

Kathy Gannon to Give Keynote at Scholars Luncheon

By Jane Reilly

Kathy Gannon, senior correspondent for Pakistan and Afghanistan for the Associated Press, will be the keynote speaker at the annual OPC Foundation Scholar Awards Luncheon on Friday, Feb. 26, at the Yale Club. The recipient of several press awards, including the Burton Benjamin Memorial Award from the Committee to Protect Journalists for a lifetime of distinguished achievement in the cause of press freedom, Gannon has covered South Central Asia and elsewhere for the AP as a correspondent and bureau chief since 1988.

At the luncheon, the Foundation will award a combination of scholarships and fellowships to 15 graduate and undergraduate college students aspiring to become foreign correspondents. The winning recipients are from City University of New York; Columbia University; New York University; University of California, Berkeley; University of Chicago; University of Montana-Missoula; University of North Carolina; and the University of Southern Cali-

fornia. “We’ve been doing this now for more than 20 years,” said Bill Holstein, president of the OPC Foundation, “and it’s clear that we have created a whole new generation of foreign correspondents who are based all over the world for many top publications. But we need to keep expanding what we do to address the many unmet needs that young journalists, in particular, face. The industry’s economic shift toward greater reliance on freelancers and the perilous climate in which they ply their trade shows no sign of abating.”

Given the dangers many journalists face, Holstein described Gannon’s selection as keynote speaker as the perfect choice. “She did everything right that day, and yet tragedy struck,” he said, alluding to April 4, 2014, the day before nationwide elections in Afghanistan. Gannon was at a police compound with her friend and AP colleague Anja



Michael Danes

Kathy Gannon lights a ceremonial candle in honor of journalists killed, imprisoned or missing at last year’s OPC Awards Dinner.

Niedringhaus, a German photographer, when a police officer walked up to their car, said “Allahu Akbar,” and opened fire on them. Niedringhaus was killed in the attack, and Gannon was seriously wounded.

In presenting the CPJ award to Gannon, Christiane Amanpour, chief international correspondent for CNN, said Gannon’s long years of experience based in Islamabad gave her “unbelievable insight into an often impenetrable region” and that Gannon always followed her vision of journalism. “Be fair, be

(Continued on Page 4)

Inside. . .

Preview: Encryption for Journalists.....	2
Preview: Book Night for ‘One Child’.....	3
Preview: Remembering Castro.....	3
Azmat Khan on Al Jazeera America.....	3
President’s Award.....	3
History: Castro and the OPC.....	3
Preview: Russia Hands Reunion.....	4
People Column.....	6-8
Holiday Party Photos.....	8
Press Freedom Update.....	9-10
Q&A: Anita Snow.....	11
New Books.....	12

Rod Nordland to Discuss ‘The Lovers’

EVENT PREVIEW: Jan. 27

The OPC and *The New York Times’* Asian Heritage Network are hosting a Book Night with author and OPC award winner Rod Nordland to discuss *The Lovers: Afghanistan’s Romeo and Juliet, The True Story of How They Defied Their Families and Survived an Honor Killing Program*.

The event will begin at 6:30 p.m. at *The New York Times* building, 620 Eighth Avenue (be-

tween 40th and 41st Streets).

Nordland, an OPC member since 1985, is currently correspondent-at-large and bureau chief in Kabul for the *Times*. He won the OPC’s Ed Cunningham Award for best magazine writing from abroad in 1999 while working for *Newsweek*.

To reserve a spot, please register on the RSVP link included in OPC email event reminders and event listings on our website at www.opcofamerica.org or call the office at 212 626-9220.

Protect Yourself and Your Sources

EVENT PREVIEW: Feb. 2

Encryption is just as important as a flak jacket in today's dangerous reporting environment. Learn about when and how to use encryption from Ryan Tate and Erin Clark of *The Intercept*, published by First Look Media. Founders of *The Intercept* include Glenn Greenwald and Laura Poitras, who helped Edward Snowden leak a massive trove of National Security Agency documents. The event is co-sponsored by the OPC and New York University's Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute and will be held at the Carter Institute.

The event begins at 6:00 p.m.

To make a reservation, please register on the RSVP link included in OPC email event reminders and event listings on our website at www.opcofamerica.org or call the office at 212 626-9220.



Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

Book Night to Discuss 'One Child'

EVENT PREVIEW: Feb. 9

Bring a prospective OPC member to enjoy Chinese treats and seasonal cocktails at this one-of-a-kind book night/Chinese New Year gathering at the home of OPC Governor Minky Worden in Manhattan. The person who signs up the most new members will receive a free copy of *One Child: The Story of China's Most Radical Experiment*.

Mei Fong was a longtime China correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal*, and shared a Pulitzer Prize for her China coverage. Part analysis, part journalistic memoir, Fong weaves in her own

struggles with infertility with stories from people living with the consequences of China's rigid fertility controls, taking the reader from the wreckage of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake to a Kunming hospice and the IVF clinics of Beijing and California. Andy Jacobs, a longtime China correspondent for *The New York Times*, will moderate.

To reserve a spot, please use the RSVP link included in OPC email event reminders, call the office at 212-626-9220 or send an email to RSVP@opcofamerica.org.

Read more about *One Child* in this month's book review section on page 12.



OPC member Evan Osnos interviews Mei Fong on C-SPAN's After Words.

C-SPAN2

OVERSEAS PRESS CLUB OF AMERICA • BOARD OF GOVERNORS

PRESIDENT

Marcus Mabry
U.S. Lead
Twitter Moments

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Calvin Sims
President and CEO
International House

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

Abigail Pesta
Freelance Journalist

THIRD VICE PRESIDENT

Pancho Bernasconi
Vice President/News
Getty Images

TREASURER

Tim Ferguson
Editor
Forbes Asia

SECRETARY

Deidre Depke
New York Bureau Chief
Marketplace

ACTIVE BOARD

Jacqueline Albert-Simon
U.S. Bureau Chief
Politique Internationale

Hannah Allam
Foreign Affairs
Correspondent
McClatchy
Newspapers

Deborah Amos
Correspondent
NPR

Molly Bingham
Freelance Journalist

Rukmini Callimachi
Foreign
Correspondent
The New York Times

Anupreet Das
Reporter
Wall Street Journal

Chris Dickey
Foreign Editor
The Daily Beast,
Paris

Scott Gilmore
International Columnist
Maclean's Magazine

Peter S. Goodman
Editor-in-Chief
*International
Business Times*

Charles Graeber
Freelance Journalist
and Author

Steve Herman
Bureau Chief
Southeast Asia
Voice of America

Anjali Kamat
Correspondent
Fault Lines
Al-Jazeera

Azmat Khan
Investigative Reporter
BuzzFeed News

Dan Klaidman
Deputy Editor
Yahoo News

Paul Moakley
Deputy Director
Photography and
Visual Enterprise
Time magazine

Robert Nickelsberg
Freelance
Photojournalist

Mary Rajkumar
International Enterprise
Editor
The Associated Press

Lara Setrakian
Co-Founder & CEO
News Deeply

Martin Smith
President
Rain Media

Liam Stack
Breaking News
Reporter
The New York Times

Charles Wallace
Financial Writer

Vivienne Walt
Correspondent
Time and *Fortune*

ASSOCIATE BOARD MEMBERS

Brian I. Byrd
Program Officer
NYS Health
Foundation

Bill Collins
Director, Public &
Business Affairs
Ford Motor Company

Emma Daly
Communications
Director
Human Rights Watch

Daniel Sieberg
Global Head
of Media Outreach
Google

Minky Worden
Director of Global
Initiatives
Human Rights Watch

PAST PRESIDENTS EX-OFFICIO

Michael Serrill
David A. Andelman
John Corporon
Allan Dodds Frank
Alexis Gelber
William J. Holstein
Marshall Loeb
Larry Martz
Roy Rowan
Larry Smith
Richard B. Stolley

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Patricia Kranz

OFFICE MANAGER

Boots R. Duque

EDITOR

Chad Bouchard

OPC Bulletin

ISSN-0738-7202
Copyright © 2015
Overseas Press Club
of America

40 West 45 Street, New York, NY 10036 USA • Phone: (212) 626-9220 • Fax: (212) 626-9210 • Website: opcofamerica.org

ANALYSIS: Why Al Jazeera America Didn't Last

By Azmat Khan

When Al Jazeera announced it would be launching an American news network in early 2013, many journalists believed it could be a game changer – myself included.

During the Arab Spring, its English channel's live stream had drawn millions of first-time viewers in the United States. To those watching, the coverage was refreshingly bold, the reporters fierce, and the mission – to give voice to the voiceless – exhilarating. Even after Egypt's protests ended, Americans continued to watch and read Al Jazeera online. The fact that it had attracted a growing digital audience seemed to challenge prevailing beliefs about journalism, particularly the idea that there's little American appetite for international reporting, let alone international reporting that isn't dumbed down. For many Americans, not just journalists, Al Jazeera was a hopeful path for the future of news.

Only three years later, hardly anyone is surprised that Al Jazeera America will be closing shop in April, least of all its original fan base.

People have argued that AJAM was too “foreign,”



Azmat Khan

too serious, or too toxic a work environment to ever really succeed, and that oil prices and a litany of lawsuits made it financially unviable. But from my experience working there, it was digital naïveté that doomed it more than anything else.

Take a moment and imagine what AJAM could have been if Al Jazeera had spent \$2.5 billion on an experimental digital media enterprise – not a cable news channel.

Now consider what it actually did: Al Jazeera bought

(Continued on Page 5)

FEB. 3: OPC LUNCH REMEMBERING CASTRO

On Feb. 3, the OPC is hosting a lunch at the Club Quarters dining room to share stories with two journalists who interviewed Fidel Castro and Che Guevara in their early years.

Karl Meyer, who served on the editorial boards of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, was one of the first American journalists to spend time with Castro in the mountains of the Sierra Maestra two-thirds of a century ago.

Henry Raymont accompanied Vice-President Richard M. Nixon on a month-long trip to Cuba, Mexico and Central America in 1955 for United Press and interviewed Castro eight times over the course of his career. David Andelman, formerly of *The New York Times* and *World Policy Journal*, will moderate.

DAVID FANNING TO RECEIVE PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The OPC will honor David Fanning, founder and executive producer at large of PBS Frontline, with the President's Award at this year's Annual Awards Dinner on April 28.

In offering the award to Fanning, OPC President Marcus Mabry said that he “could not imagine a more worthy recipient than you and the team at Frontline, given your extraordinary, defining, work lasting more than three decades.”

Castro Has a History With the OPC

By Chad Bouchard

Just two months after Fidel Castro was sworn in as prime minister of Cuba in February 1959, the country's new leader addressed 1,800 OPC members and guests in the packed grand ballroom of the Hotel Astor.

An article in the May 1959 *Bulletin* said 125 reporters, photojournalists and television networks covered the April 23 event. The luncheon drew the largest attendance in the club's history at the time.

The article quoted Castro as saying the U.S. had given him “more honor than I deserve,” and that he would return to Cuba from his visit as a “man of more faith” in the bond of friendship between his country and the U.S.

A week before his OPC appearance, Castro met with then-Vice President Richard Nixon as part of a post-revolution charm offensive spanning many countries. The tone of his speech was warm. It was only months later that relations between the two countries would begin to sour.

“All the glories of war could be kept in a grain of corn,” he said at the luncheon. “We are only human and human beings can do only a few things.”

Also attending the event was baseball legend Jackie Robinson, journalist Bob Considine (namesake of

the eponymous OPC award for best interpretation of international affairs) and Herbert L. Matthews of *The New York Times*, who won the 1958 OPC George Polk Memorial Award for his interview with Castro in his jungle hideout in the Sierra Maestra mountain range in February 1957. Matthews' story had given the world a rare sign that the rebel leader was not only alive but “fighting hard and successfully.”

Castro amused the crowd with a story about

(Continued on Page 10)

Russia Hands to Gather for Reunion

EVENT PREVIEW: Feb. 24

By Patricia Kranz

The OPC and Columbia University's Harriman Institute are co-hosting a gathering on Feb. 24 in New York of journalists who covered Russia and the USSR. Diplomats, academics, spouses and other professionals who worked in the region are also welcome. Please help spread word of this event to your colleagues and friends.

OPC Governor Charles Wallace and Harriman Institute director Alexander Cooley will make opening remarks to kick off the event at 4:00 p.m.

Two panels will follow. Speakers include Ann Cooper, NPR's first Moscow bureau chief; Timothy Frye, Harriman Institute; David Hoffman, *The Washington Post*; Tom Kent, Associated Press/Harriman Institute; Vladimir Lenski, RTVI (Russian TV International) anchor; Seymour Topping, for-



Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

mer correspondent and editor for *The New York Times*; and Carol Williams, longtime *Los Angeles Times* correspondent. Other speakers will be announced. The event will conclude with a reception from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. To reserve a spot, please register on the RSVP link included in OPC email event reminders and event listings on our website at www.opcofamerica.org or call the office at 212 626-9220.

(*'OPC Foundation' - Continued From Page 1*)

honest and above all, be right. Stick to the facts." While based primarily in Islamabad, Gannon reported on the withdrawal of Russian soldiers from Afghanistan, the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, the bitter Afghan civil war between Islamic factions and the rise and fall of the Taliban. She was the only Western journalist allowed in Kabul by the Taliban in the weeks preceding the 2001 U.S.-British offensive in Afghanistan. She also covered the Middle East, including the 2006 Israeli war against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, and war in northern Iraq.

Events for the 2016 winners will last three days. On Thursday afternoon Holstein will emcee a panel at Reuters for those award winners interested in business journalism. That evening, Reuters editor-in-chief Stephen Adler will host the traditional reception for current and past winners of OPC Foundation awards at the global news organization's Times Square headquarters. On Friday, besides addressing a distinguished audience of more than 200 luncheon guests at the Yale Club, the award winners will meet with Holstein and veteran international journalists in a pre-luncheon breakfast and with several foreign editors following the luncheon. For many, says Holstein, the opportunity to meet and observe prominent journalists in action is as valuable as any monetary award.

For the second year in a row, the OPC Foundation will offer a day of risk assessment and situational training at the Associated Press headquarters on Saturday. Frank Smyth, president and founder of Global Journalist Security, a hostile environment training firm based in Washington DC, will again lead the program. Those who participated last year called the experience invaluable. "We are cognizant that we have a responsibility

to make sure our winners engage in the world's stories in ways that keep them safe. We are proud of the work that key board members are doing to improve safety and security conditions for journalists around the globe," Holstein said.

Up to 12 of this year's winners will receive fellowships to work in the foreign bureaus of the Foundation's media partners, including the Associated Press, Reuters, *The Wall Street Journal*, GroundTruth Project and Forbes. The fellowships will ensure that the awardees gain valuable experience and insight working with veteran editors and reporters. In 2015, the Foundation funded fellowships in bureaus across Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas and the Middle East. The Foundation picks up the cost of the airfare and one to two months of living expenses for the winners.

Holstein is grateful to Bloomberg which again hosted the judging in December and to the dedicated panel of judges who chose the 2016 recipients: Ethan Bronner, Bloomberg; Eddie Evans, Boies, Schiller & Flexner LLP; Joe Flint, *The Wall Street Journal*; Allan Dodds Frank; Sharon Gamsin; Holstein; Michelle LaRoche, *The Wall Street Journal*; Felice Levin; Jeremy Main; Marcy McGinnis; Kate McLeod; Ellen Nimmons, AP; David Rohde, Reuters; Charlie Sennott, GroundTruth Project; Michael Serrill; Bob Sullivan; Steve Swanson, Bronx Botanical Garden; Karen Toulon, Bloomberg; and Abi Wright, DuPont Awards.

Luncheon tickets are \$75 for OPC members and \$150 for non-members. The Foundation encourages media and corporate support at its three levels of giving: Benefactors, \$9,000; Patrons, \$6,000; and Friends, \$3,000. Tables seat 10. The reception is at 11:30 a.m.; the luncheon ends promptly at 2:00 p.m. All proceeds benefit the OPC Foundation. For further information, contact Jane Reilly at 201 493-9087 or foundation@opcofamerica.org.

Al Gore's already struggling Current TV for half a billion dollars, and then spent an estimated 2 billion more running it and trying to keep cable affiliates from dropping it. The latter cost more than money. It required AJAM to compromise its brand: scaling back global reporting in favor of domestic coverage and consenting to the draconian online restrictions of cable affiliates. Wary of free content, affiliates like Time Warner refused to carry the new network unless Al Jazeera slashed its most ambitious and innovative digital offerings, including the global live stream that made Al Jazeera's name in America. Stunningly, every single AJAM video published online had to be taken down within a week, disappearing from the internet as though it never existed. But the restrictions did more than limit access; they stifled innovation. Amid the resurgence of podcasts, most audio was a no-go, as was video animation. Despite immense outcry from its own staff, Al Jazeera caved time and again.

Rather than dedicating the brunt of its resources to figuring out a new model in journalism's changing landscape, it sunk most of its money, reputation, and staff into an old one. For a news organization that made its name in America streaming innovative global coverage, it was a stunning miscalculation – one rooted in AJAM's original conception as a cable channel and then exacerbated by other blunders.

Most news organizations build their base first, testing models before growing rapidly, but AJAM did the reverse. Scaling up rapidly – hiring more than 700 staff mere months ahead of its expected launch – led to chaos, poor management, and some bad hires. The company's CEO was widely reviled by staff as a bully with poor vision. Before it even launched, the channel was the target of sustained bigotry and anti-Muslim sentiment. It launched to disappointing ratings that improved only little over time. Across AJAM, morale was low, and issues of workplace harassment, sexism, and racism that in my experience are pervasive across most media organizations quickly bubbled to the surface in the form of lawsuits.

Against these extraordinary restraints, AJAM's talented broadcast and digital journalists managed to produce impressive award-winning work that often epitomized its "voice of the voiceless" mission. AJAM won two OPC awards last year: the David Kaplan Award for a report on Gaza and the Joe and Laurie Dine Award for work that detailed the exploitation of contract workers on U.S. military bases in Afghanistan.

Dedicating reporters to tribal reservations across the country, AJAM covered Native American issues better than any other news organization. It delved deeply into the hard realities of Americans living in poverty, new frontiers in LGBTQ rights, and the lives of people with disabilities. Its coverage found few viewers on TV, but its multimedia and long form thrived online, in spite of digital restrictions.

It would be a mistake to think the lesson in AJAM's end is that serious, smart coverage like this, or a brand associated with Al Jazeera, could never find an audience in America. Its most promising audience always lay in the digital sphere.

As an example, consider the success of AJ+, Al Jazeera's San Francisco-based experiment in digital video. It differs vastly from AJAM in form and innovation, but shares its "foreignness" and probing style. And yet AJ+ videos have been wildly popular on the platform where more Americans get their news than any other: Facebook.

A lean San Francisco-based staff of 70 experiment with distributed content: material it only publishes on social platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Tailored to how people consume news on their phones, its videos are often snappy and can be watched without sound. Within a year of launching, AJ+ videos were the second most watched of any news publisher on Facebook and generated 2.2 billion views there in 2015 alone.

Early on, AJ+ videos were primarily explainers, but over time, they broke into original foreign reporting. Its staff traveled to Europe to journey alongside migrants seeking refuge, and to the forests of Guerrero state in Mexico, where 43 students disappeared in 2014.

But AJ+ isn't perfect or a miraculous solution to journalism's crises. Sometimes its experiments have felt cheesy or partisan. And like other media organizations producing distributed content, it doesn't offer a very viable profit model – yet. But it's prioritizing what media organizations that want to succeed need to: experimentation and innovation.

AJAM's closure shouldn't dissuade the media and its consumers of their hopes for the future of journalism; it should better inform their attempts create the one they want.

Azmat Khan was a digital reporter at Al Jazeera America in 2013 and 2014. She is now an investigative reporter for BuzzFeed News. She is a member of the OPC's board of governors.

PEOPLE... By Trish Anderton

OPC SCHOLARS

2014 H.L. Stephenson Fellowship winner **Caelainn Hogan** had a story in the *New Yorker* in December about why a move away from using Arabic script on Nigerian currency has proven controversial. As an OPC fellow, Hogan was based in Lagos, Nigeria with the Associated Press. She went on to do a global health fellowship with the GroundTruth Project, founded by OPC member **Charles Sennott**. Hogan is currently freelancing with a focus on migration, rights and religion.



Michael Danes

Hogan

Fatima Bhojani, OPC Foundation's 2015 Theo Wilson winner, recently got a cover story in *Newsweek Middle East*. "Cry, For My Son, For His Freedom" tells the story of a Pakistani immigrant to the U.S. whose son was sentenced to 30 years in prison after being drawn into a terrorism plot by an FBI informant. Bhojani received a masters degree at Columbia University's Stabile Center for Investigative Journalism in 2015 and is now writing about national security, criminal justice and foreign policy.



Michael Danes

Bhojani

AWARDS

Former OPC President **Richard B. Stolley** was inducted into the New York Journalism Hall of Fame before a sold-out crowd at Sardi's in November. The Hall is maintained by The Deadline Club, which is the New York City chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. Stolley was honored for his six decades at Time, Inc., where he served as the company's editorial director and was the founding editor of *People*.

OPC member **David Hume Kennerly** has been honored with the Lucie Award for Achievement in Photojournalism. Kennerly "is considered a master storyteller by his colleagues," the Lucie Foundation wrote, "and has been shooting on the front lines of history for decades." The awards, established in 2003, recognize "the greatest achievements in photography." Kennerly has photographed more than 50 major magazine covers over the course of his career. Hired as a contributing editor by Politico in 2015, he is now producing photo essays about the 2016 presidential election.

Associated Press Mexico City bureau chief **Katherine Corcoran** has won an Alicia Patterson Foundation fellowship. Corcoran, who was named the Josephine Patterson Albright fellow, will examine press freedom in Mexico. The awards "provide support for journalists engaged in rigorous, probing, spirited, independent and skeptical work that will benefit the public." Corcoran has been with the AP since 2008. She has also worked at the *San Jose Mercury News*, the *Denver Post* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Josh Fine and **David Scott**, who won the 2014 David A.andelman and Pamela Title Award for their HBO Real Sports feature on labor abuses in the run-up to the 2022 World Cup, have nabbed an Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award for the same story. The judges said the "extensive investigation into Qatar's plan to achieve international recognition through sport exposed the price it has exacted in fair play, human rights, and even human lives." Three-time OPC Award-winner **Scott Pelley** was also awarded a duPont for his 60 Minutes investiga-

tion into 2013 sarin gas attacks that killed 1500 people in Damascus, Syria. Multiple OPC Award-winner **David Fanning** of PBS' Frontline took home multiple duPont-Columbia Awards – one for Ebola coverage and another for a documentary about transgender children.

UPDATES

NEW YORK: OPC member **Anupreeta Das** is joining a new financial enterprise team headed by David Enrich at *The Wall Street Journal*. Das has recently been covering Warren Buffett and Berkshire Hathaway for the *Journal*. She'll continue in that role, while also covering Wall Street and the presidential race. Das previously wrote about technology, media and the telecommunications industry for Reuters.



Das

Former OPC Governor **Howard Chua-Eoan** has been given editorial authority over the front-of-the-book news sections at *Bloomberg Businessweek*, where he is deputy managing editor. Chua-Eoan is a former news director at *Time* magazine and author of several books; he has served as Press Freedom chair at the OPC.

OPC Governor **Lara Setrakian** has launched her latest immersive news project. Arctic Deeply covers the impact of climate change on the polar ice caps, and how the changing polar environment affects the rest of the world. It is produced in partnership with Canada's Centre for International Governance. Setrakian founded the media startup News Deeply in 2012 to provide sustained, in-depth reporting on critical issues. The company's other topical deep-dives include Syria Deeply and Water Deeply.

The New York Times will still have a print edition in 10 years – but it may not be like today’s paper, says CEO Mark Thompson. “I think the print product will evolve,” Thompson told OPC member and *Harvard Business Review* editor-in-chief **Adi Ignatius**. He said the paper is focusing on “what’s the right way of thinking about your print platform in a smart-phone world.” Thompson also said he feels the *Times* is “successfully monetizing our audiences for news better than any other newspaper-based company in the world,” adding that “I’m not saying our model’s right for everyone, but for us we think it’s the right model.” Ignatius interviewed Thompson as part of *Business Insider’s* IGNITION 2015 conference.

Jim Rutenberg, chief political correspondent for *The New York Times Magazine*, will be the newspaper’s next media columnist – taking over a post that has stood empty since the death of industry icon David Carr nearly a year ago. Rutenberg started his *Times* career as a media reporter in 2000. “Jim brings to the job a passion for the story, a track record in covering the industry and the experienced eye of an astute observer,” wrote executive editor and OPC member **Dean Baquet**, along with business editor Dean Murphy, in a memo to NYT staffers.

The New Republic is up for sale again, as Facebook co-founder Chris Hughes appears to have given up his effort to transform the magazine into a digital powerhouse. “I underestimated the difficulty of transitioning an old and traditional institution into a digital media company in today’s quickly evolving climate,” Hughes wrote to employees; he went on to promise that “our staff will remain in place and fully supported over the coming weeks.” Hughes’ tenure has been bumpy, including the resignation of most of the magazine’s writers and editors in 2014 in protest over a planned reorganization.



Photo: Spencer Platt/Getty Images

Al Jazeera America will close its doors at the end of April, a move CEO Al Anstey says was “driven by the fact that our business model is simply not sustainable in light of the economic challenges in the U.S. media marketplace.” Meanwhile, AJAM’s global parent company will expand its digital operations in the U.S. OPC Governor and former AJAM employee **Azmat Khan** writes that the effort was doomed to failure because “Rather than dedicating the brunt of its resources to figuring out a new model in journalism’s changing landscape, it sunk most of its money, reputation, and staff into an old one.” You can read more of her analysis on page 3. An anonymous AJAM staffer told the Huffington Post that the company “can unilaterally decide what to offer” hundreds of non-unionized employees, but will have to negotiate termination with some 50 union members.

The U.S. must be careful to avoid the appearance of picking sides in the Sunni-Shiite divide, OPC past President **David A. Andelman** writes in *USA Today*. While significant segments of popular Arab and Iranian opinion have long seen America as tied to the Sunnis, he explains, “the efforts to bring Iran to an agreement on a nuclear weapons moratorium and to the fight against the Islamic State terrorist group have shifted perceptions.” In order to bring together a coalition against ISIS, Andelman warns, America



Andelman

must safeguard its image as “a neutral force of moderation.”

Harper’s Magazine has issued the first retraction in its 165-year history. In December the magazine announced that “at least 5,647 of the 7,902 words” in its 1998 story “Prophets and Losses” were based on fabrications. The story about telephone psychics was authored by Stephen Glass, who was fired by *The New Republic* that same year when it emerged that many of his stories had been invented. “Prophets and Losses” came under suspicion at the time but *Harper’s* was unable to confirm its truth or falsity; “We can’t retract the story without being able to confirm that it was false,” *Harper’s* president and publisher – and OPC member – **John R. MacArthur** told *The New York Times* in 1998. Glass recently sent the magazine a letter admitting that the story was fictional, perhaps as part of his ongoing effort to get a California law license.

CHICAGO: 2015 OPC President’s Award recipient **David Rohde** features prominently in Episode 4 of the hit podcast Serial. The show is exploring the case of Bowe Bergdahl, a U.S. soldier who deserted his post in Afghanistan and was captured and held for five years, and who now faces court-martial. Host Sarah Koenig interviews Rohde about his captivity in 2008 and 2009 in the hands of the Haqqani network, a group aligned with the Taliban – and the same group that held Bergdahl. Rohde escaped just ten days before Bergdahl’s capture; he says he worried that his escape might have caused the Haqqani to treat Bergdahl more harshly.

LOS ANGELES: **Don Bartletti**, part of the *Los Angeles Times* team that won last year’s Robert Spiers Benjamin Award, has retired after accepting a buyout. Voice of San Diego published a lengthy interview with the Pulitzer-prize winning

(Continued on Page 8)

(Continued From Page 7)

photojournalist in late December. Barletti told the website that “as a journalist, I’m not namby-pamby. I’m not in the middle. I’m not afraid to show the harshest of both sides – because my job as a photojournalist is to give YOU a choice.” He also said the OPC award is the one he cherishes the most.

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif.:

The terror attacks in Paris were the world’s biggest trending news event on Google in 2015, according to Google Trends. The attacks prompted nearly 900 million searches. Other stories that made the list include the migrant crisis in Europe (23 million), the Nepal earthquake (85 million), and Greece’s economic woes (35 million). Google Trends

attempts to capture “spiking, trending searches,” not overall search volume over the course of the year, OPC Associate Board Member – and Google global head of media outreach – **Daniel Sieberg** explained in an appearance on CBS News in December.

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia: Young Saudi women are increasingly testing the boundaries of their country’s strict social codes, writes OPC Governor **Deborah Amos** in a recent story for NPR. They call the phenomenon “pushing normal,” and it could involve anything from mingling in a mixed-gender crowd at an art show to riding a bicycle by oneself – very early in the morning, and disguised as a boy. Amos, NPR correspondent, recently covered historic local elections in Sau-

di Arabia which saw women vote and be elected to office for the first time.

PEOPLE REMEMBERED

Renowned cinematographer and documentarian **Haskell Wexler** died on Dec. 27 at age 93. Haskell won multiple awards for his work on such influential films as “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Wolf?” and “In the Heat of the Night.” As a documentarian, he exposed the torture of political prisoners in Brazil, interviewed American veterans of the My Lai massacre, and in 1974 traveled throughout Vietnam filming ordinary citizens talking about the impact of the war. “An amazing life has ended,” his son Jeff wrote, “but his lifelong commitment to fight the good fight, for peace, for all humanity, will carry on.”

OPC Kicks Off New Year With Annual Holiday Party



OPC President Marcus Mabry addresses partygoers on Jan. 6



Left to right: Lindsay Krasnoff, Gary Weiss, Jacqueline Albert-Simon and Allan Dodds Frank.



Martin Smith and Marcela Gaviria

Photos this page: Chad Bouchard



Left to right: Melissa Ng, Pete Engardio, Tim Ferguson and David Fondiller.



Left to right: Micah Garen, Robert Sullivan, Sandy Coliver and Spencer Platt.

PRESS FREEDOM UPDATE...

Washington Post Tehran correspondent **Jason Rezaian** was freed from jail in a prisoner swap on January 16, bringing to a close his 544 days in captivity in Iraq. Rezaian immediately flew to the United States with his wife, Yeganeh Salehi. "Friends and colleagues at *The Washington Post* are elated by the wonderful news," said *Post* publisher Frederick J. Ryan Jr., who thanked "the many government leaders, journalists, human rights advocates and others around the world who have spoken out on Jason's behalf." Rezaian was convicted and sentenced last year in Iran's secretive Revolutionary Courts but the charges and punishment were never made public. The *Post* has strongly denied any wrongdoing on his part.

The numbers and definitions vary, but press freedom groups agree on one thing: 2015 was a deadly year for the news media. **The Committee to Protect Journalists** says 71 journalists were killed "in direct relation to their work," making it the fourth deadliest year since 1992." **The International Press Institute** counts "98 journalists believed to have died as a direct result of their job and 35 more killed under circumstances that remain murky," resulting in "one of the deadliest years on record." **The International Federation of Journalists** reports "at least 112 journalists and media staff killed in targeted killings, bomb attacks and cross-fire incidents." **Reporters Without Borders** lists 110 "professional journalists killed." Another thing the groups agree on is that 2015 saw an increase in targeted killings, especially by extremist groups such as Islamic State.

China jailed a record number of journalists in 2015, and arrests also increased sharply in Egypt and Turkey. **The Committee to Protect Journalists** wrote in a year-end re-

port. The number of journalists imprisoned worldwide dropped to 199, from 221 the previous year. A full quarter of them were held in China. Meanwhile, arrests fell in Iran, Vietnam, and Ethiopia. The CPJ says 28 percent of jailed members of the media are freelancers; that percentage has steadily dropped since 2011. The majority of prisoners – 109 – worked online, while 83 worked in print.

In a move to offer greater privacy to its readers, **ProPublica** has become the first news organization to launch a major news site in the "dark web." According to *Wired Magazine*, the site runs as a "hidden service" on the Tor network, the anonymity system that powers the thousands of untraceable websites that are sometimes known as the darknet or dark web. This ensures that a user who visited the site will remain hidden from prying eyes. ProPublica says it hopes the site will serve as a model for other media organizations.

Senior members of the **Society for Professional Journalists** met with White House press secretary Josh Earnest in December to plead for more openness from the Obama administration. SPJ President Paul Fletcher said in a statement that the organization asked for Obama to "renew his commitment to transparency in government" and to make a "clear statement that government employees are free to speak without interference to members of the press and public." Press freedom groups have long criticized this White House for prosecuting journalists, leakers and whistleblowers and keeping too much information under wraps.

Academics and activists gathered in New Delhi to protest the re-arrest of English professor **G. N. Saibaba** and the issuance of contempt of court

charges against one of his defenders, noted author **Arundhati Roy**. Saibaba was arrested by Maharashtra police in May 2014 for alleged Maoist links. He was released on bail 14 months later after his health deteriorated in prison. Saibaba uses a wheelchair due to a bout of polio as a child. Roy wrote a sharp-tongued article for *India Outlook* last year criticizing Saibaba's detention and India's anti-Maoist campaign.

Two Sudanese newspaper editors could face the death penalty for writing columns critical of the government. **Ahmed Yousef El Tay** and **Osman Mirghani** were arrested in mid-December, according to *The Guardian*. They are charged with abusing their positions as journalists, publishing false news and undermining the constitutional system – the latter of which is punishable by death. Marghani edits *Al-Tayar* while Al-Tay is the editor of *Al-Saiha*. Journalist and activist Faisal Mohammed Salih told the *Guardian* the criminal code was in conflict with the constitution. "The government is facing a genuine challenge this time, and we will see whether they will respect their own laws and constitution, or not," he added.

One of the 47 people executed by Saudi Arabia on Jan. 2 was Adel al-Dhubaiti, who was convicted of murdering cameraman **Simon Cumbers** and injuring reporter **Frank Gardner**, both of the BBC. *The Telegraph* writes that al-Dhubaiti ambushed the two journalists while they were shooting a story about al-Qaeda in a town near Riyadh in 2004. The attack left Gardner paralyzed; he has since battled back from his injuries and resumed reporting. Al-Dhubaiti, a convicted terrorist, was sentenced to die in 2014.

(Continued on Page 10)

(Continued From Page 9)

MURDERS

● Two Iraqi journalists were shot dead while en route to Baquba with a senior security officer on Jan. 12, *The Guardian* reports. Reporter **Saif Tallal** and cameraman **Hassan al-Anbaki** of the independent Al-Sharqiya TV station were trailing behind a convoy led by Lieutenant General Mizher al-Azzawi, the provincial security head, when their car was stopped in a village by masked men. The TV channel, which is owned by Sunnis, blamed Shiite militants for the killings.

● The award-winning Syrian citizen journalist group Raqqa is Being

Slaughtered Silently (RBSS) reports that one of its members, **Ahmad Mo-hamed Almosa**, was killed on Dec. 16. According to a tweet from on the RBSS account, Almosa was “Assassinated in #Idlib #Syria by Unknown Masked group.” The anonymous collective is known for the risks it faces by secretly filming and reporting within the Islamic State stronghold of Raqqa in northern Syria.

● Syrian documentarian and journalist **Naji Jerf** was killed in Turkey on Dec. 27. *The Telegraph* (UK) reported that Jerf was shot in broad daylight in the border city of Gaziantep. A spokesman for RBSS told the paper that he believed Jerf was killed

by Islamic State militants because of his work with the organization. Jerf helped produce a documentary about RBSS.

● **Ruqia Hassan**, who used Facebook to document life under Islamic State rule in Raqqa, has been executed by the militant group. *The Guardian* reports that she was killed in September after being detained in July. The 30-year-old Kurdish philosophy graduate was known for her dark humor – “No one has shown us any compassion except the graveyards,” she once wrote – as well as her vivid portraits of daily life and her boldness in posting her observations publicly.

(‘History’ Continued From Page 3)

Matthews’ reporting. “We had eighteen men he thought we were a patrol, but that was our entire army,” he said. “He didn’t ask how many men I had, because he thought it wasn’t right. And I didn’t tell him.”

Since the event, many OPC members and award winners have crossed paths with the Cuban leader.

Longtime United Press correspondent Henry Raymont, who interviewed Castro eight times during his career, will speak at the OPC’s Remembering Castro panel on Feb. 3,

In an email to the OPC, he recalled talking to Castro in Washington for the United Press soon after the revolution. Castro asked to speak with someone knowledgeable about affairs in Latin America because he wanted to catch up on news since he had been “out of touch” while leading the rebellion in the mountains.

“We met for five hours – I talked for three and he for only two,” Raymont wrote. “And I had the chutzpah to tell him that, as far as I was concerned, his revolution could not have come at a worse moment for a ‘dawning awareness’ of Latin American politics.”

Longtime club member Seymour Topping interviewed Castro in November 1983 while working as managing editor for *The New York Times*. Castro told him that the U.S. had turned its back on him after the revolution, and that the Soviet Union offered support and subsidies.

“But he insisted that while he was taking advice from the Russians, that at no point were they in control of Cuba or determining what policy would be,” he said during an OPC video memoir interview.

Two OPC award winners received accolades for work involving coverage of Castro.



OPC President Thomas P. Whitney enjoys Castro’s story about his meeting with Herbert L. Matthews. Interpreter is to the left.



The dais included OPC officers and officials from the Cuban government. New York City police stand in the background.

Georgie Ann Geyer of the Chicago Daily News won the 1966 Ed Stout Award for reporting on Communist guerrillas in Guatemala and her “exclusive, wide-ranging” interviews with Castro that were “frank and often heated.”

Laura Bergquist of *Look* magazine won the 1967 Ed Stout Award for a series on Cuba that judges said included “penetrating impressions of Cuba playing host to a world gathering of revolutionaries, and her own face-to-face confrontation with Castro.”

Photos: Ann Meuer, May 1959 Bulletin

Meet the OPC Members: Q&A With Anita Snow

By Trish Anderton

Anita Snow is a veteran international journalist who specializes in the Americas. She currently is based in Mexico City as an editor on the AP regional desk for Latin America and the Caribbean. Previously, she was a UN correspondent for the AP and a 2010 Nieman fellow at Harvard University. She reopened the AP's Havana office in 1999 and went on to serve as bureau chief for a decade.

Hometown: Born in Norfolk, Virginia, but grew up mostly in Southern California.

Education: BA in Communications/Journalism from California State University, Fullerton; MA in Latin American and Caribbean Studies from New York University; MFA in Creative Nonfiction writing from Goucher College in Baltimore.

Languages: Native-level Spanish.

First job in journalism: Police reporter at *The Orange County Register* in Santa Ana, California.

Countries reported from: United States, Mexico, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Panama, Colombia, Peru, Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

When did you join the OPC? January 2000.

How did you first become interested in Latin America and the Caribbean? When I was working for *The Orange County Register*, I began covering the Mexican and Salvadoran immigrant communities in Southern California and I soon wanted to learn about the countries they had come from south of the border.

How do you feel about the ongoing changes in US relations with Cuba? I find the changes fascinating, and saw that Cuba was already starting to change when I visited the island on a work trip in early 2015. But truly big changes probably won't occur unless the US Congress votes to eliminate the longstanding embargo against the island.

Major challenge as a journalist: Reopening AP's Havana bureau after the new agency's nearly 30-year absence.

Best journalism advice received: "Just keep fighting." – Eloy O. Aguilar, the now late former AP bureau chief for Mexico and Central America, when I felt like giving up while trying to set up the Havana bureau.

When traveling, I like to always: Bring a swimsuit in



Adalberto Roque, courtesy of Anita Snow

Then-Cuban President Fidel Castro chats with Anita Snow in September 1999 after he appeared on state television to defend high jump champion Javier Sotomayor, who had tested positive for doping. Castro suggested that the athlete's urine sample had been tampered with.

case the hotel has a pool and some good walking shoes in case there's time to explore.

Hardest story I've done: Interviewing parents about their children who were killed in the 1994 Zapatista rebel uprising in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas.

Journalism heroes: Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein of *The Washington Post*, whose stories about the Watergate investigation inspired me to become a reporter.

Advice for journalists who want to work overseas: These days, you need to learn how to do everything: Write well, take photos and shoot video.

Favorite quote: "You own everything that happened to you. Tell your stories. If people wanted you to write warmly about them, they should have behaved better." – Anne Lamont.

Most over-the-top assignment: A story idea I came up with to spend a month living on a diet similar to the Cuban government food ration and writing about it.

Country I most want to return to: Peru for the food and culture, Cuba for the people.

Twitter handle: @asnowreports

Want to add to the OPC's collection of Q&As with members? Please contact patricia@opcofamerica.org.

New Books

CHINA

CHINA HAS BEGUN REVERS-
ing its one-child policy, announc-
ing in October that it will allow two
children per family. But it will take
more than one announce-
ment – and one genera-
tion – for the country to
recover from the damage
inflicted by the popula-
tion-control experiment,
Mei Fong argues in her
new book.

The campaign to
limit births, she writes
in *One Child: The Story
of China's Most Radical
Experiment* [Houghton Mifflin
Harcourt, January], “irrevocably
shaped the face of modern China
and set in motion a host of social and
economic problems that will endure
for decades.”

The campaign was the brainchild
of rocket scientists, Fong notes,
and not social scientists – many
of whom had lost

their resources and prestige during
the Cultural Revolution. Thus, it
took a mechanistic approach that
failed to consider the devastating
human impacts of forced abortion
and involuntary sterilization, and
the wider socioeconomic
distortions that would
ripple through the
population.

Fong, a former China
correspondent for *The
Wall Street Journal*
who is now a fellow at
New America, travels to
“bachelor villages” where
there are no women of
marrying age. She tracks
down a former family-

planning official who authorized
hundreds of forced late-term
abortions, and spends time with
families who lost their only children
in the devastating 2008 Sichuan
earthquake. She examines China's
troubled economic future as millions
prepare to retire on the
backs of a comparatively
tiny workforce.

“Fong's fine book is
a moving and at times
harrowing account of the
significance of decisions
taken by a small coterie of
men (no women) with too
much faith in science and
ideology, and too little in
humanity,” writes *The Guardian*,
while *The Washington Post* calls
it a “moving testimony to the
suffering and forbearance of its
victims.”

AFRICA

“NATURE CREATES
drought but only man
makes a famine,” writes OPC
member Alex Perry in the open-
ing words of *The Rift: A New Af-
rica Breaks Free* [Little, Brown
and Company, November
2015]. This haunting phrase is
the launching point for Perry's
exploration of just how a fam-
ine killed 260,000 people in
Somalia between 2010 and
2012 despite the best efforts

of humanitarian workers – and how, in
a broader sense, the West keeps “get-
ting Africa wrong.”

The reasons he identifies for the
catastrophe in Somalia are depressing-
ly familiar. First, the emergency food
distribution network failed to get food
to people who needed it, partly due to
security issues. In addition, the U.S.
blocked food distribution to South
Somalia because it was controlled
by an al Qaeda-allied guerilla group.
This stance was abetted by the So-
mali government and by the extrem-
ists themselves, who barred foreign
aid organizations from their territory.
The Obama administration eventually
relaxed its strictures, but too late to
change the course of the famine.

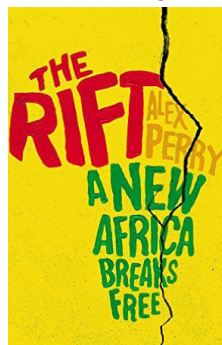
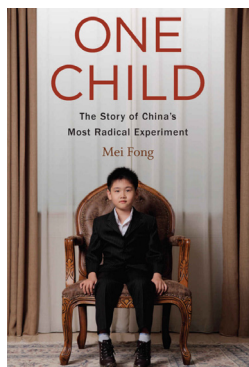
There are also larger failures un-
derlying African hunger, Perry says
– failures that illustrate how the West
discounts Africans' competence and
promotes their dependence. For ex-
ample, he argues that decades of for-
eign food aid in Ethiopia “killed the
market for Africa's com-
mercial farmers, who lost
any incentive to farm. No
farming then created more
hungry people the next year.
In that sense, food aid was
addictive.”

In *The Rift*, Perry draws
on nearly a decade of trav-
els around Africa to argue
that the world must come
to terms with a resurgent Africa – one
with healthy economic growth and
ideas that can transform the conti-
nent. Africa, he writes, must resist the
temptations of aid groups, extremists
and dictators in order to write its own
future. Kirkus Reviews calls the book
an “epic, rich, endlessly surprising
narrative of a fast-changing Africa by
one of the few Western journalists to
have spent enough time there to un-
derstand it.”

— **By Trish Anderton**

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER

Nicholas Phillips
Freelance
Active Overseas



Upcoming Events

Book Night:
The Lovers: Afghani-
stan's Romeo and Juliet
6:30 p.m., Jan. 27

Using Encryption to
Protect Yourself
and Your Sources
6:00 p.m., Feb. 2

OPC Lunch:
Remembering Castro
12:00 p.m., Feb. 3

Book Night: One Child
6:00 p.m., Feb. 9

Russia Hands Reunion
4:00 p.m., Feb. 24

OPC Foundation
Scholarship Luncheon
11:30 a.m., Feb. 26