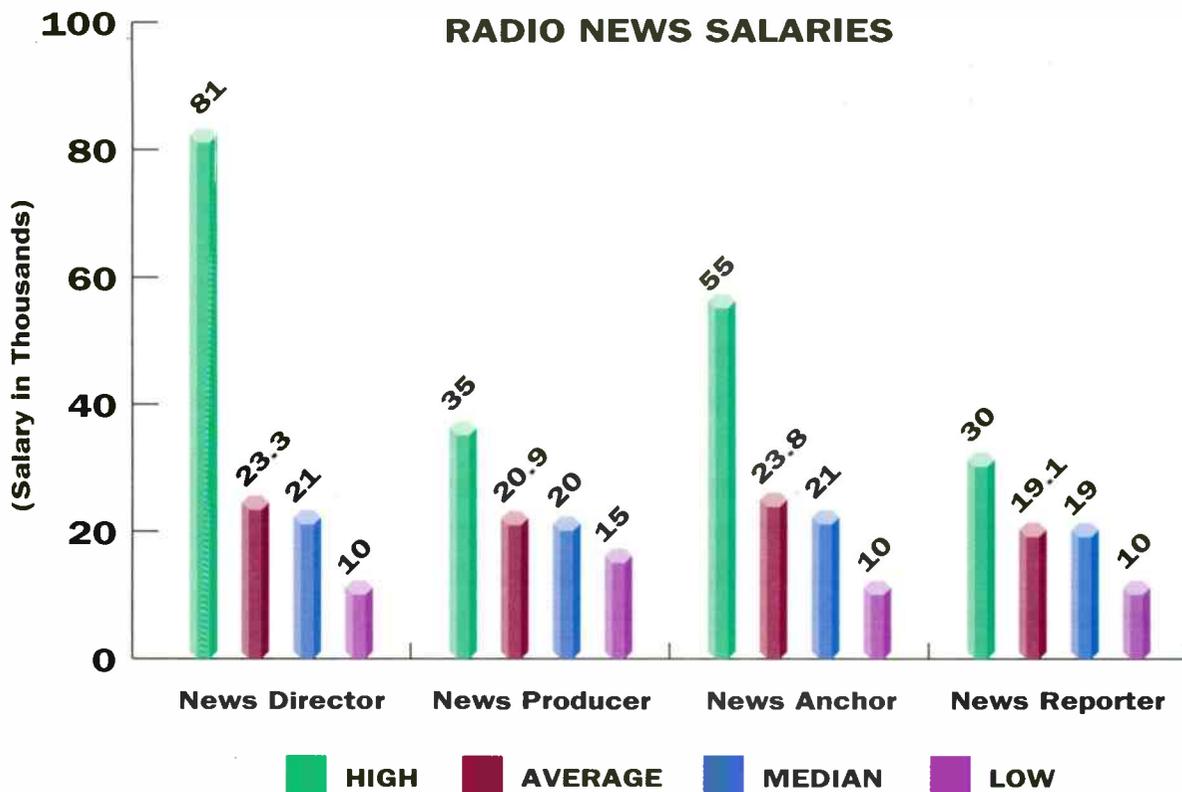
Bruce Cramer at WTXL-TV in Tallahassee, FL, said all the main anchors there make "around \$30."

Marc Cotta at KJEO-TV in Fresno, CA, said main news anchors run \$40,000 to \$65,000 and up. And it could be up quite a bit. Weather and sports, he said, run \$30,000 to \$40,000 and up, and, again, it could be a lot more, depending

*(continued on page 21)*

## Median Television News Salaries by Staff Size

	51+	31-50	21-30	11-20	1-10
News Director	\$111,000	\$70,000	\$49,000	\$40,000	\$30,500
Asst. News Dir.	70,000	49,000	34,000	29,000	25,000
Executive Prod.	62,000	41,000	30,500	25,000	32,500
Managing Ed.	57,500	42,000	35,000	25,000	45,000
News Producer	36,000	25,000	20,000	18,000	19,000
Assignment Ed.	36,000	30,000	25,000	20,000	18,000
News Anchor	125,000	70,000	40,500	28,000	22,000
Sports Anchor	86,500	50,000	31,000	25,000	21,000
Weathercaster	90,000	52,000	35,000	26,000	23,000
News Reporter	45,000	28,000	20,000	17,000	19,000
Sports Reporter	35,000	25,000	20,000	16,000	17,000
Photographer	34,000	24,000	18,000	16,000	19,000
Graphics	33,000	21,000	31,000	27,000	21,000



Although there's a large range between low salary and high salary for news directors, the range for other positions is much more compressed in radio than in television. That's why the average (the average of all the individual salaries) is so close to the median (the midpoint for all the salaries).



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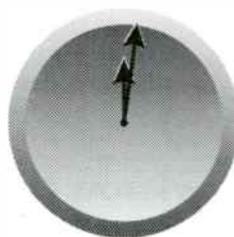
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(continued from page 19)

on experience and length in the market.

Roger Bell at KVBC-TV in Las Vegas put secondary anchors in the \$30s and main news anchors between \$50,000 and \$125,000. He put weather and sports between \$35,000 and \$60,000—with maybe a slight edge in pay to weather.

George Tyll at WHBQ-TV put main anchors in Memphis, TN, at “no less than \$100,000” and probably up to \$125,000 or \$130,000.

Steve Hammel at KMOV-TV said main anchors in St. Louis run double

that or so: “over \$200,000.” Sports and weather run “all over the ballpark,” depending on the individual.

As is commonly the case, the highest paid anchors didn’t show up in the survey. Talent representative Bill LaPlante estimated that there are 12 to 15 local anchors in the country making more than a million dollars a year.

#### Reporters

News reporters in our survey made anywhere from a low of \$11,000 to a high of \$100,000. The average pay was \$26,500 and the probably more realistic median pay was \$23,000.

Reporters start out between \$13,000 and \$14,000 in Idaho Falls/Pocatello, ID, according to Jay Hildebrandt at KIFI-TV, and then move to about \$15,000 in a year. Some anchoring would raise pay into the high teens.

In Medford, OR, reporters make in the mid teens to low \$20s, according to Renard Maiuri at KDRV-TV. Most do at least some anchoring.

That’s pretty close to the numbers in Topeka, KS, according to Mary Loftus at WIBW-TV. Loftus said reporters who do some anchoring will move into the low to mid-\$20s.

Around \$18,000, according to Bruce Cramer at WTXL-TV in Tallahassee, FL.

It depends on experience, according to Roger Bell at KVBC in Las Vegas. Less experienced reporters make \$18,000 to \$22,000, with experienced reporters running from \$24,000 to \$35,000.

In Fresno, reporters make \$25,000 to \$35,000, depending on experience, according to Marc Cotta at KJEO-TV. But, he said, there are some reporters in the market making more than that.

George Tyll at WHBQ-TV in Memphis, TN, figured reporters there make anywhere from \$25,000 at the low end up to \$40,000, depending on experience.

In St. Louis, reporters start at \$42,000 and go up from there, according to Steve Hammel at KMOV-TV.

#### Photographers

The RTNDF/Ball State University Survey found photographers’ pay ranged from \$12,000 to \$83,000, with an average of \$22,700 and a median of \$20,000.

At KIFI-TV in Idaho Falls/Pocatello, ID, Jay Hildebrandt said they really don’t have photographers—reporters shoot their own stories. The same situation is found in Medford, OR, at KDRV-TV, according to Renard Maiuri.

Bruce Cramer at WTXL-TV in Tallahassee, FL, said photographers start out in the \$16,000 range plus overtime. Overtime runs about six to eight hours every two weeks, Cramer said, because he’ll bring in part-timers on weekends rather than pay overtime.

Roger Bell at KVBC-TV said photographers make \$16,500 to \$26,000 plus overtime, which could tack on another 10 percent.

Marc Cotta at KJEO-TV said a starting photographer in Fresno, CA, might make around \$20,000, but the average is \$25,000 to \$30,000 overall, with the

(continued on page 22)

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## **"You trade certain things for quality of life. Small-market radio doesn't pay jack," said Steve Hair of KPQ in Wenatchee, WA.**

*(continued from page 21)*

high end up between \$35,000 and \$40,000.

In Memphis, TN, George Tyll at WHBQ-TV figured photographers average around \$25,000.

In St. Louis, photographers can start around \$27,000 and go up to \$52,000 after seven years. Add another 6 to 7 percent for overtime, according to Steve Hammel at KMOV-TV.

### **RADIO**

The RTNDF/Ball State University Survey showed a pay range for radio news directors from \$10,000 at the low end up to \$81,000. The average was \$23,300 and the median (midpoint for the group) was \$21,000. Radio news reporters made from \$10,000 up to \$30,000, with an average of \$19,100 and a median of \$18,000. News producers and anchors did a bit better. (See graph on page 20.)

Steve Hair, the news director at KPQ (AM), news/talk, in Wenatchee, WA, said, "You trade certain things for qual-

ity of life." Salary is one of those things. "Small-market radio doesn't pay jack," Hair said. "You do it because you love it."

Hair has been doing it off and on for 23 years—five years at KPQ. "My biggest disappointment in radio news is the salaries," he said.

Hair has news anchors who host the programs and read material he's prepared. The anchors make \$12,000 to \$14,500. News directors make in the mid-\$20s, according to Hair. Raises were about \$50 per month last year—less than 2 percent.

Vicki Holloway said she took quite a pay cut—moving from a TV producer in Dallas to the news director (and "pretty much the whole news department") at KETR (FM) in Commerce, TX. It's a public station, soon to be a part of Texas A&M University. She does have students who help and a couple of part-timers.

Last year brought across-the-board 3 percent salary increases. Holloway said

she makes \$18,500, and as a single mom, that can be tough. She produces about a dozen packages a day, and she loves the experience she's gaining and the contacts she's making as a member of the Texas Board of Directors for the Associated Press.

Libby Jackson said her last raise came in October 1994, and she doesn't expect one this year, either.

Jackson is news director (and news staff—along with a sports director) at KEXO (AM), adult contemporary; KKNN (FM), hot country; KQIL (AM), traditional country; and KQIX (FM), rock, in Grand Junction, CO. She's been there 10 years and makes \$19,200. "TV here pays less than radio," Jackson said.

"When we first moved here, the place was in a real depression; everything was dead," according to Jackson. Now she said everything's building and robust, but it hasn't filtered down into salaries—for her or the town, generally.

Jackson said she loves Grand Junction. "I'm going to stay; I'm hoping for profit sharing."

Rich Fellingham, news director at KASI (AM), talk/oldies, and KCCQ (FM), top 40, in Ames, IA, said 1995 was a strong year, compared to previous ones. Salaries went up in the 3 per-

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cent range last year. But, he said, there are fewer radio news people in Iowa. "If they had three, they cut back to two; if they had two, they cut back to one; and some eliminated news completely," according to Fellingham.

Fellingham has two full-time news people plus an intern from Iowa State University. While he said the pay isn't great, it's better than average for radio.

John Harris expects this year to be better. He said 1995 was about the same as 1994 and 1993—no increases in staff and little increase in money. Harris is the one-person news department at WCVS (FM), 70s; WFMB (FM), country; and WFMB (AM), sports, in Springfield, IL. Radio news salaries are in the upper teens and lower \$20s, Harris said, but he is hoping for a pay increase this year.

Lynda Lambert left the network and Los Angeles radio to be closer to family, a better quality of life and "out of the madness of L.A." She knew the trade-off would be money, although she said they now own a house in Birmingham, AL—something that seemed inconceivable in Los Angeles.

She and three reporters/anchors handle the news on WERC (AM) news/talk; WMJJ (FM), adult contemporary; and WOWC (FM), country. That's an increase of one over last year. "Our research said we could add several rating points by upgrading the news product."

Reporters in Birmingham, AL, make in the low to mid-\$20s, Lambert said, and news directors make in the high \$20s to the mid-\$40s. 1995 meant "very, very minute increases: 2 to 3 percent, if that." And 1996? "It better look better," said Lambert with a smile.

Radio news is alive and very well, thank you, at WBAL (AM), news/talk, in Baltimore. Salaries in 1995 grew a little ahead of the previous three years: about 3 1/2 percent, compared to about 3 percent before. Mark Miller has a news department of 10 full-time reporters, one part-time reporter, plus a full-time traffic reporter, three meteorologists (shared with WBAL-TV), two in sports and part-timers covering financial and political issues.

"In the last 15 years," according to Miller, "the number of radio stations with news departments (in Baltimore) has dwindled from 10 to two." By departments, he said he means stations that actually have enough staff to send a reporter to cover something.

"TV is more competition than radio, with its morning shows and 10 a.m. news and 11 a.m. news."

In Baltimore, radio reporters start around \$28,000 and top out around \$50,000 in four years. That's AFTRA, but a long-time, popular newscaster could make a lot more. A radio news director makes around \$70,000.

"1996 looks good," according to Miller. He sees no changes in staffing, pay raises in line with '95, and, if anything, an increased commitment to news. "We just put a home page on the Internet, so there's more news going there." ■

**Bob Papper is associate professor of telecommunications at**

**Ball State University and has worked extensively in radio and TV news. Andrew Sharma, Ph.D., and Michael Gerhard, Ph.D., are both assistant professors of telecommunications at Ball State University with extensive industry and research experience. This research was supported by the Department of Telecommunications at Ball State University and the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation.**

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By Nigel Baker

# SENDING IN THE TROOPS

**In Bosnia-Herzegovina, soldiers and journalists share a country that is devoid of law, decent roads and decent food, and where only the lucky get regular power and water supplies.**

**S**o, it was settled. A new offensive in the fall would decide once and for all how the former Yugoslavia was to be carved up.

U.S. television networks and the international TV news agencies lined up to fight for the best coverage of American troops arriving in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The slow churn of the peace process, coupled with snow, fog and floods, meant cameras had to wait to capture the image they had gone for: the main influx of American men and machinery across the swollen River Sava.

The G.I.s have been given a year to exert the peace and withdraw. The challenge is enormous. The task of recording that challenge on video is nearly as awesome. Army and journalists will share a country that is devoid of law, decent roads and decent food, and where only the lucky get regular power and water supplies.

Journalists seasoned in covering Bosnia have four years' wisdom to pass on to the American soldiers and to correspondents tempted to cover their mission. First, it is one of the few war zones in the world where, so far, the dollar doesn't talk. It is usually rejected, but Bosnians will sell nearly anything for German deutschmarks. The other main currency that foreigners use to buy their way out of trouble is Marlboro cigarettes, cherished in a country where the specter of death by bullet has overshadowed any fear of lung cancer.

It is a country that can destroy a western wardrobe in days. Tough clothes and boots are the only answer against mud, which can run knee-deep on mountain roads, plowed up by military convoys. Only four-wheel-drive vehicles usually make it to their destination, only to run the high risk of being stolen if they are too new.

Against these odds, hundreds of American journalists and TV technicians began their long trek in November and early December to the Bosnian town of

Tuzla, where it was originally thought the main body of American troops would arrive. In October, one American network had already parked a satellite uplink in the town, making sure the winter snows did not defeat any later attempt to move it there. By November, residents were moving from their homes to rent them to foreign journalists at up to \$750 a week, as the town's hotel rooms became booked for up to a year.

Next, the long wait. Every sighting of an American transport plane for the following three weeks, every U.S. serviceman in town, was followed by a posse of camera crews. Then, the sure sign of a lull in a story—American camera crews started covering themselves covering the news.

First, snow delayed the landings, then fog. The fear that the main event would spread into Christmas meant at least one American network stopped its main anchor from flying to Tuzla.

**T**he appetite that has driven TV coverage from Bosnia for four years has been the constant striving for fresh images. As the war progressed, pictures of shelling, human carnage and refugees gave way to images of U.N. troops and finally the NATO air strikes. The media craving for a Somalia-style arrival by American troops was not fulfilled by the low-key landings at snowbound Tuzla. That craving was soon to be met at another location.

The Americans were about to build their biggest pontoon bridge since the Second World War at Zupanja, the river crossing between Croatia and Bosnia. The soldiers' camp was flooded by the rising River Sava, but in the last days of 1995, we saw the first pictures that said boldly: "The Americans are coming." The tanks were finally rattling across the bridge into Bosnia at a dignified five miles an hour.

On either side of the bridge, covering that moment of history, were crews from APTV, Reuters and WTN. Bosnia is a

battleground for the TV agencies, and the majority of the harrowing images to hit the world's TV screens over the past four years have come from agency cameras.

The agencies normally compete to get their video to the world by offering them to a picture exchange service run by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), a cartel of all the major European state broadcasters. The EBU provides a series of uplinks at all the major flashpoints in Bosnia and delivers the pictures to its members. The American networks can access the EBU satellite transmissions at their London bureaus.

The view outside the United States is that the biggest story may occur on a dark night months hence when American servicemen find themselves caught up in conflict with Bosnians, if their new hopes for peace turn to disillusionment.

**I**n 1992, while a news producer for the British TV network, ITN, I was called in the middle of the night and asked to fly to Hungary, where a correspondent had just driven from Bosnia. She and her crew had managed to film world-exclusive pictures of Serb prison camps and were numbed by what they had encountered. After viewing their 10 tapes, I advised that the image that would shake the world was of skeletal men behind barbed wire. They sparked thoughts of Auschwitz and Belsen.

The image was broadcast that night on CNN and ABC and brought condemnation of the Serbs from President George Bush in the White House.

It was an image that in some ways kindled America's worries about the future of eastern Europe after the Cold War. Hopefully, America will leave us with the final image of the conflict, if troops withdraw later this year leaving a country at peace. ■

**Nigel Baker is London bureau chief of APTV.**

# NEWS MANAGEMENT TRAINING

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### TRAINERS

**Lillian Rae Dunlap** is currently assistant professor of Broadcast Journalism at Missouri School of Journalism. Lillian was both a former reporter and anchor at WTTV-4 in Indianapolis, IN.

**Jeffrey Marks** has been a television reporter, editor, producer, executive producer and news director. Currently, Jeff is the Chief Operations Officer and News Director at News 12 New Jersey.

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Radio and Television News Directors Foundation

*The next seminar will be held in conjunction with the Los Angeles RTNDA convention in October. Applications will be available this summer.*

By Lillian Rae Dunlap

# MANAGEMENT DIVERSITY

**RTNDF/University of Missouri Management Seminar for Women and Minorities attracts current managers as well as those in electronic journalism who want to be managers.**

**D**iversity both on-air and behind the camera gives news departments a competitive edge and has proven to be a winner.

But RTNDF research shows that women and minorities hit the "glass ceiling" in broadcast news management long before reaching top management. The latest research by Bob Papper and Andrew Sharma (*Communicator*, October 1995) reports women make up only 14 percent of TV news directors and 23 percent of radio news directors. Minorities account for a mere 8 percent of TV news directors and 8.6 percent of radio news directors in the country.

Researchers who work for *Fortune* 500 firms have looked at the projected demographics for the early part of the 21st century and see that only about 15 percent of the new workers will be white males. The rest will be women and minorities. With these changes altering the American population dramatically, RTNDF and the University of Missouri recognized the need to train more women and minorities in news management.

The first Management Training Seminar for Women and Minorities in 1992 had a full house. "It was like a big curtain going up," recalls Deidra White, managing editor of WBBM-AM, Chicago, who had been in news management for three years but she says "didn't really know what managers do. Going to the seminar opened up a whole new world."

"I learned how important it is to have objectives and to communicate my vision to my team," she adds. "If you can't do that, you're sunk."

You're also sunk if you think that people work for you, says Barbara Kidd, news director of WTOK-TV, Meridian, MS. "It's a service." She credits the seminar with helping her become "a much better listener."

For Cathy McFeaters, executive producer of KVUE-TV, Austin, TX, the seminar "provided a very supportive, non-threatening environment to learn some very valuable tools for management. She

says, "It helped us as we were teetering between being one of them and being one of us."

Learning about "them" was precisely what Professor Charles Warner and I had in mind when we designed these seminars. We wanted to swell the ranks of the country's news executives with new voices. Nearly 250 people have benefited from the nine seminars held so far in Washington, Austin, TX, New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Atlanta, Los Angeles, St. Louis and New Orleans.

John Jenkins, director of assignment and planning at KDRW-TV, Dallas, says he recommends the seminar to people to learn: (1) how to listen and respond to people; (2) how to make effective decisions; and (3) the importance of knowing about other departments in the station.

"The skills are valuable even if you don't go into management," reports Joie Chen, morning news anchor at CNN, Atlanta. She says the seminar takes the mystery out of management and teaches employees how to talk to their bosses. "We are scared of them. We need to get over it."

**F**rom the very beginning of the seminars, RTNDF executive director Eric Swanson wanted this training to be accessible to all levels of news staffs in every size market. So, he sought outside funding to underwrite the costs. Participants pay only the cost of getting to the sites. The Philip Morris Companies Inc. became a principal co-sponsor along with RTNDF and the University of Missouri.

The seminars bring one loud message. Diversity is not just getting one of each. Diversity is acknowledging, valuing and benefiting from each one.

Deidra White insists that black managers bring something unique to discussions at her station. "Things just hit us differently," she says.

John Jenkins says he would like more ethnic diversity in his shop. He says he couldn't go to the Million Man March in

Washington last October because he needed to "be at the station to watch the development of the story." As an African American who could affect the story's content, Jenkins says his perspective was needed in Dallas.

Karen LeFleur, news operations manager at KHOU-TV, Houston, says that the quality of the decisions in her newsroom has improved since she's "had a place at the discussion table." She thinks her presence not only guards against the use of sexist language but also adds "a voice of diverse experiences that has nothing to do with gender."

**T**he seminars help the broadcast/cable industry keep good talent by teaching the value of hiring, coaching and promoting a diverse work force. After her seminar training, Kathy Slaughter Beck traded in her position as executive producer at KHOU-TV in Houston. Now, she's doing the hiring as news director at WAVE-TV, Louisville, KY.

Cathy McFeaters used her management training in San Francisco to move from being the six o'clock to the 10 o'clock producer at KVUE-TV, Austin, TX, and is now executive producer.

Then, there is John Jenkins, who redefines the word "promotion." After his Austin training, he moved from director of planning to business manager at KHOU-TV, Houston, and then to director of assignments and planning at KDFW-TV, Dallas. He always seems to keep his next step in mind, but he says, "I'm patient."

While we lament the idea of the glass ceiling, Jenkins suggests that it may not be glass at all. He says it's probably an ice ceiling, and the RTNDF/University of Missouri seminars provide some good tools for chipping away at it. ■

**Lillian Rae Dunlap, a former reporter and anchor, is assistant professor of broadcast journalism at Missouri School of Journalism in Columbia, MO.**



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# RTNDA HISTORY

Jack Shelley

*Members are asked to dig deeper to keep the Washington office open, while Len Allen and Larry Scharff launch an important fight in Congress.*

Despite the \$30,000 seed money from the networks and the fairly recent addition of "supporting" memberships from organizations (not individuals) actively involved in broadcasting, there wasn't much doubt in the minds of board members that RTNDA was going to have to raise dues again to meet costs. On March 19, 1977, the board approved what it called an "interim" dues structure, to go into effect in September. The decision came after the Membership Committee under Lou Prato, news director at WMAQ, Chicago, made a study of financial needs.

The new dues structure called for substantial increases in all categories of membership except Student, Retired and Service. The Service category was a new one, for people who had provided valuable services to RTNDA but couldn't be placed appropriately in one of the other membership niches. The first two Service members were Peter Willett and Jim Damon. Willett, former head of UPI Radio, had been RTNDA's membership chairman for a lengthy period. Damon was an IBM executive who for years ran the newsroom at RTNDA conventions.

Under the "interim" dues plan, active members with news staffs of five or more would get a \$20 boost, to \$95. Those with the smaller staffs saw their dues increase by \$15, to \$50. Other membership categories were increased by \$10 to \$15, but "participating" members—largely public relations practitioners—climbed \$35, to \$135.

The increases turned out to be more of an "interim" arrangement than the board probably anticipated. When they were announced, the board said RTNDA might eventually have to switch to a structure by which the "size of market" in which a member functioned would determine the dues. The Executive Committee was authorized to undertake a feasibility study of still another rate structure and to present its analysis to the 1977 convention.

The new dues arrangement produced a number of protests that it would drive away many of the small-market news

directors that RTNDA had been trying to recruit in large numbers. There were other objections, too, and at the late June meeting in San Francisco, the board rescinded the earlier "interim" plan and announced still another new dues structure to take effect January 1, 1978.

Prato explained in *Communicator* that treasurer Paul Davis had reported on the dues "feasibility study," and after hearing it, the board decided to provide a new incentive for small-market membership by reducing those dues by \$5, while also establishing a new medium-market category, for news directors with staffs of five to 24.

Prato also reported that the plans to use market size or rate cards as a determinant of dues had been abandoned. "The board concluded," he said, "that such dues systems would be cumbersome, complicated and too difficult to manage by the RTNDA national office."

The board discovered that the comparatively new category of student membership was rapidly growing. Managing director Len Allen reported in March that since the Florida convention, overall RTNDA membership had risen 11 percent. That produced another milestone for RTNDA. President Vriesman called attention to it in an April 1977 column in *Communicator* by welcoming Norma Brizzi, news director of WWVU, Morgantown, WV, as the association's 1,500th member, another new high. Now, said Vriesman, it was time to "set our sights on member number 2,000." While overall membership growth was impressive, it was the increase in student membership that led the way. It had shot up 67 percent.

For any member who might question the need for more money for the Washington office, RTNDA could point to events that were unfolding throughout the dues discussions.

In March, Vriesman and Len Allen conferred with the chairmen of the House and Senate subcommittees on communications, Rep. Lionel Van Deerlin of California and Sen. Ernest Hollings of South Carolina. Hollings was not especially sympathetic to their talk of First Amendment rights for broadcasters, but Van Deerlin was described later by Vriesman as a longtime "friend of RTNDA" in this area. He urged association members to let congressional representatives know their stand on the issue.

Association legal counsel Larry Scharff prepared a 20-page, comprehensive First Amendment "position paper."

In it he wrote, "The Congress should decide, at the least, that it is unnecessary and unwise to continue the FCC's costly and controversial scheme of program regulation...Congress should revise the Communications Act to make statutory law fully consistent with a broad application of the First Amendment to the electronic press."

Van Deerlin told Vriesman the issues raised by Scharff "will be fully considered...during our review of the Communications Act." ■

**Next month: The position paper's big payoff, and political fallout from news directors who believed the Fairness Doctrine was not really a problem.**

Correction: Wayne Vriesman's affiliation was listed incorrectly in December's "RTNDA History" column. Vriesman was with KWGN in Denver in the late '70s, not KGWN.

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## YOU'RE ON!

By Edward M. Fouhy

### THE POLITICS OF THE PEOPLE

**T**wo thoughts to consider as the political year begins: First, some critics say journalists are pretty tough on candidates. They're right. But politics is a tough game, and I'm not sure we're tough enough. Second, the conventional wisdom that no one wants to watch, hear or read about politics is dead wrong. The recent ratings success of talk-news radio proves that. Political coverage is like "Field of Dreams." If you do it right, they will come.

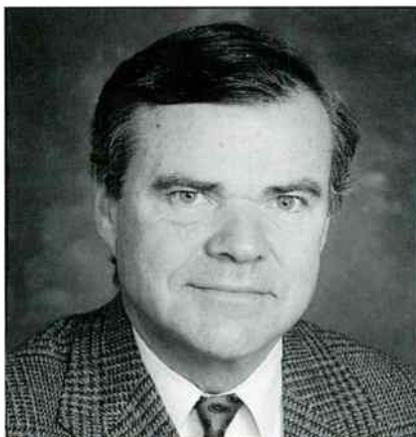
To the question of whether reporters are too tough, I want to give you an example of what tough really is and how well written tough can be. Here are two sentences written by the great newspaperman H.L. Mencken about the president of the United States in 1927:

*Democracy is that system of government under which the people, having 35,717,342 native born, adult whites to choose from including thousands who are handsome and many who are wise, pick out a Coolidge to be head of state. It is as if a hungry man, set before a banquet prepared by master cooks and covering a table an acre in area, should turn his back upon the feast and stay his stomach by catching and eating flies.*

People do care about politics. I had that lesson driven home to me in 1992 in a most welcome way. I had covered every presidential campaign since 1964. But when I agreed to become the executive producer of the presidential debates beginning in 1988, I began to see the campaign from a different perspective.

The first debate in 1992 took place at Washington University in St. Louis on a Sunday night in October. For the first time in history, one network—CBS—did not air the event. Instead, it carried a baseball game. ABC suffered a computer glitch that blacked out the network for eight seconds—forever in TV terms—at the beginning of the debate.

So when I arrived in Atlanta to prepare for the next debate, as I walked through the airport, my eye was drawn to the newsstand and the front page of the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*. Now



bear in mind that Atlanta was baseball mad, the Braves were in the playoffs and everywhere there were signs of baseball fever. The banner headline read: DEBATE BEATS BASEBALL. When the overnight national ratings had come in, the St. Louis debate was the big winner, and the old rule that few people want to watch or hear about politics turned out to be dead wrong. Since that day, I've been doing penance for my days as a cynical political reporter, producer and news executive.

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**I believe democracy in this country is in trouble and those of us in journalism have something to do with creating that state of affairs.**

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What is on the citizens' agenda in your town? Remember this election is about them, not about you, nor even, in a sense, the politicians. Focus groups are useful for establishing just what are people's deeply held values. Focus groups go deeper than survey research that takes a snapshot of where the country is on a couple of issues. Polls are very useful, but the results are quite transient. People tend to read back to pollsters whatever they saw last night on the evening news. But taken together, local polls and focus-group reports can help you establish the citizen agenda.

As you plan your election coverage, you might consider framing it as a job interview. What does the public need to know about this candidate before they hire him to do the job? Also don't be distracted by the tricks candidates and their

consultants use to get you to cover "he said, she said" charges and countercharges. A litmus test for that kind of story is whether, a month after the election, anyone will care about this charge.

Research recently commissioned by the Pew Center found people ready with plenty of advice to journalists:

- Tackle what's really important. People say they don't want to hear the personal stuff—the gossip. I'm not sure I believe that, but that's what they say in public.
- Clarify the issues. Citizens told us they want the news media to help them to understand the important issues. They want information imparted in a way they can understand. One man said, "We want information that speaks on a basic level...instead of the legal jargon."
- Create complete profiles of the candidates. They want more than the sound bites that have become standard campaign fare. One woman put it this way: "Tell me what he's done, what he will do and who is giving him money."
- Keep the candidates focused. The citizens who spoke to our researchers feel strongly that a primary function of journalists is to keep the candidates focused on the issues that are important to voters. But one said something worth pondering: "Citizens ask better questions. The media just focus on the hot stuff."
- Let the citizens decide what to think. One man put it very simply. "Report the facts—and leave the conclusions to the people," he said. The people we talked to were very strong on that point—they want information, even analysis, but they will be happier if you leave the conclusions to them.

I believe democracy in this country is in trouble and those of us in journalism have something to do with creating that state of affairs. *Washington Post* columnist David Broder, the dean of all political reporters, recently said that he did not want the obituary of his generation of political reporters to be some smart-assed remark that for 40 years we had reported everything that was happening in American politics—except that public support for the system was collapsing. ■

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**Ed Fouhy is executive director of the Pew Center for Civic Journalism in Washington.**



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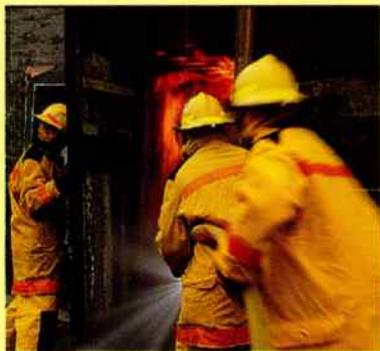


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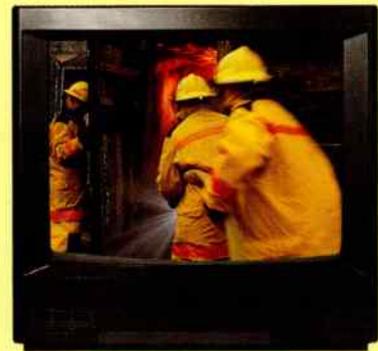
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