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Journalism review

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FREE



Are increasing pressures on media to be first with the story hurting basic journalism?

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Daily vs. weekly newspapers

By ASHLEY DUNBAR



Tyler Savoie (left) explores the daily edition of The Guardian newspaper. Friend James Murray enjoys the communittee events of The 40-Mile County Commentator. (Dunbar photo)

When you think of a newspaper you think of community events, poiltics, streeters, cartoons, and sports. But have you ever picked up two different kinds of newspapers and wondered what the differences were.

A daily newspaper and weekly newspaper may appear the same, but each has differences that aren't always apparent to the average reader.

Colin MacLean, a reporter at the Truro Daily news, in Truro, N.S., said the two main differences between a daily and a weekly would be the work load and deadlines.

"From what I've gathered from talking with friends who work at weeklies is that they might average about one, maybe two stories a day. While at a daily you are producing at least two stories a day and doing as many standalone pictures as you can."

Daily reporters also have to worry about fitting enough writing time into their day to make it out of work at a decent time, said MacLean.

"But on the flip side, you will find a lot of quality hard news stories and features in weeklies. Dailies are a mad dash away from the ever-approaching deadline every day, at least that's the way I feel."

Overall, there really isn't a whole lot of a difference between a daily and a weekly, said MacLean.

"They are both papers and have the same basic content, one is just a little more timely than the other."

As far as skills go for working at a daily compared to a weekly, MacLean said time management is the biggest difference.

"At a daily I've been told to take no longer than 15 minutes to complete a photo assignment and absolutely no longer than a half hour to 45 minutes to complete a story assignment, unless I've been otherwise cleared to take longer by my editors."

A 300-word story should take no longer than an hour to write, said MacLean.

"This is an ideal situation and one that my editors have told me to follow as much as possible. Unfortunately, in the real world it

can take longer to do assignments and for a green reporter writing can take quite a bit longer than expected. But these are skills that come with experience and I've noticed my own story turnaround time improving the more work I do."

The public is more likely to read a paper they know will produce quality stories, regardless of it being a daily or weekly, he said.

"The public isn't stupid, they know who will produce the better copy and will follow that paper. Better reporters produce better stories, which sells more papers and makes the company more money. At least that's what I think."

Shawn Merrithew, a reporter for the twice-week newspaper in Woodstock, N.B., the Bugle-Observer, said working at a daily would be much less stressful.

"You work on one or two stories a day, make a few phone calls. Whereas in a weekly it can get confusing sometimes."

Working at a daily allows you to get your skills to the high level because you are focused on one topic such as politics, sports, or court. In a weekly, you have to be able to cover different topics.

Typically dailies are located in

larger cities because they have more going on, said Merrithew.

Christy Marsters, a reporter for the Hants Journal in Windsor, N.S., said she thinks the biggest different between a daily and a weekly is the deadlines.

"Deadlines at a weekly are a little more relaxed. I think one area where a weekly may have an advantage over a daily is that there is a little more time to correct human error and to get to focus and understand the atmosphere of the community. There's more time to figure out what the communities interests are."

Although Marsters has never worked at a daily, she really enjoys weeklies.

"I like that I don't feel as pressured with deadlines. I like having that bit of extra time to get to know many of the people in my little community, and being able to carry something over a week if I'm not comfortable with it and I think a story needs that extra voice."

To work at a daily you have to be really good at managing stress and pressure, more than you would at a weekly, said Marsters.

"I think at a weekly paper you have to be a bit more sensitive to the needs of the community

because, where I work, you're dealing with the same people regularly."

It depends on the reader whether or not they prefer a daily or a weekly, said Marsters.

"If you're looking for the quick bites and direct news, you're probably going to be more interested in the dailies. And if you like the longer community and human interest pieces, you're probably going to be more interested in the weeklies because, again, weeklies have a bit more time to write the longer stories."

Raissa Tetanish, a reporter at the Amherst Daily News, in Amherst, N.S. said, there are a number of differences between working at a daily compared to a weekly, but mainly it's the deadline.

"You've got less time to work on your stories at a daily, because you constantly need to fill space day after day. It's nothing to complete six or seven stories in one day at a daily. It's more of a go, go, go atmosphere."

A daily offers your readers something new every day, said Tetanish

"Dailies offer more up-to-date news than a weekly does, but neither offer up-to-the-minute news. A daily also gives the journalist a

chance to experience more on a day-to-day basis."

Tetanish said she prefers working at a daily.

"At a daily, you have to be more focused on your deadline and what needs to be done by the end of the day for the next day's paper. At a weekly, you've got a few days to work on things, so it's easy to put things off and procrastinate."

Working at a daily, a journalist definitely needs a good work ethic, but more importantly, time management skills.

"Journalists at a daily need to prioritize things, what needs to be finished first to run in the next publication, what can be set aside to finish the next day if needed, and what might be time sensitive and when that piece has to run."

Readers for dailies and weeklies differ, said Tetanish.

"A daily offers the reader more hard news than a weekly can, but features are great for weeklies."

At the paper Tetanish is with now, she has her slow days and very busy days.

"There are some days where I'd be working on five or six stories, but can't reach anyone, so it feels like nothing has been accomplished at the end of the day. But then there are days when I'll write four of my own stories, with interview, rewrite three or four press releases that come in, cover provincial court, find a front page photo, then shoot something like Halloween."

Tetanish said in a small town and working for a small publication, there may not be many reporters in the news room, meaning the more things you knew, the more valuable you are.

"I'm currently the only one with a background in photography, so I'm expected to find photos on storm days, or when we have no front page photo. I'm also the one that covers court on a daily basis, and uploads the website every day. It gets busy."

One of the most important things about working at any publication is to observe and respect deadlines.

"Deadlines are there for a reason, from advertisements to articles."

So the next time you pick up a news paper take the time to consider the differences.

Coping with pressure to be number one

Are increasing pressures on media to be first with the story hurting basic journalism?

By AL MACLEOD



From left, CBC legislative reporter John Jeffery interviews P.E.I. Provincial Treasurer Wes Sheridan during a reporter scrum in the lobby of the Legislative Assembly on Nov. 19 in Charlottetown. Also present were reporters from Ocean 100 and CFCY.

in the middle, the truth.”

It is always important to have the most balanced story possible, even if you won't be the first to break news on a particular topic, McGuire said.

“Sometimes you have to acknowledge you're going to get beat.”

Wayne Thibodeau, a political reporter with The Guardian, said he sees a disturbing trend with “clean hit” stories getting into the news without balanced coverage or proper research.

“I am very fearful of McJournal-

ism.”

The pressure on journalists with 24-hour news channels and updating the websites constantly is magnified by the fact newsroom staffs are shrinking and reporters are often doing more than they can handle, Thibodeau said.

“Journalists are under immense pressure. I think it's only going to get worse.”

Still, there are things journalists need to remember when dealing with potential spin, especially in smaller markets like P.E.I., Thibodeau said.

“The government needs us as much as we need them.”

John Jeffery, legislative reporter for CBC TV's Compass, said adding to the temptation and pressure for reporters are possible jobs in the future with the government in power.

“If you look at what happened after the last election, you see a number of journalists who went into public relations.”

The most important thing is how the audience sees you, even more important than being the first to break a story or getting an exclu-

sive, Jeffery said.

“If they don't trust you, they don't respect your broadcast.”

There are too many dangers of not getting the facts in a story and it's something that should be avoided at all costs, Jeffery said.

“I don't think there's an excuse for unbalanced coverage.”

The CBC finds ways to deal with the pressure of quick delivery and fast-breaking news to avoid unbalanced coverage, Jeffery said.

“We do follow-ups to get the story straight.”

Donna Allen, senior producer with CBC Island news radio, said a big issue with getting the facts straight on a story is not always lack of time. Sometimes it's hard to get a straight answer during an interview, even asking a question numerous times.

“Often journalists just give up.”

Spin isn't always false and usually contains the facts.

Often information is put in a positive or negative light depending on how it benefits the person giving the information, Allen said.

“They (politicians) are in the business of telling you the message they want to get across.”

It is getting more challenging to get a well-balanced story and free of spin considering the pressures on the media to deliver in a short time frame with little resources and to beat the competition. It's a choice journalists face, Allen said.

“Are you going to be first or are you going to get it right? It's important to get it right.”

The trend is not a move toward ignoring basic journalism to keep up with the pressures, as long as journalists keep with what they are taught, Allen said.

“I think journalism schools are doing a good job. People don't last in this field if they aren't good at it.”

As newer generations grow more and more dependant on the Internet for news and demand it as up-to-date as possible, the time for getting the balanced coverage and researching all the facts is getting short.

When issues like smaller newsrooms, increased competition, and pressure to perform on a consistent basis are factored in, the time is that much shorter.

Independent in a corporate era

Deep roots in the community a key for weekly newspapers competing in Atlantic Canada, professor says

By TAUNYA MURCHISON

They're becoming more rare by the year, yet often they have a big impact in the lives of their readers.

Independent, weekly newspapers have been competing with daily, corporate-owned newspapers for years, however, in the past decade the number of independents has declined in Atlantic Canada.

Paul MacNeill, publisher of the West Prince and Eastern Graphics, said more than half of the members involved in the Canadian Association of Journalists from Atlantic Canada are from bigger newspaper owners like Brunswick News or Transcontinental.

That has happened in the past five or six years, MacNeill said.

MacNeill became publisher in 1998 when his father Jim MacNeill died of a sudden heart attack.

One of his biggest challenges taking over the family business was transferring the newspaper to a second generation.

"We had to build confidence of the staff, confidence of our readers and confidence of our advertisers," said MacNeill.

Depending on how one would define the term success, MacNeill said his papers have many people to thank.

"We have a lot of very long-serving people who care about the product and community ... and I think that shows in the papers."

MacNeill said having good relations with people in the communities is very important to his paper and the roughly 20 full-time workers they employ.

"That's how we learn what's going on. You don't get that from politicians or press releases. It's never of interest."

In the future, MacNeill said whether or not the market will be with papers or the Internet, people will adapt.

"Internet delivery may be the primary way in 10 to 25 years, but it's the content that matters, not the product it's put on."

David MacDonald graduated from the journalism program at Holland College in the spring of 2006. He was hired at the West Prince Graphic, then moved to the



Paul MacNeill, publisher of The West Prince and Eastern Graphics, took over in 1998 when his father, Jim MacNeill, an Island pioneer in the news industry, died. Photo courtesy of The Eastern Graphic

The Eastern Graphic and has been there since. While in college, MacDonald worked at two newspapers operated by the Irving-owned, Brunswick News newspaper chain in New Brunswick.

MacDonald said one of the reasons independent newspapers attract loyal readership is trust.

"P.E.I. is a pretty small market, so I know with a community paper there's a lot more stories about people in it.

"Someone's more likely to see a story about someone they know when it's a community paper."

In his job, MacDonald notices people in eastern P.E.I. are usually more willing to talk to The Eastern

Graphic because they feel it's their paper.

Because The Eastern Graphic is a weekly, independent paper, MacDonald said things work a bit differently in the newsroom, including having more time for interviews and getting to know the people in the community.

Bigger papers have more resources than independent papers, so that poses a challenge, said MacDonald.

Kim Kierans, a journalism professor at the University of King's College in Halifax, has an extensive career in the journalism industry.

She says weekly, independent

newspapers are her favourite.

Her career started in photography and has since included everything from work in P.E.I. newspapers, to CBC radio, to some work on television.

For 13 years she has been at King's, where much of her research is on community newspapers and media concentration.

When Kierans was beginning to work in the media, there were a lot more independent newspapers in Atlantic Canada and competition was often friendly, she said.

Most of the competition was aimed at the provincial papers, said Kierans.

"The independent papers had to

provide readers with more depth, context and focus more locally than what a daily could provide."

One of the most important skills an independent newspaper should possess is simple, said Kierans.

"They have to be rooted deeply in their community. That's what a successful paper needs."

Kierans recalls working at The Eastern Graphic, when the late publisher, Jim MacNeill, walked into the office one day and removed all the chairs from the reporter's desks.

"It was so we couldn't depend on telephone journalism. He told us to be out at the coffee shops and arenas and meet people in the community.

"He was a genius of a man."

Although strong community ties and loyal employees are essential with an independent newspaper, Vernon Oickle, editor for the Bridgewater Bulletin and Lunenburg Progress Enterprise in Nova Scotia, said there's another important element to success.

"Today it's hurdling economic challenges, shrinking revenues and rising costs, whether it's because of technology, environment problems or staffing issues.

"It's a small market place and we're all competing for the same money," said Oickle.

Independent newspapers need to make money if they want to continue to compete in a corporate world, said Oickle.

"Primarily, your number one focus is to get your news out there, but equally important is making enough money to stay afloat."

The papers, which employ about 45 people, pride themselves in covering the news each week, but their staff is also involved in various organizations and charities.

"One, we are a news service. But two, our employees are still ordinary members of the community."

Oickle has worked with one main philosophy for the 20 years of his editing history.

"The paper goes in someone's house one day, but you don't want it to go out the door the same day. That the newspaper will stay around the house for the people to enjoy."

Digging deep

A look into the ups and downs of investigative reporting

By **CHRISTINA SUKIE**

Marie Labobe went out one night determined to stab an older woman. As she was about to do it, a younger girl jumped in front of the victim and ended up getting stabbed.

Headlines in newspapers across the country described the heroic young girl, but what about Labobe, who had once lived in P.E.I.?

Pat Martel, a CBC reporter in P.E.I., wanted to know what led the 18-year-old girl to do this, so he called her in Ontario where she was sent for psychiatric assessment.

After a few tries to reach her in jail, he got through.

"Marie, I'd like to do an interview with you," he asked.

"Yeah, go ahead," she replied.

Martel spoke with Labobe while his producer listened to the conversation.

"Ask her is we could go up there to Ontario to interview her," the producer said.

"Marie, could we come up there to interview you," Martel asked.

"Sure," Labobe said.

"Look now, we're not going to come all the way up there and you changed your mind. Is it OK really?" Martel asked.

"Yeah, absolutely," she said.

CBC booked the tickets and Martel flew to Ontario to see her.

Martel went to the mental institution where she was being held. He was asked not to bring any sharp objects, just his recorder. Guards stood on either side of Labobe during the six-hour interview.

Labobe told Martel many stories, about her time in P.E.I.

She lived in a house with nurses in Stratford and a UPEI student was hired to look after her at night, but no one told the student Labobe was diagnosed with having over 40 different personalities.

One night, the two girls rented some horror movies. While watching it, Labobe went into the

kitchen for a knife and rope. Labobe tied the student up, turned off the lights, poured cleaning fluid over her and flicked matches around the student.

"Wow, boy, Marie has quite an imagination," Martel thought while listening to her story.

After the interview, he had to find out if what Labobe said was true.

With only a first name, no help from the province and only what Labobe told him, it took a while for him to find the student. When he found her, she told the same story.

After two months of investigating, a 45-minute piece aired on Island Morning.

This kind of in-depth reporting has seen some growth in newsrooms compared to years before.

According to the study *The Changing Newsroom* released July 21, 2008 by the Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ) in the U.S., investigative journalism has received more support than it did three years ago. Staffing grew 30 per cent in the newsrooms surveyed.

Still, Martel said investigative reporting is a technique many reporters today aren't using as often as they should.

"I think it's almost a lost art and that a lot of reporters just cover the basics of the story."

A senior reporter for the Ottawa Citizen, Gary Dimmock said when it comes to taking the time to do an investigative piece, you have to want to do the story. "You've got to really care about a story to actually hit it out the park."

Fred Vallance-Jones, an assistant professor at the University of King's College School of Journalism in Halifax, said it's an important kind of reporting for any newspaper.

"Investigative journalism is one of those things that makes newspaper journalism distinctive and actually draws in readers."

One of CBC's reporters in its

investigative unit, David Mckie, said investigative reporting is an important part of the media.

"I think all in all, it's alive and well. Is it as robust as it could be? Well, I guess it never is, especially in an age of cutbacks and so on."

The Changing Newsroom survey found over 90 per cent of newsroom executives from larger papers considered investigative reporting "very essential" compared to just over 52 per cent of their peers from smaller papers.

Mckie said many big newsrooms are putting more time and money into it.

"Media outlets are doing it. They never do it as much as they could, but I think that it's fair to say at least the major media outlets anyway are devoting considerable resources to investigative/enterprise reporting."

There are numerous challenges involved when doing investigative reporting, said all four journalists.

They noted a series of factors - a lack of time, not wanting to give readers a superficial story, sources reluctant to talk, newsrooms not recognizing its importance, government resisting the release of documents and difficulty selling ideas to your editor.

Martel said reporters are often swamped with stories, so they can't find time to do an investigative piece.

"We have so many stories, so many deadlines, that we often can't have the luxury of doing investigative journalism."

The interview with Labobe 15 years earlier was effortless, he said.

"That was the easy part, in the sense I spent the next two months trying to find out what she said was true."

Dimmock said you have to put in the hours.

"It is not a 9-5 or a 8-4 or whatever. It's all over the ... map. I do stuff basically whenever. A lot of that's at home at night. After my

pirates go to sleep, then I go down to basement and do my thing."

Jones said completing such stories is time consuming.

"Because you're after the whole story or the slice you're after, you have to fill in all the squares in the quilt so to speak. It just takes time."

Martel said all angles of a story aren't always told because of the lack of investigative reporting.

"They don't take the time to peel away the layers to find out really what is going on, what is the truth from all sides, rather than just doing something that's superficial and easy to do."

Sources for investigative stories are often reluctant to talk, Dimmock said.

"These folks, they don't want to talk. This isn't something like a press conference where you go there, put out your tape recorder and catch spit for a living."

Mckie said getting people to talk is one of the hardest things.

"Getting people to respond to allegations in your report can be troubling and frustrating.

"It can be impossible. It can be many things, but I think that's the tough part, getting people to cooperate."

Dimmock said there aren't more reporters in this field because newspapers doesn't recognize its importance.

"You got newspapers that do not understand the value of enterprise reporting, and ... that means you do not have folks in positions to do that kind of reporting."

But Jones said investigative journalism has the potential to grow.

"I think it has a bright future and I think that, in many ways, for example in the United States, we're seeing the appearance of non-profit investigative journalism creators."

ProPublica is one which produces investigative journalism. He also mentioned CBC's continuing reporting with the Investiga-

tive Unit and it's collaborations with the Toronto Star newspaper.

Mckie said many steps in an investigative story are difficult.

"Almost every step of investigative reporting, or trying to get the stuff to air or print, can be challenging."

While there are challenges reporters face, there are rewarding aspects of it including prompting change, getting to the bottom of a story, challenging government and loving the work you do.

Martel said it's better than giving readers just the surface of a story.

"I think that you get to the bottom of things. Because so often we're so superficial that we just give people sort of a general idea of this is going on, rather than getting to what's really happening out there."

Jones said it gives reporters and readers the chance to find out information people don't want publicized.

"Investigative journalism seeks to tell the reader about things they otherwise wouldn't find out about.

"Generally it seeks to find out about things somebody definitely doesn't want the public to know."

It serves society, readers, the publication as well as the reporter whose career will rise as they do more of these stories, he said.

"It turns up problems that wouldn't otherwise be known and publications who do it are seen by the readership to be digging into things."

Dimmock said doing this reporting is a benefit on its own.

"I don't have to rent a lot of movies. I find that this stuff is actually a lot more fun. I love it."

Having the power to change something by writing a story is great, he said.

"Who wouldn't want to expose stuff and tell untold stories and prompt change just by writing stuff.

"That's an incredible feeling when you think about it."

Freelance - frugalities, freedoms, frustrations

By ELLEN KLEIN

A few years ago, Allan Lynch, a Holland College journalism program graduate from the early 1970s, was compelled to leave work and return to his home province of Nova Scotia from Ontario to help care for his ailing father.

Until then he had been writing and editing for community newspapers for about 17 years.

While in Nova Scotia, he concluded that when he returned to the job market it would not be in newspaper writing or editing. He was bored with that kind of journalism.

"When he (Lynch's father) died that freed me up to do some freelance."

He decided freelancing would give him the variety he craved.

"I can throw myself with a passion into something and then move on."

As he did not have a family to support, he realized the lack of a salary wouldn't be a factor in the decision.

"It suits my lifestyle," Lynch said.

For most freelancers he knows, freelancing provides mad money, above their regular earnings.

For Kevin Yarr, a Holland College graduate of 1985 and now webmaster at CBC in Charlottetown, freelancing gave him and his partner a small income as she pursued graduate studies at Guelph University. There was a recession, he said.

"Freelancing was what was out there."

Yarr spent almost two years in Guelph freelancing, then moved to England and back to the Maritimes, where he freelanced until about 2006. He's now with the CBC.

Lynch said to be a freelancer, a writer has to think about his life and priorities. Sometimes lifestyle changes need to be made to accommodate a lower, less predictable income.

"You've got to step things down. You learn that you don't really need as much as you think."

When Yarr started out, he and his partner had no children and were living off her graduate studies and his freelancing incomes.

"We were poor."

Like any other writer, a freelancer has to have a good story sense, Lynch said. But there are other considerations. Like time management, which is a huge issue.

"You've got to be organized."

Yarr said organization was definitely a key issue. Most importantly, a freelancer has to be constantly on top of the six-month cycle of pitching, writing and cashing the paycheque.

"I came into it pretty early on that there was a business aspect to it."

Lori Mayne, a Carleton journalism school graduate of 2001 and a full-time reporter and photographer at the Journal Pioneer in Summerside, picks up some freelance work every month or two, she said.

"I'm learning to set deadlines for myself."

Elizabeth Patterson agreed. She's a 1983 Kings College journalism honours graduate with experience at CBC TV, CTV and as editor and reporter at the Cape Breton Post, who now freelances occasionally.

"It's all about timing. You're not going to get paid professionally if you don't act professionally."

She advises anyone wanting to succeed at freelancing not to procrastinate. After finishing an interview, writing should start immediately.

"Get it done when you get it done."

Lynch stresses a writer also needs to know when and how to pitch a story idea to an editor.

"An editor can usually recognize a dilettante from far away."

Mayne has never had to pitch a story idea as she freelances part-time and depends on her newspaper employment for income.

In the beginning, Mayne was approached by editors who got her name either from a former university professor or someone has called the Journal Pioneer looking for a local writer.

"I enjoy it when I do it, but I don't pitch it."

Patterson has been approached mainly on the merit of her work.

In addition, she plays the flute and has produced two CDs.

She doesn't need to depend on her freelancing as her only source of income, but she has made some good money from it, she



Allan Lynch, a freelancer from the Annapolis Valley in Nova Scotia, writes travel and business articles. Ellen Klein photo

said.

"I'm not really good at pitching myself."

Lynch said editors get hit with a lot of pitches.

"You've got to be good to stand out."

Over the years, he has developed a schedule that works well for him. He does the bulk of his writing from about 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day, Monday to Friday.

"By about 3:30 to 4 p.m. I'm brain dead."

Then he uses evenings and weekends to think about ideas, most of which he gets from newsstands, libraries and other writers' profiles.

Often he will get a new idea from his travels, which have been extensive. During his travels he often meets editors, but resists the temptation to pitch an idea to them while at leisure.

"Never, ever pitch an editor when you're on a trip like that."

He advises writers to use the opportunity to strike up a rapport

interested in that?"

"It's got to interest my readers and I've got to be able to pitch it to somebody."

If the topic interests him, he uses that as a gauge to know it will interest his readers,

"I really know my readers."

Lynch writes for the travel industry and for trade magazines. Three American and one Canadian.

"A lot of writers don't consider trade magazines. There is steady work."

He doesn't write about technology, but said it is good to be prepared to write about anything.

Yarr is versatile too.

"I write about whales, beer and business financing."

Patterson has also written on diverse subjects. Anything from how a canal system works to book reviews for the Halifax Herald, her latest labour of love.

"You write exactly what they tell you."

Lynch said the idea of writing for blogs appeals to him as it seems lucrative. Most blogs probably generate between \$5,000 and \$6,000 per month.

However, Yarr thinks the Internet works against the freelancer.

"It's made writing in general seem less expensive."

Sometimes, Lynch feels disconnected from people as the bulk of his interviews are done over the phone.

Mayne agreed. When she is writing freelance articles in her apartment she feels disconnected with the community. Phone interviews from home have the same effect.

She misses the activity of the newsroom and can't see the day when she would freelance full-time, she said.

"It can be very lonely."

Lynch has experienced success with editors who turn to him regularly for his professionalism and product.

"I've really been blessed with the editors I've worked with."

To get a good start, you need to market yourself. It's not unlike being a musician, but you are on your own, he said.

"You need to sell yourself. You always have to be pitching."

As for ego, that fragile idea soon gets lost in the workload.

"It's not about yourself."



Lori Mayne, reporter and photographer for the Journal Pioneer. Journal Pioneer photo

and pitch the idea to the editor as soon as they return to the office. Lynch's experience as an editor in small town newspapers isn't hurting him in this respect.

When he gets an idea for a story, he thinks "Who would be

From classroom to newsroom

By KATHERINE HUNT

It's always one of the first questions they are asked.

As one of those first-year students sitting at a table looking at all the other new faces Jonathan Russell heard one of the first questions instructor Rick MacLean always asks "How many of you are in this because you wanted to write?"

The hands went up and Russell was one of them.

Russell started the program in 2001 and during his first on the job training he learned how to take criticism.

Not everyone is kind to beginning journalists, even if it's their first internship at a paper, even if it's their first day.

For Russell's first story during his placement at the the St. John's Express in Newfoundland, he was insulted by the interviewee.

"The woman started going off about how I must be a student because everything I was saying was bad."

Although he hung his head walking home through the mall that afternoon, Russell didn't let it discourage him. When he graduated in 2003 he went to UPEI to do the two-plus-two program, the joint degree run by the two schools.

After the first year he decided not to go back and quickly got a job reporting sports in the sister newspapers the Crag and Canyon and Canmore Leader in Alberta.

Now, he lives in Forteau, Labrador covering 300 km of its southern coast writing for the Northern Pen, a newspaper based in St. Anthony, Nfld.

He works from a home-made office in his two-bedroom apartment. It's a different atmosphere for Russell who's used to working in a newsroom, even when he was in college.

"The course was very modelled after a newsroom," said Laura Jean Grant, a reporter for the Cape Breton Post. She graduated in 2001 and was a second-year in the first class MacLean taught at Holland College.

She spent five weeks at her first internship at the Port Hawkesbury Reporter in Cape Breton and came back to P.E.I to work at a gift shop.

The editor from the newspaper



Steve Brun reading a story he wrote for the Guardian in the newspaper. Submitted photo

called her at work and offered her a job.

"I was blown away by the job offer, but I wanted to finish out school."

For her second internship she went to the Cape Breton Post and by the end of it a job opened. Grant got the position and finished her last few weeks of school while she was there.

She has worked for the Cape Breton Post for six years and moved from general news reporting to arts and entertainment.

Moving quickly into the business and climbing the ladder from news reporter to a reporter with a beat can be a time consuming task, but for Teresa Wright, a political reporter for the Guardian, it took her just the two years she spent in the program.

She studied English literature and writing at Dalhousie University and at UPEI, but she wanted to be able to pay her bills by

doing something with her love of writing.

She thought about the Journalism program at Holland College and called MacLean asking for more information.

"When he talked about how quickly we'd be going on OJT (on-the-job internship) it really drew me to the course," said Wright. Her first internship was at the Guardian, the provincial newspaper in P.E.I. It later became her full-time workplace.

She graduated in 2008. During the summer after her first year she started doing stories the weekend reporter for the Guardian at the time didn't have room to do.

After the reporter stopped doing weekends, Wright took on the role. She worked weekends and holidays there for the year, had a job at Tim Hortons and she's a full-time mom.

Because of her role as a parent, Wright was determined to get a

career in the journalism.

"With William, I had too much to lose not to do well."

When her course ended at Holland College, reporter Ron Ryder left his job at the Guardian creating a job opening to fill.

Wright found herself going into the offices of the editors and asking them for more work, and the job.

"I kept coming in and telling them to hire me," said Wright.

Though reporters from across Canada applied for the position, it was Wright who got it.

It started as a general reporter, then grew to political reporting.

Because of the push of motherhood, Wright took on initiatives to finish work all the hands around her were giving her, and in the end it paid off.

"It's not because I'm special or better than anybody else," said Wright. "My circumstances made me be that way."

Her classmate, Steve Brun, earned his degree in English at UPEI and joined the program to further a career.

During his first year in the Journalism program Brun wrote his day in the life piece, an 800-word story about a person a student followed around, on a P.E.I. Rocket tutoring session.

When he was at home he heard the phone ring. It was his mom.

"Is this the Steve Brun that was in the Guardian this morning?"

The Guardian had bought the story for \$35.

And his mom wasn't the only person to recognize his name in the paper, instructor Wayne Young noticed it too.

"Wayne showed it to the entire class," said Brun.

His name appeared more in the Guardian when he took on a one-day-a-week reporting job in his second year.

His first and second internship were at the Halifax Daily News, but the second year didn't go as planned.

In his last week there the paper closed abruptly.

"I thought: Oh crap, there's friends I made there who are out of the job. People with wives and kids," said Brun.

He woke up that morning and checked the Daily News website, only to find a screen with green highlighted news links instead of the usual red. The top story was the closing of the Daily News.

He decided to go to work just in case and sure enough a man was standing at the door with his arms folded, a security guard turning people away.

"Any of your stuff will be mailed to you," he told Brun.

When he went back to school early he finished up work for class, graduated, then jumped from an eight-week summer internship at Summerside's Journal Pioneer to freelancing and weekend reporting for the Guardian.

Recently he accepted a full time job at the Eastern Graphic in Montague.

Many graduates from the Journalism program go on to become more than just writers, they become journalists.

"I love having something new every day where you talk to all kinds of people," said Grant.

Blogs keep watch on journalists and help the public informed

By MELISSA MCINNIS

With the increase in the people using the Internet to get their news, there has also been a jump in the use of blogs as a news resource.

A blog is an online log of personal thoughts that usually reflects the opinion of the author.

But what can blogs bring to the newspaper industry?

They are an extra feature for the media, said Sean Kelly, a reporter for the News in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia.

A journalist sometimes has a word count, which puts a limit on what they can write, said Kelly.

"Blogs can give the public a better understanding of the background behind something."

Blogs are also helpful because they bring readership to the online version of the paper, he said.

In an effort to increase the online readership at the News, it was decided reporters would start a blog.

"They help with their (paper) online components," Kelly said.

He has been the only one to keep up a blog on the website.

"It's good for me because I can interject my own opinion," he said.

One problem he's seen with bloggers is some aren't keeping them up, leading to less of a readership, Kelly said.

Another problem he has faced with blogs is people who copy and paste whole articles he and others have written onto their websites without permission.

A group made a website dedicated to an issue. The News had written articles about the issue. They took full articles Kelly and others wrote and pasted them onto their site without the knowledge of the reporters, Kelly said.

When Kelly writes about an issue and uses material from an article he will only take a paragraph, say where the article came from and comment on the article in his own words.

Fair use isn't fully defined for blogs, making it a gray area, said



Peter Rukavina, is an independent blogger. He writes about technology, politics, restaurants and his travels. McInnis photo.

Kelly.

But not every blog is aimed at helping the public to get a better understanding, said Peter Rukavina, who publishes in his blog whether anyone reads it or not.

"It's primarily something I do for a personal need," he said.

He started to blog in May 1999 for his web developing company, blogging what looked like a brochure, he said.

About three or four years ago he started writing about different things including technology, politics, restaurants or about his travels.

He sees blogging as different from what a journalist does.

Journalists write with an audience in mind. He doesn't have to care about his audience, he said.

"I'm free to put a lot more personal opinion in what I write about."

One's writing depends on their

audience and if they care about their reputation. Rukavina will sometimes write with other people in mind, he said.

He thinks of blogging as a bit of a luxury.

Journalists have a tradition or an approach to uphold, a certain format or style. He sets his own agenda, Rukavina said.

Anyone who blogs and does stories should be aware of what they write for personal protection of their point of view, he said.

Although Rukavina may not write the same as a journalist would, he still enjoys the stories they have to share.

"I wouldn't want to live in a world where there's no journalism," he said. "Similarly I don't want to live in a world where it's all journalism."

And journalists getting their work reviewed by another pair of eyes is healthy to have, he added.

Tim Currie, an assistant professor for online journalism at the University of King's College in Halifax, also sees blogs as being helpful to the reader.

Blogs are providing opinion, which may not necessarily be news, but it's a good dividing line, Currie said.

They add a layer to the stories readers may not get otherwise, he said.

Not only are blogs helpful to readers, they are a positive thing for journalists as well, he said.

"Bloggers are prompting journalists to check all their facts and figures in their stories."

There used to be an idea journalists were perfect, He doesn't think anyone believes that now, Currie said.

"You lose your credibility if you don't admit you're wrong."

One blog that say it tries to help the media is the DeSmogBlog.

The DeSmogBlog, based in Vancouver, was co-founded by Jim Hoggan and John Lefebvre about three years ago.

Hoggan was tired of people in public relations who were hired by companies such as Exxon to suggest global warming didn't exist.

If the media is going to use people as sources in the stories, the context should be there, said managing editor Kevin Grandia.

The media has to research who the scientists are, he said.

The blog has been breaking stories over the years.

In 2007 the blog broke a story about the Centre for Disease Control report changed by the White House. The report had been edited down and omitted key information.

With unlimited space, the DeSmogBlog got a copy of the report and posted it online and highlighted all the areas in red where the edits were made, said Grandia.

The problem with the mainstream press is they can't show the entire document. It doesn't show you where the edits were made, he said.

About 1.5 million people read the story when it broke that day, he added.

The idea blogs are killing print is fading and there's a lot of cross over between online and offline media, said Grandia.

"I think if you're going to be writing online and doing this type of thing, you have to have a relationship with everyone you talk to."

Those who report for the blog range from scientists to reporters.

People won't read a blog if it's not well written, said Grandia.

"If you want to be a source for media, you have to be ethical," he said.

With the Internet, media companies like TV and papers are bleeding readers and viewers, he said.

People have started to rely on the DeSmogBlog as a trusted source, he said.

At the Centre of it all

From movie stars to Japanese reporters keen on Anne, Walls works to get the message out

By ROSS MAIR

Pacing back and forth at the Charlottetown airport with instructions to pick up an Oscar-nominated actress, Dan Wall is understandably as nervous as much as he is anxious.

He has arranged for a Hollywood star to visit P.E.I., take in the sites, sounds, and smells of Anne's Land and watch a performance of *Anne of Green Gables - The Musical*, from the novel this young actress wholly enjoyed.

The guest of honor, Abigail Breslin, the Academy Award-nominated child-actress best known for her parts as Olive Hoover in *Little Miss Sunshine* and Nim Rusoe in *Nim's Island*, has come to P.E.I. on Wall's and the centre's suggestion that it would not only make for a fun trip, but a one-of-a-kind opportunity to raise the centre's profile internationally.

After all, that is his job, to raise the profile of the centre and bring stories to the media, then helping with their access in hopes of helping produce a story that reaches from Prince Edward Island to the glam of Hollywoodland in California.

It's not every day Wall is zipping off to pick up an actor or artistic figure for a rare media opportunity, but not a dull day goes by at the centre, said Wall.

"It's the nature of the entertainment business, there's always something going on here."

This wasn't what he had planned coming in as the centre's publicist last year, but after a year he said he couldn't imagine it any other way.

"I never imagined I'd be sitting beside Abigail Breslin, watching Anne in Charlottetown. (People) don't realize how much goes on here. I wouldn't want a job that's the same hour after hour."

Wall has experience working in journalism, freelance writing for a weekly newspaper in British Columbia before being hired there, mostly working with nature photography and features.

This helped him expand his resume to include tourism, working with the Central Development



Dan Wall, publicist for the Confederation Centre of the Arts, works with the media reporters want to do a story at the centre. Mair Photo

Corporation in Nova Scotia and eventually here on P.E.I.

Those jobs prepared him for the work he is doing now and helped him understand what's going through the mind of the people on the other end of the phone, he said.

"If I didn't understand how they work, I wouldn't be able to do my job."

A large part of the job involves writing press releases to be sent to all local and regional media outlets.

While these releases promote and get word out on new events going on at the centre, they don't always fill their purpose, said Wall.

They are supposed to give reporters an idea for a story, something to build on, but more often than not, Wall notices his press releases running unedited in

newspapers and feels reporters should be doing more.

"I think that we provide opportunities to the media that wouldn't happen in a bigger city. It's like a big fish in a small pond."

One local reporter who helps make the most of those releases is CTV's Dan Viau.

Viau is on a release mailing list and receives sometimes 30 in a day, some more helpful than others.

"I use maybe 15 per cent of what the government sends me, I would say 95 per cent of what Dan sends me is useful, 35 per cent ends up becoming a story."

And it's not just good clean copy Wall provides, he is genuinely interested in helping tell the stories, down the last detail said Viau.

"If he says he is going to do

something, he will follow through. If not, he will call you on it. It makes a tremendous difference."

Other media have also noticed Wall's enthusiasm and attention to detail on the job.

Matt Rainnie hosts the CBC's radio show *Mainstreet*, and frequently has interviews with performers at the centre or sets up contests with ticket giveaways.

"He's the go-between. A good communications person who's really quick and efficient," said Rainnie.

Rainnie is also impressed with Wall's ability to handle dealing with all the various media.

"I'm one person and I'm sure he's getting requests from all over. The Confed Centre is like an octopus, it's got its arms all these different directions, and Dan han-

dles them all."

Being the centre's publicist presents other, cultural problems, like when Japanese reporters shows up at the door, incredibly enthusiastic about the Anne story they are working on.

It's not their level of professionalism that bothers Wall, it's the language barrier.

"They plan things down to the minutest detail, very conscientious. They're also very excited and grateful to be covering Anne, but they didn't speak a lot of English and we had no translator," said Wall

It is these scenarios Wall enjoys most, the scrambling at the last moment, the understanding that journalists have time constraints and other stories being juggled, the movie star who needs to be picked up and has to have the interviews and photo-ops set up, that's the rewarding aspect of the job.

And it's his qualities as a person that help him best deal with these situations, said his boss.

Brenda Gallant, director of marketing and development, said Wall's personality, understanding of the media and previous job experience has been an asset for the Centre since his arrival.

"Very calm, nothing fazes him, he handles it all diplomatically. He helps people enjoy the centre."

Since his first week, Gallant said Wall has handled it all like a pro, including when a keynote speaker at the annual Symon's lecture fell ill and he had to scramble to make sure it all went as smooth as possible.

Also hindering him, Wall's predecessor held the position for eight years, presenting a steep learning curve for him to maneuver.

"The instinct isn't there yet, but the first year under his belt has given him the experience. He has other things to tackle now."

Gallant said the key for Wall is to build on the foundations he has put in place, so the centre will gain more recognition.

"I hope he will be the one to give us the most national attention," said Gallant.

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This paper's a family

By **KERRIE THOMPSON**

Residents of Kensington and the surrounding area have a paper just for them.

The County Line Courier focuses on area communities, residents, businesses and service organizations.

Isabel Smith does the editorial and layout for the paper while her husband, Mike Smith, does the sales and advertising.

The paper is free and bi-monthly.

The Courier pays Canada Post to deliver the paper to all post office boxes in the greater Kensington area and all rural route mailboxes. Smith said there are roughly 2,400 people year round who get the paper, more in the summer. The Courier, a community-based paper, is not limited to the community. There are subscribers all over Canada and in some of the United States.

For the most part, the Courier is a two-person team, but on occasion hire personnel for special issues.

Monthly columns include bird-watching and gardening, financial tips, local Island issues, human interest stories, service organizations updates, seniors, the Historical Society, youth organizations and library updates, said Smith.

"We serve a readership niche in a geographically defined area with content that is community specific. I feel the County Line Courier Community Newspaper informs and entertains our readers and plays an important role in our community's identity."

The Courier does not deal with global issues and Smith said she does not consider their paper in competition with other papers such as the Journal Pioneer or The Guardian.

The Courier focuses on the community and nothing outside of the area where they aren't competitive. Over the past 18 years they have built a strong relationship with the people and service organization in Kensington and surrounding communities, Smith said.

"We've been very fortunate."

The Legion, Lion's Club, Harvest Festival and the Kensington-Bedford hockey exchange are some common groups and events the Courier covers.



Mike Smith works up a few ads in the County Line Courier office. Thompson photo.

The paper also promotes benefits for people.

"We offer these community minded groups, businesses, and organizations the opportunity to get their information out to the communities, and highlight how they support the area through their donations," she said.

"Groups, businesses, and organizations get events out through the community paper," she said.

Their office is in the KenNet building, just across from Community Gardens, it has been their third move.

Mike has his desk on one side of the office while Isabel has her own on the other side.

"We kinda draw a line on the floor and I stay over here, Mike stays over there," she laughed.

There will be anywhere from 12 to 30 pages depending on how much advertisement is sold in the

paper, she said.

Advertising is how the paper gets its revenue Mike Smith makes ads for businesses to put in the paper.

"He has 30 some years of experience so he knows what he's talking about."

He said they have progressed and grown over the years and have worked hard to get where they are today.

"I combine my graphic design skills and my advertising skills to get what needs to be said."

Carrie Thompson of New London said she loves having a paper that focuses on the community.

"The County Line Courier is all about my community and I enjoy reading about people I know in the paper."

Having only two papers a month is enough, she said.

"I think two a month is good.

There might not be enough information coming from K-town to make a daily like the Guardian or Journal."

She prefers reading the County Line Courier over the Journal, she said. "It's about my community. I know what they're talking about. I know the people and go to the places they mention a lot."

Amanda Seaman is much like Thompson in her views of the community paper.

"There's nothing I don't read in it. I love knowing what going on and the County Line Courier does an amazing job for covering Kensington."

She always read it, even when she was younger, she said.

"My friends' pictures were in the paper for local sports and whatnot. It always felt like a big deal, no matter how big or small the paper is."

The paper of Record in Sussex

By MIKE MCNEIL



The staff of the Kings County Record gather on the front steps of the building for a group shot with student intern Mike McNeill, centre. Former Giselle McKnight is directly behind him on his right.

to the editor. That resulted in the editor at the time offering her a column.

By 1995 McKnight began writing editorials, resulting in a first prize for national editorial writing from the Canadian Community Newspapers Association. By 2000 she was hired as a reporter and in 2004 promoted to editor.

Since Sussex is a small town, the residents depend on the paper every Tuesday to catch them up on what's going on, she said.

"Our long history has made us an icon in the community. If the paper is late, we hear about it and they're not happy," said McKnight.

"If you're in the paper, you're a bit of a celebrity for a week."

The Record doesn't have any local competition other than a small bi-weekly community bulletin board style booklet, said McKnight.

"That would be the only competition, unless you want to include the local radio station. There is no other paper covering the Sussex area."

Being the editor can be stressful and offer challenges, no matter the size of the paper.

The biggest challenge can be getting everything done, said McKnight.

"Reporters needing guidance, editing, 200 emails a day, the public coming in to yell at you or praise you, answering the phone, proofreading pages, doing administration work and so on makes it next to impossible to fit the work into 40 hours."

Something that is reported every week in the Record is court, she said.

"If we didn't cover court we would be inundated with angry calls. People love to read the court section and ours is more

extensive than the dailies because we cover both Sussex and Hampton."

McKnight has since left the Record to pursue a job at the Daily Gleaner in Fredericton as the opinion page editor, but considers her time with the Record profitable.

"Without the skills I picked up, I would not have become an editor, nor would I have been able to move to my present position."

David Kelly took over as editor at the Record, but he remembers what it was like when he started as a reporter.

Kelly recalls one assignment he was sent out on as a new reporter.

He was expected to go to a church in the area to cover a home-school charity event, an event which would result in home-made pie for Kelly, something he was looking forward to.

Kelly set out to find the church

and cover the story, but after reading the directions couldn't figure out exactly where it was located, which was strange for such a small place.

After driving around for an hour Kelly noticed his gas light was on and he remembered his wallet was sitting on his desk back in the newsroom. He began to worry and eventually had to abandon his assignment, worried he might not make it back.

Kelly returned to the newsroom to explain to his editor what had happened.

Upon reading the directions more closely he figured out exactly where the church was and his editor pointed out it was directly across from where he had grown up. A rookie mistake, and it cost him some free home made pie.

Since being promoted to editor, Kelly said getting everything done in a week can be a challenge.

"Managing people and making sure they are getting things done along with interruptions throughout the day can make it hard to get things done in a 40-hour work week."

Whatever happens the paper must come out each week on time to keep the readers happy, said Kelly.

"Even people who move away from here still receive the paper to keep up with the news," said Kelly.

"If people in the community don't receive the paper, the phones are ringing off the hook."

Steve Clark has been a resident of Sussex for many years and he said the Record has always been on top of things and provides great coverage in the community.

"I've been involved in organized sports in the community and the Record has always been there to publish any upcoming events and get the word out."

Like the rest of the town, Clark looks forward each week to the paper coming out.

"Since there is no other paper, the town relies on the Record to tell them what they need to know. Every Tuesday morning Tim Hortons is flooded with people drinking their morning coffee catching up on the news from the previous week."

Some learn the trade on campus

By NATALIE HUNT

In the last federal election Alan Hale, a journalism student at the University of King's College in Halifax, was assigned to interview a candidate running in the city.

He decided to try calling Ted Larsen first, the Conservative candidate for Halifax.

Larsen's communication's officer answered the phone and asked when he would like to do the interview.

"Who are you with?"

"Well, uh, no one. It's just a class project."

"Well, maybe we'll have some time for you later. We're very busy. Election and all, you see."

Hale tried calling the Liberals and said he was with the Gazette – the Dalhousie University student paper with a readership of 30,000. He was invited to a press conference and promised a private interview after.

At the press conference he managed to ask questions, talk to another candidate, a senator and Ted Larsen.

A week later at the candidates' debate Hale went to talk to Larsen and the communications officer stopped him.

"Who are you with?"

"The Gazette."

He was able to interview Larsen with no trouble.

The Gazette covers the news for King's College and Dalhousie and it has really helped him as a journalism student, said Hale.

"With the Gazette's name behind me I've been able to tell candidates' PR minions to piss off, get more interviews and get invited to more press conferences than I would as a journalism student."

Dalhousie's paper receives city-wide distribution said Hale.

"You can walk into a restaurant and find them more than you'll find the Chronicle Herald."

A paper of this size is important to his school experience because there's no other way to build a portfolio for a job or grad school, said Hale.

"Having articles you simply did for class really doesn't match having a collection of published ones in a paper in such a high



Nicholas Oakes, a first-year journalism student at Holland College, reading a recent issue of the program's newspaper, the Surveyor. Hunt Photo

readership, even if they may be the same articles."

He's not sure what kind of journalism he wants to pursue, but he knows he wants to stay in the business, he said.

"I certainly hope to be at some respectable news organization doing journalism that hopefully doesn't revolve around celebrities' eating habits."

The Gazette is an example of what a student newspaper can be if it sets out to try to be taken seriously like any other paper, said Hale.

"It's not just a place for clever horoscopes."

Rob Fishbook, president of the Canadian University Press, said university newspapers are important because students aren't always involved on campus and the newspapers help keep the students informed.

"They're important on all campuses as a way to keep informed and get involved."

Canadian University Press is a resource university newspapers can use as their newswire service. It provides learning seminars and a media lawyer. Each student paper gets one free hour of legal service a year, said Fishbook.

He spent one year as a volunteer writer at the University of Ottawa, then two years as the news editor and two years as the manager of the paper.

Lucas McInnis, the editor-in-chief of the newly renamed Panther Post at UPEI, said having a paper at UPEI is important because newspapers like the Guardian are regional and will cover some, but not all of the news at UPEI.

There are stories at UPEI that don't get covered by other papers,

but are still important, said McInnis.

"There's no reason why students shouldn't know where their money is going."

Now that the Cadre is the Panther Post, McInnis is hoping it will bring a new era for the paper and focus more on journalism.

"There's nothing wrong with having a laugh, but that's not what a newspaper is for."

McInnis said they're learning as they go and it's harder at UPEI to put a paper together than it would be in Toronto.

"I hope people like the Panther Post."

This isn't the first time the Panther Post has changed its name. It started out as the Cadre, was changed to the Panther Print, then the Xpress, then back to the Cadre, said McInnis.

Last year was a difficult year,

with only four issues published, said McInnis.

McInnis took over late in the year and managed to put out one more edition, then was hired as the editor, said McInnis.

The budget for the Panther Post was cut in half this. With only four reporters and being at such a small school, they're struggling to get copy for their papers, said McInnis.

There has been some problems with some of the reporters because of their friendship, he said.

"Positive reinforcement is better than screams."

He spends a lot of time in the newspaper room at UPEI, even if he's just doing homework, he said.

"That's something this paper needs."

They also need more reporters and the reporters he does have need to remember they can't just do two stories a month, said McInnis. Still, it's starting to look better and they're getting lots of positive reinforcement, he said.

There's another publication on campus called the Semantic for the less newsy stories that used to be in the Panther Post. It's a blessing, said McInnis.

"If someone wants news they come to us, if they want something else they go to them."

Fred Vallance-Jones is an assistant professor at King's College. He started his journalism career at Carleton University in Ontario.

Vallance-Jones worked at the campus radio, which was the typical student radio at the time. You could smell marijuana in the halls and it was the typical grab-bag of rebellious people, he said.

"Things were less prudish then."

Student papers are more about the experience, he said.

"They're good places to learn journalism."

He always wanted to be a journalist and he grew up listening to CBC, he said. Now that he's teaching journalism, he feels the student papers are good for the students because they learn how to write on deadline, he said.

"They're one of the few outlets students have of real journalism."

Protecting sources crucial in journalism

By MIKE TURNER II

In the 1990s, Andrew MacIntosh of the daily National Post was investigating allegations made against the former prime minister.

There were suggestions Jean Chretien had helped someone who owed him money get a federal government loan.

The prime minister's lawyer and the bank alleged the document used in MacIntosh's story was a forgery, so they demanded the document in a bid to find out who gave it to the reporter. That set off a lengthy legal battle with the paper determined to protect its source.

Confidentiality of sources is offering protection to sources it is important, says Bill McGuire, news editor at the Guardian newspaper in Charlottetown.

"If a breach of confidentiality occurs, trust is broken."

McGuire said it's to the journalist's benefit to keep the source to him or herself.

"You can't consider that person in the future as a source, if you don't maintain that confidentiality."

Amanda Mackay, a reporter at the Guardian, said confidentiality is important to reporters.

"It doesn't take long in a small province like this one for word to get out and that would basically be burning every bridge you've built from there on."

Mackay said people try to hide things.

"They may not want the whole world to know that they were an alcoholic or have some kind of communicable disease."

McGuire said naming sources makes stories more credible, so it is important journalists know who they are.

"Most journalists like to know their story is well informed, because then their story sells."

Mackay said in the past sources sometimes didn't want to be identified.

"That's when I'd say, well in that case I'm comfortable not using your name or just say the source remains unnamed."

There are different ways a reporter can offer protection, said McGuire.

"You can say a source close to the government or company, but



Reporters can shake hands and promise to protect a source, but legal protections are few.

generally enough to not implicate he or she, because that is considered finger pointing."

McGuire said there are times when sources don't want to be quoted.

"When quoting a source who doesn't want to be quoted, you can say *the Guardian has learned that...* which is completely safe, so we run with that."

However, McGuire said it is crucial sources are verified.

"We can't just get an anonymous tip and run with it. We need a name, background check or know the person."

It is vital journalists verify their sources, he said.

"It's important that they find out where the tip came from and

where the info came from, because a good story doesn't just land on your desk."

Tim Currie, an assistant professor on online journalism at the University of King's College in Halifax, said it is difficult to uncover information when sources are at risk.

"In many cases, the only way journalists can get information is if people can offer it without fearing for their jobs or their reputation."

It is a very useful tool in journalism at times, said Currie.

"For investigative reporters, it's one of the key ways reporters are able to get information out."

Wayne Thibodeau, a political reporter at the Guardian newspa-

per in Charlottetown, said reporters have a wealth of information coming their way and most of it is prepared in advanced.

"A lot of the information received is information that is carefully crafted, whether it be from a corporation or a politician."

Sometimes information is not true, sometimes it is, but slanted to favor them for whatever purpose they are disclosing the information, said Thibodeau.

"People spend an awful lot of time in ensuring that the message that the public gets is what they want them to hear."

Currie said because the possibility of false information exists,

journalists must treat confidentiality very carefully.

"Because journalism is all about verification and transparency, bringing in anonymous sources goes against that, so it's not something you want to do too often."

Thibodeau said it is the job of the journalist to get sources on the record and attribute as much as possible, but this may not always be possible.

"From being in the business, I'd rather know what's really going on and maybe not use someone's name than to just be buying into the spin."

When offering protection, journalists must inform their sources of the court's ability to take action, where they [journalists] have no control, said Currie.

"The courts can put on the legal pressure, or police action to seize documents, so journalists should not be giving their clients or sources any iron-clad guarantees."

Currie said the original decision in the MacIntosh case, since overturned on appeal, did something for journalism in Canada.

"It granted that journalists do have a special function in society."

Canada doesn't have any shield laws for journalists, but there is still a degree of respect for journalists, said Currie.

"There are many cases where journalists may have to protect their sources and the courts should and do recognize that."

Still, the Ontario Court of Appeal issued a decision stating MacIntosh must give up the report, which was sealed and in his lawyer's possession.

The National Post has vowed to try to appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court.

Although courts respect journalists when the relationship between them and their source is diligently fostered for the public's benefit, the judge ruled that MacIntosh should not have that protection in this case.

Journalists can always determine how far they want to go to protect their sources, said Currie.

"The reporter can refuse. He can go to jail.

"He can burn the documents, but the courts can also take legal action."

Plugged in, or tuning out?

Technology letting many skip the radio and listen to what they want, when they want it

By **ROBYN SEYMOUR**

Rhonda Mercer of St. Johns, Newfoundland is one of many Canadians tuning out - the radio that is.

Although the 18-year-old occasionally listens to the radio, she would rather turn to her television for up-to-date news and entertainment.

"I'd rather listen to the radio for weather updates because it's quick and to the point, but TV gives better details when it comes to news," she said.

According to a recent study by Statistics Canada, fewer people are turning to the radio for entertainment and news each year.

Over the last decade, the average time per week Canadians have spent listening to their radio has fallen by about two hours.

The 2007 *Radio Listening Study* showed Canadians tuned into their radios for roughly 18 and a half hours a week that year, compared with 20.5 in 1999.

Teenagers like Mercer tuned in the least for all age groups - about seven hours - while senior women continued to be the medium's most ardent fans, spending an average 22 and a half hours listening to the radio.

"Less teens are listening to the radio now," said Mercer. "A lot of them have MP3 players and iPods."

Melissa Dawe agrees.

Dawe, an 18-year-old Memorial University of Newfoundland student, said in the past year alone the number of people she sees using their iPods has drastically increased.

"The only people my age I see listening to the radio now are people without iPods or people who don't have a way to connect them to their vehicles," she said.

Although she believes there is a need for radio, she doesn't think radio is as important as it once was.

"I like to listen to the radio for the new music. When I hear the news, I shouldn't, but I turn it



Melissa Dawe, an 18-year-old Memorial University of Newfoundland student, said although there is a need for radio, she doesn't think it is as important as it once was. Seymour photo.

over. But without radio, people wouldn't hear the new songs to even put on iPods."

Dawe said although radio doesn't play a big part in her life, it would be different without radio.

"I find the radio relaxes me. Without radio it would be really different for me when I do my homework, when I drive around or just when I want to hear the new songs being introduced."

According to the study, radio listening has fallen in every province, except P.E.I. where it's 20.9 hours a week, and Manitoba where it's 16.6 hours a week.

Henk van Leeuwen, managing editor for CBC Prince Edward Island, said Canadians are just finding and enjoying audio in

more ways than was available to them in previous years.

"What we once knew as radio is now being consumed in different ways, and how you measure this diversified audio consumption in this country will be a tricky bit of business," Van Leeuwen said.

There'll always be a need for radio, but how they do it will evolve, said Van Leeuwen.

"People will always want to hear good storytelling, good newscasts and good music. It's how societies have always functioned. Humans need to talk to and entertain each other.

"The challenge facing conventional broadcasters such as the CBC is to figure out how to get ahead of the listening curve from

a technological perspective," he said.

Blair Rhodes, program director for K-Rock 105.5, Charlottetown, said he doesn't think radio listeners are beginning to tune out, they are just tuning in a lot less.

"There are many more options than ever before.

"We have a very on-demand society that wants what they want and when they want it," Rhodes said.

"I think if we continue to be local and timely, there will always be a place for us."

Beside, ipods, YouTube and satellite radio can't provide local news, weather or breaking information, he said.

"I think we also need to

embrace all these new medias and use them to our advantage. We have the benefit of having 98 per cent connectivity. The Internet doesn't even come close to that."

Rhodes said people have really begun to use the Internet as another part of their day-to-day operations.

"With updated content, our own versions of YouTube and by using our sites to provide the on-demand entertainment we've become used to.

"I can't speak for other companies, but I know [station owner] NewCap has some very cool initiatives to use new medias and our own to continue to grow and become more and more compelling.

"I don't think the situation is nearly as desperate as some would make it sound."

Younger people are a concern for radio companies, but they want to have more of a younger audience, Rhodes said.

"As they get older, they continue to be radio listeners. I think with the younger end we need to market ourselves slightly different, more as a valuable tool rather than just a music jukebox."

Many stations, including Charlottetown's K-Rock, have begun to do this by using the new media to their advantage. K-Rock now has a database of listeners the station can text when their school or office is closed during a storm.

There are also stations developing more Facebook and iPhone applications.

"The idea is to create more compelling and interactive programming that would be suited to the next generation," said Rhodes.

"NewCap Radio is more than committed to continue to evolve the way we do radio. We have a number of younger programmers, myself included, who constantly come up with new ideas to help us grow.

"There will always be a place for us we may need to evolve and grow, but there's no other media that can deliver with the immediacy that we can."

Cutting through the spin's not easy

By SHAWNA MACAUSLAND

If you've been to legislature lately, you might have noticed the politicians talking in circles, using long sentences and big words on their topic of choice in response to a unrelated question.

That's what Teresa Wright deals with every day. She's a political reporter for the Guardian.

"I pretty much live here," she said as she sat down at her desk in the newsroom to check her messages.

She looked out the window at the gray sky and tucked her newspaper-print umbrella under her arm and threw her purse over her shoulder.

We walked *the walk*, as she calls it, to the legislature less than a block away.

"I remember being excited the first time I came to legislature."

The worn ends of her shiny black stilettos clicked on the sidewalk as we came up to the building and people I've only ever seen on TV greeted her.

She stopped to talk to a man standing on the steps, dug through her purse for her tape recorder and clicked it on. He wanted to get his message out, but he wasn't direct when answering the questions she asked.

Direct answers are a thing of the past.

How do you cut through the jargon in the legislature to write a news story?

"With a hatchet," said Steve MacDougall, a CFCY radio reporter.

His job isn't too difficult because he only needs a short sound clip and a brief summary of the main issues, MacDougall said.

"We only need a 15-second sound bite, but I'll use 30 seconds if it's good enough."

Radio reporting isn't the same as newspaper reporting when it comes to covering the legislature, said MacDougall.

"I feel bad for thoses guys."

His job is to pick out the top issue of the day, he said.

"I try to find the story that will affect more people, such as farming communities."

After question period, MacDougall usually seeks out the leader of the opposition or the premier for comments.

"It depends on what the issue



CBC's John Jeffery interviewing MLA Carolyn Bertram at the P.E.I. legislature. MacAusland photo

is."

Sometimes it's harder to dig an answer out of a response that isn't so direct.

"It can be messy."

Wright plugs her tape recorder into the wall in the press room at the legislature, and hangs her coat up on the back of the door. We walked out into the gallery and sat down on a bench that looked down on the political debate happening below.

Wright's pen flew across the page as she took notes on something that seemed interesting to her. I was listening to the same speech and I couldn't pull out anything.

Pat Martel works for CBC Radio. He seemed to get more out of what we just watched. He sat in the press room with his shoes off and laptop open in front of him.

Martel said it can be hard to get a story out of the discussions sometimes, but the theatre of it all helps.

"When they're back and forth and yelling at each other it generates a bit of excitement."

He writes down who said what and jots down a number to indicate the topic to keep his note organized.

"We don't use clips when we do the afternoon rant," he said.

In the rant, a spot on the afternoon radio show, he talks about what happened in the legislature.

Guardian reporter Wayne Thibodeau was also taking his notes from the press room, where he can watch live feed of the legislature on a TV in the room. He said he just takes note of who said what and builds a story based on that. He and Wright split up stories based on who has more background information on the topic.

"There's two of us here, which makes it easier. Teresa has covered PNP [an immigration program] since it started, so there's no reason for me to jump into it. She's got all the background information on it. I've read it, but

she's more intimately involved."

Some of the issues aren't very newsworthy. Some of the issues have come up before and some just aren't important to many people, he said.

"We want to use the issues that affect a number of people. On many days you will be juggling six or seven stories. Today I'll be lucky to find one."

When interviewing spinners, it's important to stay persistent, use resources to get information, and if they get off topic, tell them you don't understand the answer, said Thibodeau.

"It comes with a little bit of experience. Sometimes it throws them off guard enough to give you a more direct answer."

But if they don't answer, it's important to tell your readers what you have and what you don't have, said Thibodeau.

"We're just an extension of the public. The public has the right to know what's going on. They can make their own minds."

A lot of theatrics go on in the legislature. Outside, they talk more directly, he said.

"(It seems like they think) if you really don't know what they said, they can't be held responsible."

John Jeffery, the CBC Legislative reporter, said covering it for TV is different.

"We only have a limited amount of time on TV. The main story and a second story are all we need."

Jeffery takes notes on the proceedings and finds out how he can paraphrase.

"You look for a clip that sums up what the issue is."

Good video clips are short and get to the point quickly, Jeffery said

"Very rarely will we go on beyond 15 seconds."

After her interviews and notes are all taken and tucked away, Wright walks back to the Guardian and writes up her stories. It can be a long day, she said.

"Sometimes I'm here 'til 11."

Papers, radio, magazines, TV

- Sally Pitt has done it all

By SAMARA MEADE

When she heard her name being called by her Grade 5 teacher, Sally Pitt got up and proudly accepted the award for her story about puppies and the Humane Society.

That day, and that award, could have been what decided the future for the one-day journalist, news announcer and court reporter.

"Ever since that day, I loved writing," she laughed, recalling the story.

Pitt, who now works for CBC Television in P.E.I., has been in the business for over 20 years. She has worked in newspapers, magazine and radio.

Her love for writing and her sister's suggestion of journalism led Pitt to the University of Kings College in Halifax after high school. She was editor of the school's paper, which she loved. After graduation she did freelancing for magazines.

Jobs at places came and went, including the Eastern Graphic, an Island weekly newspaper.

One of her favourite things about working at the Graphic was working with Jim MacNeill, editor of the paper.

"It's the best first job to have," she said.

MacNeill let her learn, fail, and learn from failing. And when she did make a mistake, he wouldn't say I told you so.

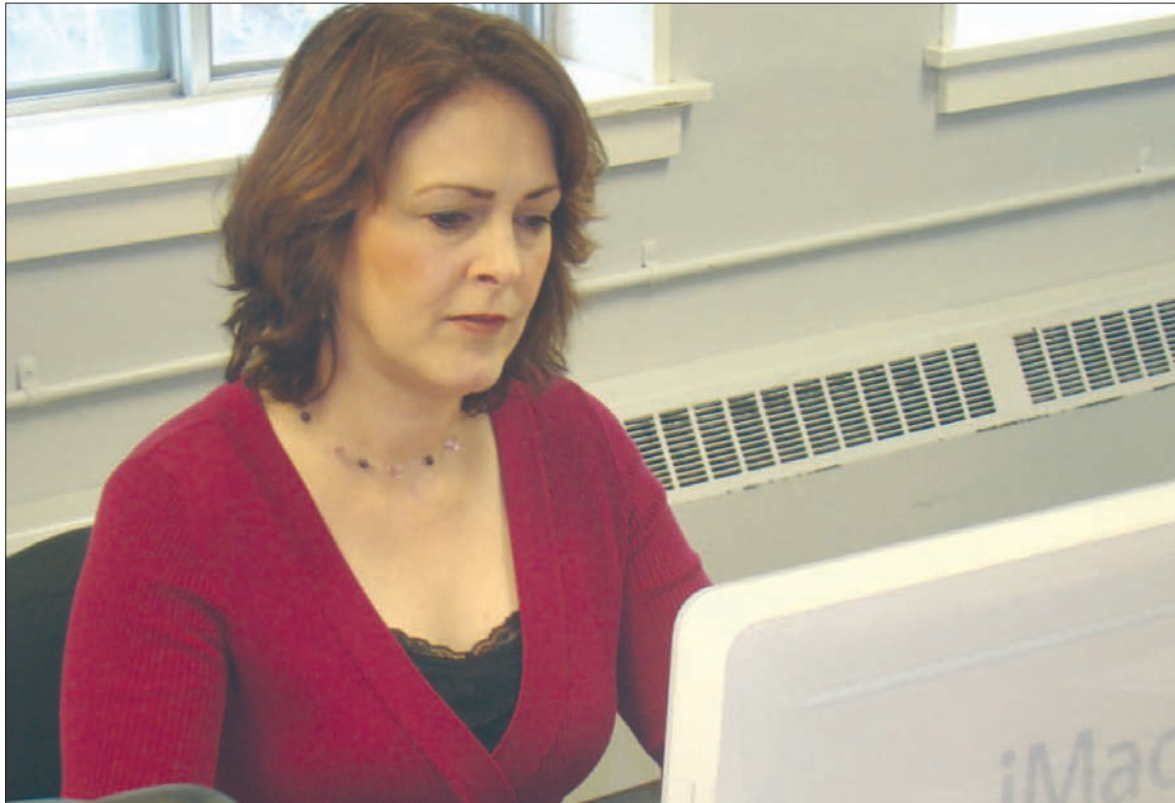
Pitt said MacNeill also had a great sense of humour. After covering a story and being threatened to get sued, MacNeill's only response was not to worry about it.

"You're not a true journalist unless you get threatened with a law suit at least once," he told her.

"But the most important thing I learned from him was never be afraid to ask questions," she said.

Pitt stayed at the Graphic for a couple years, then moved to the Scotia Sun, a Cape Breton paper that went under after two years. Moving around didn't bother her.

"You want to try different things



Sally Pitt, a CBC P.E.I. television reporter, makes time to work with the Holland College journalism class despite her busy reporting schedule. Meade photo.

to see where you fit," she said.

And Pitt did find where she fits. CBC Radio in P.E.I. had a job opening. She stayed for seven years until she became involved in television, where she has been for the past 13 years.

Although Pitt has the skill to do national reporting, which she has considered in the past, she loves the hours and type of work CBC P.E.I. provides.

Working in a place like Toronto would be too busy, involve a lot of travel, and she wouldn't be able to see her family as much as she does now, said Pitt.

Her devotion to her husband and two kids also keeps her here.

"Every choice you make is about negotiation."

Being able to do something new every day and telling people something they didn't know is Pitt's favourite part of the job.

"The thing I like here is that you don't have to stick to just courts."

She also loves writing about the environment, health and education.

Although she gets to write different stories every day, Pitt is well known for her court reporting.

Sitting in the courtroom is part of her daily routine. It's a routine she loves and excels at, says CBC TV executive producer Tracy Lightfoot.

Lightfoot has worked with Pitt since starting at CBC P.E.I. just over a year ago and it didn't take long for her to see Pitt's talent.

"She's really terrific on general reporting, but her niche would be court reporting," she said.

Pitt's strengths, like keeping in touch with contacts across the Island, are keys to the newsroom and the stories they get, Lightfoot said. Her ability to get people to open up and talk about difficult stories also makes the path to the evening news hour clearer.

Director of prosecutions of P.E.I.

Cindy Wedge has known Pitt for about 10 years.

"She has great integrity. Sally is a reporter I trust," she said.

Pitt understands the rules of the courts, and respects those rules, which helps gain the trust of those involved, she said.

"She understands criminal law enough that she gets it right. That's all we ask," said Wedge.

Court reporting isn't as glamorous as it may seem, said Pitt. Things like threats are common and Pitt realizes there may be danger if she's not careful.

Once she was working on a story and was threatened if she aired it. She went ahead. Nothing serious happened. There were a couple of phone calls in the middle of the night, but they stopped eventually. She also had a few unexpected pizza deliveries show up at her door in the early morning hours, but she simply ignored the harassment.

Still, she takes precautions,

keeping her phone number off the staff sheet and keeping her car door locked at all times.

"If there's an issue, I don't get so close so it's a threat," she said.

"And remember, key out," she said while holding her key in between her thumb and forefinger after locking her car.

Despite that, of all the media jobs she has done, television is her favourite so far.

"TV can be a powerful medium. It's the next best thing to being there," she said.

Pitt said since Compass, the one-hour daily news show, is very popular on the Island, it's important to have support and cooperation to run smoothly.

And they have just that.

Once, when Pitt was working on a wind turbine story, the man she planned to have on the show cancelled at the last minute. It took her just five minutes to get somebody else.

"People here really feel like Compass is their show," said Pitt.

Bruce Rainie, the CBC TV news anchor, agrees and gives Pitt a big piece of the credit.

"We have the best supper-time show in the country because of precision and care and it wouldn't be that way without people like Sally."

Rainie and Pitt have been colleagues for four and a half years.

Sometimes, when Rainie is away, Pitt fills in as anchor.

"There's lots of jokes. Many little things only behind the scenes people would understand," said Rainie.

"It's kind of cool because I know I can take pride in our show when I'm gone."

The change of pace is something Pitt also enjoys.

Although Pitt loves her job, she doesn't know where the future will take her.

Her love for the station and the Island may keep her here for quite a while.

"I love P.E.I. and I can't imagine getting the satisfaction from my job anywhere else. I'm very lucky," she said.