

China Escalates Campaign Against Critical Voices

EVENT RECAP

By Chad Bouchard

Over the last few years, the Chinese government under President Xi Jinping has stepped up a campaign against press freedom and civil society, jailing activists and critical voices while intimidating domestic and foreign media. On Monday, May 18, the OPC hosted a panel to explore the outlook for the country's future and discuss how far the current crackdown might go.

Kathleen McLaughlin, who is head of the media freedoms committee for the Foreign Correspondents' Club of China (FCCC), and previously reported from China for *The Economist*, *The Guardian*, and BuzzFeed, said after increasing pressure and harassment, journalists working in China have lost hope for a more open government.

"Leading up to the (2008) Olympics in Beijing, we felt like there was this great momentum, that things might be headed in a good direction and that China was maybe becoming more tolerant of critical voices," she said. Restrictions on travel outside Beijing and Shanghai had been lifted, and journalists could report

without being tailed by government observers. "Around 2010 we saw the trend go decidedly in the other direction."

The FCCC surveyed its members last year and found that two-thirds of correspondents reported experiencing some kind of interference from the government while working in the field.

Sarah Cook, senior research analyst for East Asia at Freedom House, said China's crackdown is a sign of insecurity -- similar moves from authoritarian regimes around the world come from countries that are "facing a crisis of legitimacy," she said.

Freedom House published a report in January that concluded Xi has escalated repression and pressure on civil society groups over the last few years, and expanded beyond those who are directly involved in political advocacy to include more subtle kinds of dissent.

"A lot of these people being tar-



Clockwise from upper left: Sarah Cook, William J. Holstein, Jerome A. Cohen, Kathleen McLaughlin and Ying Zhu

geted now are people who had previously been on the safe side of the Communist Party's red lines," she said, adding that many more people are now being jailed instead of merely silenced. She warned that "growing quiet resentment" among Chinese citizens could lead to unstable conditions.

Ying Zhu, professor of media culture at the City University of New York, College of Staten Island, said Xi's campaign is aimed at an ideological return to the old Communist Party -- to restore the credibility of one-party rule and "to reclaim Chi-

(Continued on Page 3)

Inside. . .

Ben Taub Writes for <i>The New Yorker</i> ..2	
Annual Meeting Aug. 25th.....3	
Book Night: Burma Spring.....3	
Vietnam Correspondent Reunion ...4	
People Column.....5-7	
Press Freedom Update.....8-10	
Q&A: Rebecca Fannin.....11	
New Books.....12	

GOT A STORY FOR THE BULLETIN?

Join OPC members Edith Lederer and Ben Taub, whose stories are on pg. 2 and pg. 4, and get your byline in the OPC *Bulletin*. Do you have a war story to share with other members? Got something to say about trends or news related to the world of foreign correspondents or the news industry? Maybe you have heard juicy member news for the People column, or a tip about developments in press freedom. We're looking for articles, commentary, anecdotes, updates and dispatches from the field to share with your club colleagues. Please send your pitches and tips to patricia@opco-famerica.org.

Ben Taub Pens Major ISIS Story for The New Yorker

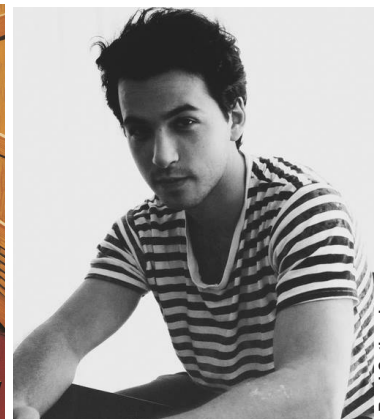
By Ben Taub

Ben Taub, a recent M.A. graduate of Columbia Journalism School, and one of the OPC's newest members, landed a story for the June 1st issue of The New Yorker. His piece, "Journey to Jihad," follows a radicalized teenager from Belgium to Syria and back. He won a 2015 Emanuel R. Freedman scholarship, and has a fellowship at the Reuters bureau in Jerusalem.

Last summer, I was living in Kilis, Turkey, a dusty town by the Syrian border, when two Belgian fathers showed up on an unusual quest. One of them, Dimitri Bontinck, was trying to help the other, Pol Van Hessche, plan a trip into parts of Syria controlled by ISIS, to search for Pol's runaway jihadi son.

Dimitri had previously undertaken a similar hunt. In early 2013, his own son, Jejoen, a teen-age Muslim convert, travelled to Syria to fight against Assad's army, expecting to "fall martyr within a short time." Desperate to retrieve him, Dimitri soon crossed into Syria as well, but was captured, beaten, and humiliated by Jejoen's comrades, and soon released with warnings to never return. After more than half a year without contact, Jejoen wrote a message to his father announcing his intention to go back to Belgium. Federal police arrested him within hours of arrival.

In Kilis, Dimitri told me that even if I travelled to Belgium, I could not speak with his son. Jejoen and his associates would soon be tried in court, for belonging to a terrorist organization, and the proceedings would only magnify Jejoen's usual reluctance to recount his time in Syria. Still, my chance encounter with Dimitri and Pol provoked



Brad Catteugh

Ben Taub in Kilis, Turkey in 2013.

a deep interest in the lives of parents whose children run away to join ISIS and al-Qaeda. Dimitri and I remained in touch, and, initially, I planned to write about the agony and isolation endured by European families facing similar situations to his own.

Then, in November, a source sent me a trove of documents that included transcriptions of wire-tapped phone calls between Belgian jihadis in Syria and their friends and families back home. I spent Thanksgiving weekend translating these documents from Dutch, quickly learning vocabulary words like *ongelovigen* (infidels) and *onthoofding* (beheading). During these calls, which were dated before ISIS formally existed, Belgian fighters illustrated their routine of kidnapping local civilians, selling them back to their families, and murdering the ones whose families could not pay. They also described jihadi

(Continued on Page 10)

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Pederson Portrays Plight of Suu Kyi in 'Burma Spring'

EVENT RECAP

By Chad Bouchard

Rena Pederson, author and former speechwriter for the U.S. State Department, began following Aung San Suu Kyi when she first heard the pro-democracy activist had received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. She visited Myanmar, also known as Burma, and tracked Suu Kyi's struggle from a distance for more than two decades. Finally in 2003, she sneaked past guards with the help of a diplomat to interview "The Lady," who was still under house arrest during the 15 out of 21 years from 1989 to 2010 that she served as a political prisoner.

The interview is featured in Pederson's biography of Suu Kyi, *The Burma Spring: Aung San Suu Kyi and the New Struggle for the Soul of a Nation*.

Pederson discussed her biography during a book night on June 10, the same day Suu Kyi made international headlines with an historic visit to China to meet President Xi Jinping.

Pederson said she found Suu Kyi to be an elegant and bright woman, who surprised her with "a charming sense of humor." Rena told Suu Kyi that she meant to keep the interview brief in case they might be interrupted by police, and had written just 20 questions on a sheet of paper, to which Suu Kyi chirped "20 Questions? It sounds like a quiz show."

A few months later, Suu Kyi was sneaking out of confinement on the way to talk to supporters when hired thugs attacked her convoy. Student "honor guard" defenders linked arms to protect her, and more than 200 people were beaten, Pederson said. "The military had guns, she had students." Suu Kyi was eventually detained and taken to prison. She was released to house arrest, but this time in complete isolation. Pederson was one of the last people to talk to Suu Kyi for seven years.

Rena shared with attendees a list of her "reasons you should care about Burma," including human rights abuses against Rohingya, Chin and other ethnic and religious minorities, opium farming and production, environmental threats and Burma's key role in China's global trade expansion.

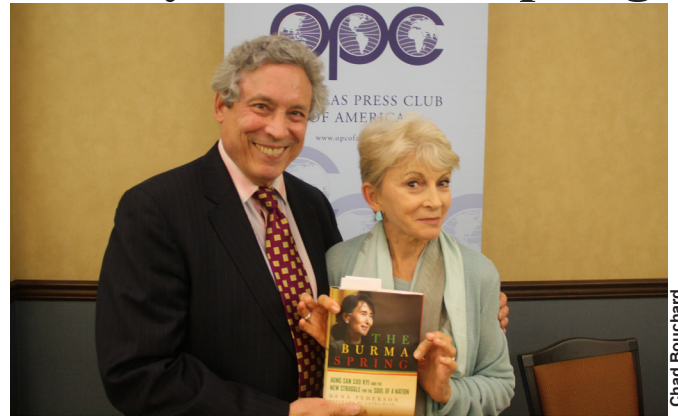
(Continued From Page 1)

na's glory, and push for a more assertive China on the global stage."

She said though perspectives from scholars and the elite may differ, most Chinese see him as a strong leader.

Jerome A. Cohen, professor at New York University School of Law and co-director of its U.S.-Asia Law Institute, said there are people within China who are working on reforms and strengthening the rule of law, but there are gaps between policy and how provincial police and judges implement those laws.

"Although it is desirable to improve these pieces of paper we call laws and regulations, China in some re-



Allan Dodds Frank and Rena Pederson

Chad Bouchard

In 2008 the two countries agreed to build an oil and gas pipeline to connect Kunming in China's southern Yunnan province with the Indian Ocean. A \$20 billion rail project along the same route was suspended last year.

Elections are slated for October or early November this year. Due to provisions in the country's constitution, Suu Kyi is barred from running as a candidate because she was married to a foreigner, Michael Aris, the Cuban-born grandson of a Canadian ambassador, who died in 1999.

"Suu Kyi will be walking a tightrope," Pederson said of her visit to China. Myanmar is caught in a "game of

OPC ANNUAL MEETING AUGUST 25th

Please keep an eye out for emails and updates about the upcoming OPC Board of Governors election. This year members will elect 12 Active board members and two Associates. Next month's Bulletin will feature bios and messages from candidates.

Votes must be entered by Monday, Aug. 24. The annual meeting, open to all members, will be held on Aug. 25 at 6:00 p.m. at Club Quarters, when election results will be announced.

To cast your vote, you will receive an email from the OPC with a link to Balloteer, our online voting service, or you can call the office for a paper ballot at 212-626-9220.

spects is a lawless place," he said.

William J. Holstein, OPC Foundation president and former China correspondent who moderated the panel, asked the panelists what might stop Xi from descending into a purge in the style of Mao Zedong or Joseph Stalin.

Cohen answered that Xi is more sophisticated and intelligent than Mao, and not as arbitrary or changeable. Xi has taken a lot of risks in his campaign against corruption, he said, which continues to net more and more influential people. "He's a high roller. He's a gambler," Cohen said. "It could be that in two more years he will have inspired enough reaction that he might not get a second term."

Journalists Reunite in Old Saigon for 40th Anniversary Reunion

By Edith Lederer

An aging but exuberant group of correspondents who covered the Vietnam War gathered in old Saigon on the 40th anniversary of the war's end on April 30 – but this reunion was different than the four previous ones, because for the first time the Vietnamese government officially recognized our presence.

On the 20th, 25th and 30th anniversaries of the fall of Saigon, up to 100 former reporters, photographers and TV crew members would meet for drinks and dinner in some of our old haunts, and some new ones, with the government keeping its distance and police intervening on at least one occasion.

But on the last day of the reunion on the 35th anniversary in 2010, a ministry official showed up and invited those of us who were staying the following night to what turned out to be a fascinating dinner with members of the media who covered the other side of the war for the communist North Vietnamese and Viet Cong.

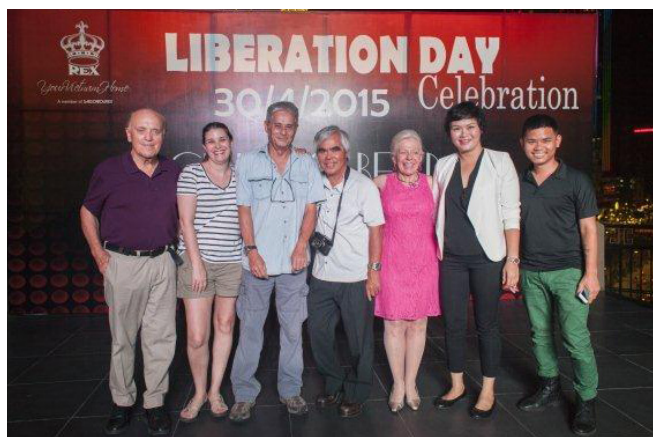
That apparently broke the ice because this year, with perseverance from former AP reporter-photographer Carl Robinson who runs the “Old Hacks” network that keeps the ex-war correspondents in touch with each other, the Foreign Ministry invited all of us back. And not only did they invite us for a week, but they paid for hotel rooms and in some cases for flights. Many colleagues accepted the offer. A few like me, who are still working or didn't want to be beholden to the event-filled itinerary the ministry organized, did not.

At this reunion, about 30 of us showed up, a dwindling number reflecting the loss of so many of our colleagues. There were many toasts to “absent friends” who passed away during the last five years, including my Pulitzer Prize-winning AP colleague Horst Faas who organized the first two reunions with me.

But there were also many fun-filled moments and some gasps in seeing the changes to old Saigon, which is now Ho Chi Minh City, including a 52-story skyscraper with a helipad on top and a restaurant one floor below. It has fabulous views of the city and the “other side” of the Saigon River which was once infested with Viet Cong fighters and is now a suburban business and residential area with modern buildings.

The government remains staunchly communist with tight controls on any signs of political dissent and freedoms of the press and assembly. But it wanted to show off the new Vietnam, including industrial plants and an agricultural research center where scientists are developing new strains of fruits, vegetables and flowers.

It was on the way to the Cu Chi tunnels, an extensive underground network which Viet Cong guerrillas used to supply their fighters and to seek refuge from American bombers. When I first went to the tunnels in 1995 I remember crawling in pitch darkness through the sec-



Peter Arnett, far left, Nick Ut (center, with camera) and Edith Lederer (in dress) stand before a “Liberation Day” sign on the roof of the Rex Hotel with four current AP staff members.

ond level, grabbing the hand of a colleague in front of me because it was too claustrophobic. Today, there are widened stairs to the entrance, and a short widened tunnel with light that tourists can crouch walking through to give them a tiny taste of what the Viet Cong supporters experienced.

Our 37-year-old guide, born three years after the war ended, was accompanied by a veteran fighter who lost an arm and an eye during the war. Nguyen Van Chia told us: “In wartime we were enemies. Now we're friends. If you remain enemies, you never sleep well.”

The Foreign Ministry also organized tours to the city's War Remnants' Museum – which includes the Requiem photo exhibition curated by Faas and British photojournalist Tim Page which honors photographers who lost their lives during both the French and American wars – as well as local universities and the mammoth parade in the cooler early morning hours of April 30 that commemorates what the government views as “the liberation of Vietnam.”

A Vietnamese friend arranged for a group of us to visit the roof of the building where the late UPI photographer Hugh Van Es took the iconic photo of Vietnamese and Americans scrambling up a ladder to get on a helicopter as Saigon was falling in April 1975. We clambered up a ladder to the old helicopter landing site and took photos of ourselves and the city.

A small group of us went on to Hanoi where we were feted at a lunch with Vietnam's deputy foreign minister and dinners hosted by the Swedish and New Zealand ambassadors. We also got to visit the home of Vietnam's legendary war hero General Vo Nguyen Giap, who led the poor Southeast Asian nation to victory over the French and then the Americans, and spend an hour in fascinating conversation with his youngest son.

Everywhere, Page and AP Pulitzer-prize winning

(Continued on Page 10)

PEOPLE... By Trish Anderton

OPC SCHOLARS

2014 Flint winner **John Ismay** got a front-page byline on a major investigative story in the June 7 *New York Times*, along with Mark Mazzetti, Nicholas Kulish, Christopher Drew, Serge F. Kovaleski and Sean D. Naylor. The piece takes an in-depth look at Seal Team 6, the Navy unit best known for killing Osama bin Laden and, as the story argues, “one of the nation’s most mythologized, most secretive and least scrutinized military organizations.” The *Times* pulled together “dozens of interviews” and government documents to build a case that the unit has become “a global manhunting machine with limited outside oversight.”

This has been an exceptional award season for 2006 Schweisberg winner **Gregory Johnsen**. Along with his BuzzFeed News colleagues, he won the Everett McKinley Dirksen Award for Distinguished Coverage of Congress from the National Press Foundation for the story titled “60 Words and A War Without End.” Johnsen also won a Peabody Award for his collaboration with Radiolab on the same topic: the broad, malleable wording of the Authorization of Use of Military Force Act, approved by near-unanimous Congressional vote shortly after the 9/11 attacks, and how its interpretation has expanded military power and secrecy.

Accolades continue for 2009 I.F. Stone scholar **Jonathan Jones** and his colleagues at ProPublica, PBS Frontline and Rain Media, for “Firestone and the Warlord.” Besides Rain Media’s Marcella Gavrira getting a citation for the OPC’s Edward R. Murrow award this year,

the team took first place in the 2014 Investigative Reporters and Editors award in the Large Multiplatform category, won an RFK Journalism



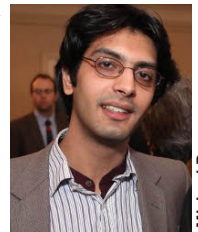
Jonathan Jones, left, with John R. “Rick” MacArthur at the OPC Foundation Luncheon in 2009.

Award and were named a finalist in the International Category for a 2015 Gerard Loeb Award. The story examines how Firestone managed to continue operating during the brutal Liberian civil war. The team used diplomatic cables, court documents and accounts from Americans who ran a rubber plantation as Liberia descended into chaos. This was the topic of Jones’s winning essay in 2009. The Loeb Award winners will be announced June 23 at its banquet at Capitale in New York City.

In the same month that 2015 Freedman winner **Ben Taub** graduated from Columbia School of Journalism, his thesis on the journey from Belgium to Syria and back for a teenage jihadi ran as a cover story in *The New Yorker*. Ben began his research two years earlier partially funded by a stipend he received as a candidate on *The Voice*. He joined the OPC even before becoming fellow, having been recruited by OPC Governor Rukmini Callimachi, who won two OPC awards last year. He has an OPC Foundation fellowship in the Reuters bureau in Jerusalem. See page 2 to read Taub’s thoughts and background about his work on

the *New Yorker* story.

Nizar Manek, 2012 I.F. Stone winner, has published his exhaustive investigation of corruption in the Egyptian government in *Africa Confidential*. His story, co-bylined by Jeremy Hodge, tracks billions of dollars stashed in unaudited government accounts.



Manek

WINNERS

OPC member **Rebecca Blumstein**, deputy editor-in-chief at *The Wall Street Journal*, will receive the 2015 Lawrence Minard Editor Award, named in memory of Laury Minard, founding editor of *Forbes Global* and a former final judge for the Loeb Awards. This award honors excellence in business, financial and economic journalism editing, and recognizes an editor whose work does not receive a byline or whose face does not appear on-air for the work covered.

OPC Second Vice President **Abigail Pesta**, a freelance journalist, has won a New York Press Club Journalism Award in the Feature Reporting category. Pesta’s story “Who Are You Calling a Bully?” probed the suicide of 12-year old Rebecca Sedwick in Lakeland, Florida and the subsequent prosecution of Katelyn Roman and Guadalupe Shaw for allegedly harassing her. The story, which ran in *Cosmopolitan* magazine, won a National Headliner Award earlier this year.

OPC Board member **Rukmini Callimachi** of *The New York Times* has won a Deadline Club Award from the New York City chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. Callimachi’s story “Underwriting Jihad” won the Daniel Pearl

(Continued on Page 6)



Journalist Jara Badra speaks in front of an image of her imprisoned husband, Mazen Darwish, during a UNESCO ceremony in which he received the Guillermo Cano Press Freedom Prize.

Award for Investigative Reporting. The story revealed how Europe funds Islamist terror organizations by paying ransoms for its kidnapped citizens, sometimes under the guise of development aid.

Syrian journalist **Mazen Darwish**, who has been imprisoned since 2012, has won UNESCO's Guillermo Cano Press Freedom Prize. Darwish co-founded *syriaview.net*, an independent news site banned by the government in 2006. He has also served as president of the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression. In a press release, UNESCO cited "the work that he has carried out in Syria for more than 10 years at great personal sacrifice, enduring a travel ban, harassment, as well as repeated detention and torture."

Sheri Fink, a member of the *New York Times* team that won the 2014 Hal Boyle award for its Ebola coverage, has won a PEN Literary Award for her book about Hurricane Katrina. *Five Days at Memorial* recounts the critical decisions made at a New Orleans hospital during and after



Fink

the storm. It has won several other prizes, including the National Book Critics Circle Award.

Sergei Loiko and **Carol Williams** of the *Los Angeles Times*, who won the 2014 Bob Considine Award for their coverage of the conflict in Ukraine, have won the Los Angeles Times Editorial Award for Beat Reporting. The *Times* said their reportage "takes guts, game – and a career's worth of



Loiko and Williams

knowledge of the region."

Don Bartletti, part of the *Los Angeles Times* team that won this year's Robert Spiers Benjamin award, walked away with the Los Angeles Times Publisher's prize. The *Times* said the story he co-reported on the lives of Mexican farm laborers "makes readers confront what they might prefer to ignore."

Matthieu Aikins, who won the 2014 Ed Cunningham Award along with Sebastiano Tomada, has also been

honored with the Livingston Award for international reporting. The Livingston Awards are given to outstanding journalists under the age of 35. They are sponsored by the University of Michigan and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Judges on the Livingston panel include OPC members Dean Baquet and Christiane Amanpour.

UPDATES

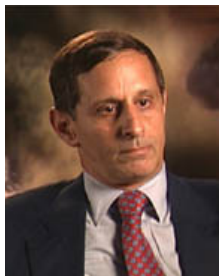
Politico has posted a wonderful tribute to the campaign photography skills of longtime OPC member **David Hume Kennerly**. "I Want to Be With the Circus" – the title is Kennerly's own expression of his hunger to get behind the scenes – showcases his work over countless elections, from Senator Robert Kennedy flashing the victory sign shortly before being assassinated in Los Angeles, to Barack and Michelle Obama sharing a rare intimate moment on the night of his inauguration. Kennerly's comments on each photo add fascinating insights into both the images and the candidates they capture.

Simon Kilmurry, co-winner of the OPC's 2014 Edward R. Murrow Award along with Rachel Boynton, has been appointed Executive Director of the International Documentary Association. Kilmurry previously served as Executive Producer of *POV*, the PBS documentary series.

OPC Award-winning photographers **Marcus Bleasdale** and **Marcus Bleasdale** will travel to seven countries this year to help raise awareness of retinopathy of prematurity, a preventable form of blindness that affects premature babies. The photographers will visit Australia, Fiji, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan and Uganda to document the devastating impact of avoidable blindness. An exhibition of their photographs, *Time to See*, will be sent around the world starting in late 2015. The effort is sponsored by The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust and

partner Standard Chartered.

OPC member **Roy Gutman** is the first Western journalist to land an interview with Syrian rebel leader Zahran Alloush. Gutman, working with colleague Mousab Alhamadee, sat down with the Army of Islam commander in Istanbul. He reported that Alloush, who has previously denounced democracy as a corrupt system, struck a far more moderate tone, saying “If we succeed in toppling the regime, we will leave it to the Syrian people to choose the form of state they want.”



Gutman

NEW ORLEANS: OPC member **Dean Baquet** delivered the commencement address at his alma mater, St. Augustine High School in New Orleans. “The goal is not to just tell somebody’s story,” he advised journalism students at the school in a pre-graduation chat. “It’s to come as close to telling the truth as you can.” The son of a New Orleans restaurateur, Baquet started his journalism career at the *Times-Picayune* after attending Columbia University.

NEW YORK: **John Corporon**, OPC president from 1996 to 1998, who is credited with dramatically improving the club’s finances, reports from the heart of Park Slope, Brooklyn, that at age 86, he is feeling better every day. He has had five surgeries within the past year. “But none of the ailments were life-threatening and a current kidney stone attack is under control,” he reports.



Corporon

OPC Foundation board member **Jim Gaines** has been hired to lead content operations at *The Atlantic’s* branded-content division, Atlantic Re:think. Gaines, a former top ex-

ecutive and editor at Time Inc. who was managing editor of *Time*, *Life* and *People* magazines, has more recently worked as a top editor at Reuters.



Gaines

BOSTON: OPC member **Charles Sennott** was featured on the Memorial Day edition of PBS NewsHour, along with coverage from the organization he founded, the GroundTruth Project. Sennott was talking about Foreverstan, GroundTruth’s project on the war in Afghanistan.

JAFFA, ISRAEL: **Lea Bouchoucha**, who joined the OPC in 2014 while a journalism student at NYU, started a job as an editor at I24 News, an international news channel that broadcasts in French, English and Arabic, in early June. The newsroom is in Jaffa, Israel. Lea, who was born in France, works for I24’s French service.

PEOPLE REMEMBERED

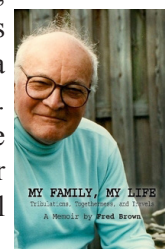
Leonard Saffir, who served as OPC president from 1988 to 1990, died Jan. 3 in Lake Worth, Fla. at age 84. Saffir was a foreign correspondent and columnist who founded four newspapers and wrote three books. He reported from New York, Dallas and Tokyo for the International News Service. Saffir was a public relations consultant for Ferdinand Marcos, and developed a strategy that helped Marcos get elected president of the Philippines in 1965. Saffir became disillusioned with the president long before details about Marcos’s graft came to light. In 1988 he wrote an op-ed piece in *The New York Times* titled “Imelda and Freddie Really Took Me In.” Saffir won accolades from the Sigma Delta Chi Professional Journalistic Society for distinguished journalistic achievement, and received multiple awards



Saffir

from the New York Press Association and the Public Relations Society of America. He authored *Power Public Relations*, *How to Get PR to Work for You*, *Power Public Relations: How to Master the New PR*, and *PR on a Budget*.

Former foreign correspondent **Fred Brown** died peacefully in his sleep on March 31 in Jamestown, NY. Brown’s first overseas reporting assignment was with the Far East Network, covering Tokyo. He spent the rest of his career with the Voice of America, working in locations ranging from Nigeria to India to Lebanon. In Lagos, Nigeria, he covered the civil war and the unconditional surrender of Biafra, which he described as his first and biggest scoop in his 2013 memoir, *My Family, My Life*. “A happy man who loved his work, Fred possessed a sharp mind and a keen sense of humor – laughing particularly hard at his own jokes. He is fondly remembered by friends around the world,” reads his obituary in the *Jamestown Post-Journal*.



Brown

Malawian journalist and press freedom activist **Raphael Tenthani**, 43, was killed in a car accident outside Blantyre on May 16. Tenthani was a contributor to the Associated Press and BBC. His weekly “Muckraking” column tackled controversial issues. He won several awards, including the United Nations Media award in 2010. Tenthani was once arrested for reporting that then-President Bingu wa Mutharika had moved out of his official residence because he feared it was haunted. “He was fearless in the pursuit of truth and any cause in which he believed,” wrote fellow columnist Thom Chiumia. “He was everything a great journalist should be.”

PRESS FREEDOM UPDATE...

The U.N. Security Council has expressed alarm about the threats to journalists across the globe and is calling on member states to create a safe environment for media. The council unanimously adopted a resolution on May 27 stating that journalists are civilians protected by both international human rights laws and the Geneva Conventions. “[W]e must condemn the governments and non-State actors that attack journalists, as well as the overly restrictive laws and regulations that under-



U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Samantha Power gave the keynote speech at the OPC Annual Awards Dinner last year.

mine their freedom,” U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Samantha Power told the council. “It is much easier to prevent these spaces from closing than it is to fight to reopen them.” Power highlighted the plight of **Mazen Darwish**, the head of the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression, who has been jailed for more than three years. She also discussed the case of Azerbaijani journalist Khadija Ismayilova, who has been jailed since December 2014. Ismayilova has reported extensively on corruption.

The brother of imprisoned *Washington Post* reporter **Jason Rezaian** spoke to a congressional committee

on June 1 about Rezaian’s plight. “It is time for Jason to come home,” Ali Rezaian told the House Foreign Affairs Committee, according to the Poynter Institute. Jason Rezaian has been held for over 300 days in Iran on espionage charges. He is currently being tried in a closed court; even his mother has been denied entrance to his trial. Ali told the committee his brother has suffered from high blood pressure and multiple infections during his incarceration, and has lost 40 pounds.

Press freedom groups are also voicing concerns about imprisoned Syrian journalist **Mazen Darwish** and two colleagues, saying the three have not been seen since early May. The International Press Institute says local human rights defenders have been unable to visit Darwish, Husain Ghreer and Hani Zaitani in recent weeks. The three were arrested in 2012 without charges, and charged in 2014 with “publicizing terrorist acts.” In a statement, IPI Executive Director Barbara Trionfi called on the Syrian government to account for the whereabouts of the three prisoners. “We further repeat our call on the Syrian government to release and drop all charges against Mr. Darwish and his colleagues, whose basic human rights have been grossly abrogated,” she added. “This case is an extraordinary mockery of justice occurring directly in front of the world’s eyes.”

A BBC crew was arrested and jailed on May 2 for reporting on conditions for migrant workers constructing facilities for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. BBC Middle East business correspondent **Mark Lobel** wrote that eight white cars suddenly surrounded his vehicle on a quiet stretch of road in Doha and forced it to pull over. He, a translator, a driver and a cameraman were on their way to interview workers. The trip was apparently not part of

their official PR tour. “A dozen security officers frisked us in the street, shouting at us when we tried to talk,” Lobel recounted. “They took away our equipment and hard drives and drove us to their headquarters,” where each member of the group faced “hostile” questioning. The group was released after spending two nights in jail. Several journalism organizations, including the International Federation of Journalists, the National Union of Journalists, the International Press Institute, and the BBC protested the arrests and urged the Qatari government to commit to freedom of movement for journalists working in the country.

Two journalists working in Colombia have admitted to fabricating recent threats against them – a move that could distract from the very real threats against members of the media there, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. In January, Colombian news photographer **Johanny Vargas Yandapiz** claimed he had been kidnapped and held for about 36 hours in the southern city of Popayán before he managed to escape. He later admitted he had invented the story. In an unrelated incident, reporter **Yesid Toro Meléndez** revealed in April that he had written a bogus e-mail pamphlet that appeared to be a death threat against eight journalists by drug trafficking group Los Urabeños. “These are deplorable acts,” Pedro Vaca, director of the Bogotá-based Foundation for Press Freedom told CPJ. “They create widespread anxiety among the media and may cause people to question the credibility of journalists.”

Journalism groups have joined human rights organizations and high-tech companies to call on President Barack Obama to commit to strong electronic encryption standards. Nearly 150 organizations

and individuals signed the letter asking Obama to commit to secure encryption “to promote and protect cybersecurity, economic growth, and human rights, both here and abroad.” According to the letter, some administration officials have publicly suggested that American companies should weaken their encryption standards in order to allow the U.S. government access to private communications.

The Turkish government is drawing fire for its proposal to ban certain TV news outlets from the state satellite system. On May 18 the Ankara prosecutor’s office asked government-owned TÜRKSAT to bar news organizations such as Samanyolu TV and Bugün TV, which have been critical of the current administration. “If the prohibition goes ahead, it would deal a devastating blow to media freedom and diversity in Turkey,” wrote Reporters Without Borders, adding that “the authorities have stopped at nothing to prevent journalists from working.”

Mexican independent journalist **Pedro Celestino Canché Herrera** has been released after spending nine months in jail on charges of sabotage. Canché Herrera had been



Canché Herrera

accused of directing protesters to block access to the Quintana Roo state water and sewage commission Felipe Carrillo Puerto municipality, according to La Prensa. Last February a judge found that he had been denied the right to due process and that there was no evidence he had been present at the protest that day. Canché Herrera’s lawyer told the Committee to Protect Journalists

that a local court had declared him innocent of the charges and ordered his release.

Moscow lawmakers have approved plans for a monument to journalists killed in the line of duty. The memorial will be funded by the Moscow Union of Journalists and will stand outside the Central House of Journalists near Arbatskaya Ploshchad, the *Moscow Times* reported. The city already has a monument to members of the media who perished in World War II; the new edifice would honor those “who died relatively recently – in Afghanistan and Chechnya and Ukraine,” said Yevgeny Gerasimov, head of the Moscow City Duma’s commission on culture and mass communication. He specifically mentioned several journalists whose deaths are suspected of being politically motivated, such as Vladislav Listyev, Artyom Borovik and Anna Politkovskaya.



Mourners attend a memorial for Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya in Washington, DC in 2006. Politkovskaya, who wrote about human rights abuses in Chechnya, was shot and killed in the elevator of her Moscow apartment on Oct. 7, 2006.

MURDERS

- Brazilian investigative journalist **Evany Jose Metzker** was found decapitated on May 18 near Padre Paraíso in the south-eastern state of Minas Gerais. Colleagues said the independent reporter had been probing allegations of drug trafficking and child abuse. “There is a climate of terror in the region that intimidates reporters from doing their job,” the president of the Minas Gerais journalists’ union, Kerison Lopes, told the BBC. The union is demanding a rigorous investigation into Metzker’s death.

- Less than a week after Metzker’s death was announced, a second journalist was found slain in north-eastern Brazil. **Djalma Santos da Conceição** hosted a community radio program in Conceição da Feira. He was at a party in a small bar there when gunmen burst in and dragged him away, according to the Guardian. His body was found the next morning in the nearby small town of Timbó. Santos da Conceição’s show was known for its criticism of corruption, Everaldo Monteiro, coordinator of the Bahia State Union of Radio, TV and Publicity Workers, told the Committee to Protect Journalists. “It was sensationalist and when you do that you damage egos and get to people,” said Monteiro. “The brutal murders of two Brazilian journalists in less than a week represents a troubling escalation of anti-press violence in Brazil, already one of the most dangerous countries in the world to be a journalist,” said Sara Rafsky, CPJ Americas program research associate.

- South Sudanese journalist **Pow James Reath** and a friend were killed by gunmen while walking in the Akobo area. Reath was a correspondent for the independent station Radio Tamazuj. According to the *Daily Star* of Lebanon, the two men were caught in a crossfire between rival groups. The Sudan Tri-

(Continued on Page 10)

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bune said the murders were believed to be “inter-clan revenge killings.” “We condemn the senseless killing of Pow James Raeth, somebody who was working for peace and for educating and informing the public,” Radio Tamazuj said in a statement.

- The statute of limitations has expired in the case against Sergei Dorovskoi, former deputy governor of the Lipetsk region of Russia, who was accused of masterminding a fatal attack on journalist **Igor Domnikov**. A reporter and editor for the independent newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, Domnikov died in on July 16, 2000, two months after he was

beaten with a hammer outside his apartment. Investigators alleged that Dorovskoi convinced a friend to orchestrate the attack after Domnikov criticized the politician in print. Dorovskoi continues to deny any involvement in the murder.

- Reporter **Mohamed Shamsan** was killed on April 20 in an air strike that claimed at least 25 lives in Sana, Yemen. The blast killed and injured employees of the satellite TV station Yemen Today, whose headquarters are nearby. Local residents speculated that a bomb had struck a munitions depot, touching off a fireball that could be seen for miles around, according to *The New York Times*. A coalition led by Saudi Arabia has

been bombing the capital in an effort to beat back Houthi rebels and restore the exiled Yemeni government.

- The bodies of two abducted journalists were found in the rubble left by an airstrike in Dhamar, Yemen, on May 21. **Youssef al-Ayzari** was a reporter for the satellite TV news network Suhail TV, while **Abdullah Qabil** reported for the satellite TV news networks Belqees TV and Yemen Youth TV. The two had been kidnapped the day before by alleged Houthi militiamen. Saudi Arabia, which is leading a coalition carrying out airstrikes in the war-torn nation, has faced criticism over civilian casualties; it in turn has accused Houthi rebels of using human shields.

(Ben Taub, Continued From Page 2)

training camps and details about their shadowy leader, a Syrian named Amr al-Absi, who the State Department said was later “in charge of kidnappings” for ISIS. With these documents in hand, and a trip to Belgium in the works, *The New Yorker* showed interest and the focus of my article began to shift away from the parents.

Dimitri’s son, Jejoen, had willingly joined Absi’s group, but his comrades quickly turned on him. A few days after he returned to Belgium, a medical examiner found evidence of torture all over his body, and Jejoen began to cooperate with the police. In the ensuing months, he underwent over two-hundred hours of interrogation by security services from several western governments. His account offered extraordinary detail into the radicalization process, as well as the foundations of the ISIS hostage crisis.

I met Jejoen several times this winter, and back then,

I had not seen transcripts of his police interrogations. He was always kind, patient, and sincere with me, and agreed to be profiled, but I was surprised by his continued adherence to extremist beliefs. He also refused to tell me much about his time in Syria. But even if he had been more forthcoming, checking some of his claims without access to the police file would have been impossible. His official testimony, which I finally obtained in March, had been used as evidence in Belgium’s largest ever terrorism trial, and the Belgian authorities rigorously checked it against wire-tapped communications, interrogations with other returned jihadis, and intelligence gathered by other countries. A Belgian security official told me that out of everything Jejoen told them, “We haven’t found one element that is not correct.” Jejoen’s account was valuable in its own right, but placing his experience within the larger mechanisms around him required sifting through a lot of other documents in the police investigation, which totals forty-thousand pages.

(Edith Lederer, Continued From Page 4)

photographer Nick Ut, who took the famous photograph of Phan Thi Kim Phuc running naked from a napalm attack, were trailed by the local media. AP’s Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Peter Arnett, Newsweek’s Tony Clifton, Robinson and other old timers were also pursued by the new media.

As Robinson said, “These are the new hacks for the old hacks!”

Arnett said his “coming of age as a journalist” was in Vietnam – as it was for many correspondents who covered the war. “We were all in our 20s,” he said. “It lasted a decade.”

Arnett said getting to know those who fought and reported the war from the communist side “reflects the improved relations with the U.S. and the West.”

“I’ve attended every reunion since the fall of Saigon and I feel more welcome this time,” he said. “Vietnam is making up for 30 years of war and is fast becoming a Southeast Asian economic tiger.”

Former Reuters bureau chief Jimmy Pringle lamented that the North Vietnamese victors still can’t reconcile with the South Vietnamese they defeated.

He said the Foreign Ministry’s

friendliness to the correspondents who covered the war from the south “stems, I think, from a fear of China and the threats it is making of military action in the South China Sea.”

“One official of the Press Department said we journalists had helped in winning the war, and were valued friends!” Pringle said. “I wouldn’t go as far as that, but they were friendlier than before. Kind of late in the day though.”

“By the time the 50th celebrations come along attrition will be appreciably noticeable among us...It is, after all, the way of the world,” he said.

Meet the OPC Members: Q&A With Rebecca Fannin

By Trish Anderton

Rebecca A. Fannin is the author of *Silicon Dragon* (McGraw-Hill, 2008) and *Startup Asia* (Wiley, 2011), and a contributor to *Forbes*, where she writes a widely read weekly column. Since 1992, she has been reporting on innovation, technology and emerging economies. A former international editor at *Red Herring*, *International Business*, and the *Asian Venture Capital Journal* in Hong Kong, Fannin also has written for *Inc.*, *Worth*, *Fast Company*, *AdAge*, *Chief Executive*, *The Deal*, *The Huffington Post*, and *Harvard Business Review*. Her news and events group formed in 2010, Silicon Dragon Ventures, www.silicondragonventures.com, publishes e-newsletters and research for venture capitalists, entrepreneurs and investors, and develops sponsored conferences in tech hotspots in Asia, Europe and the U.S.

Hometown: Lancaster, Ohio.

Education: BSJ, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.

Languages: English, Spanish, a little Mandarin.

First job in journalism: copy editor, Dayton Journal Herald.

Countries reported from: China, India, Vietnam, Taiwan, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Mexico, U.S., U.K.

Year you joined the OPC: 2003.

What drew you to business reporting? The opportunity to make a difference by profiling business leaders and innovators in places not frequently covered.

What's the most important thing entrepreneurs need to know about doing business in Asia? You need to have an on-the-ground presence, understand the local culture and adapt your business for the market. Don't go it alone.

What inspired you to become an entrepreneur yourself? Interviewing the first wave of Internet entrepreneurs in China and India and hearing the obstacles they had to overcome to break through. Their courage, passion and success encouraged me to go out on my own.

Major challenge as a journalist: Never enough time!

Best journalism advice received: Tell the story in an engaging way with details that make it come alive.

Worst experience as a journalist: Having multiple editors on one feature article (thing of the past?) isn't a great experience.

When traveling, you like to ... explore neighborhoods off the beaten track to get a feel of the lifestyle.

Hardest story: Nabbing an interview way back in 2006 with Alibaba leader Jack Ma in his hometown of Hang-



Jack Ma and Rebecca Fannin

zhou, and getting him to speak candidly about his influences. The interview came through the day before I was scheduled to leave Shanghai for the U.S. and I had to scurry to make plans to get to Hangzhou and back in time for my flight.

Journalism heroes: James Fallows for his reporting about China issues and lifestyle from China.

Advice for journalists who want to work overseas: Make sure you are an independent-minded self-starter who likes to pioneer.

Dream job: I have it for the most part -- media entrepreneur with my own news and events brand. It would be great to work within a major business publishing company to leverage resources and scale up the Silicon Dragon brand more quickly.

Favorite quote: Jack Ma, Alibaba: "When I am myself, I am happy and have a good result."

Place you're most eager to visit: Israel because it's one of the world's leading tech innovation hotspots. I'm set to go this year.

Most over-the-top assignment: Interviewing 12 CEOs of China's major outsourcing companies within one week, from Beijing to Shanghai to Hangzhou, and writing on tight deadline an overview article about China's rise in this sector to compete with India.

Most common mistake I've seen: Name misspellings (it's so simple but still trips up many).

Country you most want to return to: China (though I've been to Mainland China more than 50 times). To stay current with China's fast pace of developments, particularly in tech innovation and entrepreneurship, you have to be there regularly.

Twitter handles: @rfannin @silicondragon

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

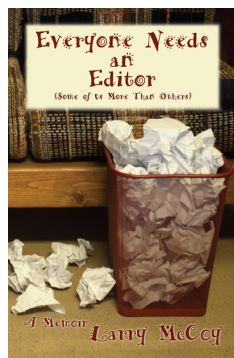
New Books

MEMOIR

IN HIS NEW MEMOIR, *Everyone Needs an Editor (Some of Us More Than Others)* [Sunstone Press, December 2014], veteran journalist Larry McCoy pokes fun at modern journalistic realities ranging from broadcasters who talk down to their audience to reporters who make up stories. He also tackles the American obsession with British royals, and seemingly everyone's need to tweet constantly.

After 45 years as a writer editor, and producer at UPI, ABC, CBS and Radio Free Europe, McCoy has plenty of stories to tell. But the chapter that will be of most interest to OPC members covers his experiences dealing with overseas stringers as news director at CBS Radio in the 1980s and '90s.

"Usually a stringer had no company benefits, no one nearby to help with technical problems, and in many countries it could take an hour or more to get a phone call through to the New York desk where the chances were high you would be told the line was bad and could you call back," he recalls.



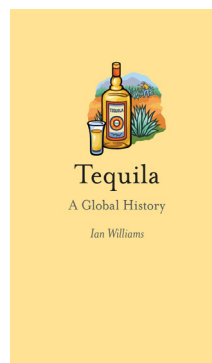
"When a second call did get through, the chances could be even higher that the desk wasn't all that hot about the story you pitched earlier because something newer and better had come along."

McCoy reminisces about numerous reporters he worked with, including Kimberly Dozier, Robert Berger, Maggy Sterner, Elaine Cobbe, Terry Phillips, Katherine Arms and Jesse Schulman. He recounts one incident in which OPC member Scott Wallace, who was then freelancing in El Salvador, filed a story saying rebel forces had surrounded a hotel in San Salvador. A CBS correspondent had reported that the rebels had surrendered. The producers decided to go with both stories, explaining that there were conflicting reports.

A CBS executive complained that a stringer shouldn't contradict a correspondent, McCoy recalls. But Wallace had gotten the story right.

Considering the low pay, long hours and obvious risks, why would anyone be a freelance foreign cor-

respondent? "Because they cared about what was going on in the world, were curious and courageous and thrived on the exhilaration that came from facing deadline after deadline," McCoy writes. Those are sentiments many OPC members will understand.



NATURAL HISTORY

UNTIL RECENTLY, tequila was the stuff of neon-colored drinks, late-night shots and pounding headaches. Only over the

last two or three decades has it graduated to the status of serious liquor, with batches barrel-aged for years and specialty bars offering hundreds of elite bottles to choose from.

Ian Williams charts the drink's evolution in his new book, *Tequila: A Global History* [Reaktion Books, May]. Williams is a UN correspondent for The Nation and regular contributor on programs such as Hardball, The O'Reilly Factor, and Scarborough Country; he has written several other books, including *Rum: A Social and Sociable History of the Real Spirit of 1776*.

In *Tequila*, he explains how the origins of the liquor and how it became distinct from another agave-based drink, mescal. He looks at the painfully slow process of growing agave, which can take seven years or more to mature. He explains why tequila can only be made in Mexico – thanks to laws championed by its producers – and describes how the industry is now trying to limit the use of the word agave.

In case all this makes you thirsty, Williams has included advice on how to buy, store, taste and serve tequila. He's also provided some recipes to raise your skills above merely tossing a bottle of Cuervo and a couple of cans of frozen concentrate in the blender.

If you're one of the growing legions of tequila aficionados, *Tequila: A Global History* will deepen your appreciation of Mexico's iconic drink.

— By Trish Anderton

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Charlotte Greensit
Managing Editor
The Intercept
Active Resident

Coleen Jose
Steiger Fellow/Committee
to Protect Journalists
Correspondent/GroundTruth
Active Resident - Age 29 and under

Ludmila Kafanova
Freelance
Istanbul, Turkey
Active Overseas, 29 and under

Derek Kravitz
Researcher/Post-Graduate
Columbia University
2014 OPC Foundation Scholar
Active Resident - Age 30-34

Jane Sasseen
Executive Director
McGraw Center
for Business Journalism
CUNY Graduate School of Journalism
Associate Resident

Aaron Schachter
Assignment Editor
PRI's The World
Active Non-Resident

Ali Velshi
Host "Ali Velshi on Target"
Al Jazeera America
Active Resident