



BULLETIN

Panelists Discuss the Future
of Journalism and Mentorship
With The Media Line

EVENT RECAP

BY CHAD BOUCHARD

MANY JOURNALISTS and media watchers have voiced growing concern about the future of journalism in an era of constant challenges and uncertainty. With diminishing trust in traditional media, sound reporting dismissed as “fake news” and blatant falsehoods passing for news content, the information stream has been polluted.

“Many of us are disgusted when we look at the media and try to understand what is going on,” Felice Friedson, president and CEO of The Media Line, an American news agen-



GREGORY PARTANIO

Felice Friedson, left, talks to Shirley and Arthur Sotloff.

cy covering the Middle East, told attendees during a recent forum at the OPC. “I tell you that our forefathers would turn in their graves.”

Friedson made her remarks on Tuesday, June 13 at an event that the OPC and The Media Line co-

hosted to discuss the crucial link between policy and journalism and to celebrate the agency’s Press and Policy Student Program. The program offers students studying journalism, public policy or international relations one-on-one mentorships, either remote or on-site in the Middle East with The Media Line news bureau’s veteran journalists. Selected students can earn academic credit or pursue independent study.

Former OPC President David Andelman, who serves on the pro-

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to watch video
from the event.

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OPC Attends JPC Freedom of the Press Conference

EVENT RECAP

BY PATRICIA KRANZ

OPC PRESIDENT Deidre Depke told a crowd of international journalists that there are reasons to be optimistic about the future of journalism in the United States despite myriad challenges.

“Partnerships between news outlets and non-profits like GroundTruth, the Pulitzer Center and the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists are helping to fill the gap created by

staff cuts and the closing of foreign news bureaus,” she said at the Jerusalem Press Club’s Second International Conference on the Freedom of the Press on May 8-9. Her panel was titled “Innovation and Press Freedom.”

Depke pointed out that several OPC awards this year went to journalists who received funding from those non-profit groups. For example, the Malcolm Forbes Award was bestowed on “The Panama Papers,” a massive global investigation of financial corruption conducted by the ICIJ,

McClatchy, the Miami Herald and more than 100 other media partners.

Mayka Blok, media strategist for De Correspondent, a member-funded Dutch news website, described how her company created a profitable business model through crowd-sourcing and subscriptions. The site launched in 2013 after raising \$1.7 million in 30 days. Since then, the site has signed up more than 50,000 subscribers who pay about \$65 a year. More than 30 correspondents write in-depth stories based on reporting

and interaction with subscribers. They share notes and story ideas and solicit tips and insights from readers. Blok lamented the power of Facebook, which she claimed tweaks its algorithm frequently to divert readers from media websites to Facebook. “Facebook is evil,” she said several times.

Giving the keynote speech was Carl Bernstein of Watergate fame.

OPC Executive Director Patricia Kranz also attended the event in Jerusalem. ❖



GREGORY PARTANIO

Peter Yarrow

gram's Board of Professional Advisers, helped to facilitate the event.

"Where are we today if we don't have a press that's not just free but a press that's reliable and responsible?" Friedson asked. "The bottom line is that it's about being complete. That's what we teach our students."

Friedson said The Media Line has trained four dozen young students with internships at the Jerusalem bureau over the last decade.

During the event, she announced the launch of the distance learning partnership with six universities around the world, where students are paired with mentors remotely in The Media Line's Middle East bureau to help them shape and strengthen stories. The Media Line recently wrapped up a pilot program at Florida Atlantic University. Other partners include the Middle East Studies Department at King's College in London, Al-Quds University in the Palestinian territories as well as the University of Houston, University of Denver and University of Miami, with about 50 more currently discussing partnerships.

In introducing the program, writer and media consultant Neil Berro lauded The Media Line's "commitment to an honest brokering to find the truth, to work with people of all sides."

During introductory remarks, long-time The Media Line adviser Marvin Kalb, Edward R. Murrow professor at Harvard and senior fellow at the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, addressed journalism's rapidly changing landscape and the effect of financial pressure on the quality of reporting.

"Everywhere you turn today the idea of the internet is central to the way in which we get information and the way in which we communicate with one another," he said. "And that has, in my opinion, coarsened what was once a beautiful, honest pursuit of fact. Today we look at a time when

money and technology will end up determining what is on the air or what is published."

Kalb said despite these challenges, he remains optimistic in the light of passion and tenacity he sees in journalism's next generation.

"It's much more difficult for them now than it was for me in my time, but somehow or another I'm absolutely persuaded that they are going to do it. They're going to pull it off, and we're all going to be the better for it."

During the program, Friedson interviewed three alums of the program who worked at The Media Line bureau.

Liana B. Baker, who is currently a business journalist at Reuters covering mergers and acquisitions, recalled the early days of her internship in 2006, when the Lebanon War was dominating headlines.

"You had me look at some of the sectarian strife in Lebanon and how there's different sects of Muslims and Christians. I wrote sort of an explainer, and that was a whole new subject for me. That's where [The Media Line] is really great," she said, "finding the stories in the Middle East that no one else is covering. Where else could you read an explainer on groups in Lebanon?"

Baker was attending Northwestern University at the time of her internship.

Katie Beiter, who worked in the Middle East, wrote a total of about 50 stories for The Media Line during her stint there after studying at Rice University, a file that Friedson said works out to an average of about one story every day.

"I joke with Felice that I racked up quite the international phone bill, and I had a permanent kink in my neck from all the time I spent on the phone, Beiter said. But it was my first dip into learning how to research, be inquisitive, synthesize that information and then learn how to impart it." She will do that next semester studying

at Columbia University with an emphasis on Human Rights.

Asaf Zilberfarb, a recent graduate of Dartmouth College who interned at The Media Line during the rise of ISIS in 2014, said one of his first assignments was to pose as a prospective ISIS joiner from London, using social media to approach recruiters to see how far he could get.

"We got pretty far," he said. ("Too far," added Friedson.) "We were contacted by a lot of people and it really provided us with a lot of insight as to how this kind of movement and flow of people happens, and how easy it is, and how surveillance doesn't really exist in the virtual space, at least not then."

Zilberfarb, who speaks Arabic, spent much of his time translating local newspapers. He spoke about following the range of coverage and angles across Arabic media on a single story, like the boycott of Qatar.

"One of the things I learned from Michael [Friedson] and Felice and the other people in the newsroom is this idea that there isn't a single truth. It's about completeness. It's about providing different narratives to the same story. And that couldn't be more important than political work and in policy work," Zilberfarb said. He will take the press to policy paradigm to economics at Ernst Young.

Peter Yarrow, renowned singer from the folk trio Peter, Paul and Mary, spoke about the crucial link between policy and journalism.

"Something is happening in this administration that is so fascinating and so mesmerizing that the substance of what is going on and the context is obscured," he said. "It's increasingly difficult for the ordinary citizen to have the raw material to make decisions, and

to resonate in their hearts what it is that's being shared so that they come to a conclusion. We can't have a democracy unless people can synthesize information."

Yarrow spoke about an organization he co-founded called Operation Respect that seeks to tackle bullying and bolster self-esteem. More than a decade ago, the group launched an educational program and curriculum called Don't Laugh at Me, which has been disseminated in schools across the globe, including many in the Middle East. The program expanded after an op-ed written by Felice Friedson alerted the US Embassy to the program which the embassy ultimately sponsored, a development that Friedson points out illustrates the link between media and policy. The program is now in 60 percent of Israeli schools and preparing to launch in the Palestinian territories. Yarrow also performed the song Weave Me the Sunshine, and led a sing-along with attendees.

Friedson then spoke with Arthur and Shirley Sotloff, the parents of Steven Sotloff, an American journalist who was held hostage by ISIS for a year before he was brutally killed in August 2014. Steven filed stories for The Media Line while working in the Middle East, and was in close contact with Friedson in the days before his disappearance.

She said Steven was frustrated that news agencies would not publish his reporting on the development of ISIS in Libya, and yet today the story remains a solemn reminder of journalism that could have affected policy had his voice been heeded.

Friedson recalled talking to Steven over the last weekend before he disappeared, asking him if he trusted his fixer. "Steven was a bit naive, frankly. But on the other

hand he was one of the most brilliant young journalists that we've ever seen in terms of understanding what was happening in front of us."

Shirley Sotloff remembered seeing seeds of Steven's interest in journalism and narrative at a very young age, writing "scary stories" as early as six years old, and later resurrecting his high school newspaper and becoming editor-in-chief. She said he showed a great interest in the stories of his grandparents, who were Holocaust survivors. "He would listen to his grandma and grandpa talk about the atrocities that happened to them, to their families as they lost everyone in the Holocaust," she said. Steven later pursued journalism at the University of Central Florida.

Arthur Sotloff said Steven was deeply curious and had a knack for getting people to open up to him.

Arthur remembered that in high school, while working to revive the school newspaper, Steven made a point of sitting at different tables during lunchtime so he could talk with different people each day.

"I miss him a lot," Arthur said.

He added that Steven was one of the first reporters on the scene after the 2012 attack on US facilities in Benghazi, Libya, and was able to track down and interview guards at the facility whose version of events contradicted the US government's narrative.

"He was just trying to make people aware of what was going on that nobody else was reporting. And that's why he went into Syria. He was the voice of the voiceless."

In concluding the event, Friedson said that The Media Line pushes students to find material outside of their comfort zone, and to be thorough in their reporting. She encouraged attendees to become involved in mentorship for young journalists.

"This is our future," Friedson said. "This is how we take back journalism." ❖

Filmmakers Discuss Iraq's 'Queen of the Desert'

EVENT RECAP

BY CHAD BOUCHARD

WAR, SECTARIAN conflict and the rise of terrorist groups like ISIS have dominated headlines about Iraq for more than a decade. Some observers point to roots of conflict that reach back to the drawing of artificial boundaries by Western powers following the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1920. Gertrude Bell, a British spy and explorer who is sometimes called the "female Lawrence of Arabia," was a central figure in the early forging of this amalgamized nation and the shaping of the Middle East.

On May 17, the OPC hosted a special sneak preview at International House of a new documentary about Bell's life, *Letters from Baghdad*.

Bell traveled widely in Arabia before being recruited by British military intelligence during WWI to help draw the borders of Iraq and as a result helped shape the modern Middle East.

Following the screening, a panel including filmmakers Sabine Krayenbuhl and Zeva Oelbaum discussed the project and the Bell's legacy.

Krayenbuhl said they chose Bell as a subject for a documentary in part because of its relevance and parallels to more recent turmoil.

"From the beginning, we thought this film would make a great springboard for discussion," she said. "When we started the film five years ago, it was at the moment the U.S. had pulled out of Iraq, so the political context

had shifted to the background and sadly by the time we finished the film, the Middle East is once again in the headlines"

Research took the filmmakers to more than 25 different archives around the world, including some based in Russia, the Netherlands, France, U.K., Germany and the U.S. A Gertrude Bell archive at Newcastle University held photographs and 1600 letters that she wrote to her family.

Oelbaum said they were surprised to discover how much "Miss Bell's" legacy remains present in Iraq, even as knowledge of her story has faded in her home country of the U.K. Bell was

addressed with the title "al Khatun," an honorific usually reserved for queens.

Oelbaum said when the Iraqi Ambassador to the United States recently saw the film at a screening in Washington D.C., he remarked that "you really need to understand this is a real term of respect and it's not a term that's thrown lightly around," she recalls him as saying. "So there seems to be enormous recognition still in Iraq about her."

Also speaking on the panel was Lisa Anderson, a specialist on politics in the Middle East and North Africa who was president of The American University of Cairo from 2011 to 2016.

Anderson said that often portrayals of Bell default to her unusual role as a woman in a world of men.

"But she's also a representative of a very interesting complicated role in the 20th century which is the liberal imperialist," she said. Who many see as "real creeps."

"That's how we think of them perhaps, but that era had lots and lots of people who thought they were doing good things for

the natives. Really genuinely believed that. Knew the language, cared deeply, thought that British influence was the best thing that could happen but thought that this should be on the way to empowerment - the kinds of things that [Bell] said."

One of Bell's biggest legacies is her dedication to the creation of the Iraqi National Museum. Lamia Al Gailani Werr, a British-Iraqi archaeologist and expert in the establishment of the museum, also spoke on the panel. She provided an update on efforts to recover some of the 15,000 objects that were looted from the museum during the U.S. invasion in 2003.

"About 4000 have come back and the rest haven't," she said. "Very few have come out in the [black] market, so where have they gone? Of about 5000 of the [inscribed cylinder seals], which are small objects, only 600 have come back." ❖

OPC ANNUAL MEETING SEPTEMBER 5th

The OPC Annual Meeting, open to all members, will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 5 at 6:00 p.m. at Club Quarters.

This year, the OPC will elect ten (10) Active board members and two (2) Associate board members to begin two-year terms. Next month's Bulletin will feature bios and messages from candidates.

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.

Results will be announced at the annual meeting.



Left to right: Lamia Al Gailani Werr, Lisa Anderson, Zeva Oelbaum and Sabine Krayenbuhl.

CHAD BOUCHARD

Junger and Quested Probe Conflict in Syria for 'Hell on Earth'

BY CHAD BOUCHARD

ON WEDNESDAY, May 24, the OPC hosted a special screening and discussion of the documentary *Hell On Earth: The Fall Of Syria And The Rise of ISIS*, with filmmakers Sebastian Junger and Nick Quested.

The film puts the atrocities of this brutal paramilitary group in historical context, tracing the roots of ISIS to the rebel movement against Bashar al-Assad in Syria as well as U.S. mishandling of the aftermath of the Iraq War.

Hell On Earth was cut from 1,000 hours of footage that includes that of a family living under ISIS control that finally fled to Turkey.

Junger said to get footage of the family, they sent them cameras and gave them loose technical instructions.

"We were very clear with them: self-document, but only make decisions that you yourselves are making for your own welfare. And eventually they decided to flee ISIS territory, which was a very risky thing to do," he said. "We were incredibly lucky because not only did they get through safely but these two guys who had never shot video and their lives shot some of the most moving profound footage of the entire film."

The film also follows Kurdish fighters in Sinjar and Shia militias in Iraq as well as al-Qaida-affiliated fighters in and around Aleppo and Raqqa.

Since there was little chance of safely "embedding" with ISIS, the filmmakers drew from ISIS propaganda films to represent their strategies and recruitment. Images of patriotic songs and violent rhetoric were juxtaposed against nationalistic images of other countries, such as the US and France.

"Every society is sort of blind to its own violence, really," Junger explained. "And people are particularly irrational in how they evaluate violence. [Bashar Al-Assad] has killed far more people than ISIS, but ISIS because of the public nature of the violence are sort of known as the bad guys. And they're terrible people you know I'm not defending them. But what we forget in America, or the news consumer forgets is that Assad is roughly eight times as bad

if you just judge by the amount of people killed."

Junger talked about the responsibility of nations to protect refugees fleeing conflict.

The filmmakers also talked about Western fighters who have joined ISIS, and what their fate might be if the organization was successfully put down.

Asked what the filmmakers would hope President Donald Trump might glean from the film if he watched it, Quested said he would like to impart a sense of compassion for those who are fleeing violence.

"They were forced to flee because of the intense bombing by the Russians and Assad, and then by the very nature of living under the Islamic State. That's really the primary take away. If he could understand that if New York was attacked now, we'd be facing all kinds of the same choices."

One audience member who was preparing to go to the Middle East to work for an aid organization asked if Junger thought the role of journalists might be changing.

"The role of doctors is to cure illness, to help people to alleviate suffering. And the role of journalism is to bring the truth out. End of sentence. And I don't think that will change," he said.

Hell on Earth debuted at the Tribeca Film Festival in April and aired on National Geographic, which produced the film.

Junger and Quested previously collaborated on a trio of films about the war in Afghanistan: *Restrepo*, *The Last Patrol* and *Which Way is the Front Line From Here*. ♦



Sebastian Junger, left, and Nick Quested.

CHAD BOUCHARD

Click here to watch video clips from the Q&A.



OPC member Jacqueline Albert-Simon, left foreground, asks Junger and Quested about imagery used in the film.

CHAD BOUCHARD

Journalism in the Age of Trump

BY MICHAEL SERRILL

MUCH HAS been made of how the administration of President Donald Trump requires a different kind of coverage than its predecessors. *Washington Post* editor Marty Baron disagrees. “Our traditional role serves us fine,” he says. That role, he adds, is to be “an honest observer” of political events and then to “tell the people what we’ve found.”

That classic approach, of course, has resulted in a series of spectacular scoops for the *Post*, including its report that National Security Advisor Michael Flynn had lied to other government officials about his contacts with the Russian government. Flynn was fired days later.

Baron was speaking to the Foreign Editors Circle, a gathering of foreign editors and others who meet annually to discuss the challenges of covering the world. This year it was held at the plush, spacious headquarters that the *Post* occupied after its purchase by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos.

Baron did acknowledge that the Trump administration has a marked hostility toward the media. “I am not sure Trump has read the First Amendment; he skipped over it and went right to the Second,” Baron joked. Still, he said, “we shouldn’t be partisan, though the administration is trying to portray us as partisan.”

The *Post* editor lamented that Trump’s disrespect for the press extends beyond our shores. Unlike other Presidents of both parties, “he is not a good advocate for freedom of the press around the world. When the Secretary of State [Rex Tillerson] doesn’t allow reporters to travel with him, that is a bad sign.”

So, he said, is Trump’s “admiration for [Russian President] Putin and others who control the press.”

The Foreign Editors Circle meeting was organized by the Vienna-based International Press Institute and The Associated Press. More than 20 foreign editors and representatives of media organizations, including the Overseas Press Club, the GroundTruth Project and the International News Safety Institute, spent the day discussing global politics, the dangers of overseas reporting, particularly for freelancers, and the continuing struggle of news outlets to survive in the internet age.

The difficulty of dealing with an Administration that labels fact-based reporting as partisan was a persistent theme. John Daniszewski, standards editor and former foreign editor of The Associated Press, noted that even that scrupulously objective news outlet has been denounced as anti-Trump. Jackson Diehl, deputy editorial editor of the *Post* and former foreign editor, asked, “How do you react to Trump? Do you call him on his lies? Do you engage with him? He wants us to get into an argument with him.”

In his talk to the group, Diehl outlined four trends that will dominate global affairs in coming years: the uncontrolled movement of people from poor and

war-torn countries to the West; the backlash against globalization; the rollback of democracy in countries like Turkey, Hungary and Russia; and the retreat of U.S. leadership in global affairs. On the last trend, he noted the silence of the Trump administration when confronted with the crushing of dissent in nations such as Turkey and Venezuela.

The dangers of overseas reporting were addressed by Gary LaFree, a University of Maryland professor and founder of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). LaFree has compiled a database of attacks on journalists around the world; it counts 1,165 kidnappings of news men and women and 1,300 murders since 1970. Some 146 of the killings happened in 2015 alone, LaFree said. Hannah Storm, executive director of the London-based News Safety Institute, said that two journalists are killed every week for doing their jobs. Her group is a forum for information sharing and has provided safety training for more than 2,500 staff and freelance journalists.

Storm noted that a growing category of journalistic harassment is virtual, and that women are most often targeted online. “In almost all situations the attacks become sexualized,” she said. Baron said *Post* reporters have been subjected to a flood of online assaults since Trump’s election, many of them anti-Semitic and some threatening violence. The paper has had to beef up security at its offices as a result.

Outside the U.S., the internet, rather than a boon to free speech, has too often become a vehicle of oppression. “Sovereign control of the internet” is the rule in much of the world, Baron noted – “a tool of authoritarian regimes.”

The internet is also the great disrupter of U.S. journalism’s economic life. Newspapers in particular “are still struggling to figure out the model in major metropolitan areas,” Baron said. “We have to deepen the level of engagement, get people to read the second and third day story. We have to prove to our readers every day that we have value.”

One way to do that is with high-impact investigative stories of the kind underwritten by the non-profit Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting. The Center, founded by Jon Sawyer, who attended the Washington meeting, has spent \$2 million in the past decade providing direct grants to reporters working on international stories. One result: four winners of this year’s Overseas Press Club Awards were backed by the Pulitzer Center. ♦



RICKY CARIOTI, COURTESY OF THE WASHINGTON POST.

PEOPLE

By Trish Anderton

OPC SCHOLARS

OPC member and 2015 Emanuel R. Freedman scholar **Ben Taub** has won a prestigious Livingston Award – the largest all-media, general-reporting prize in the country. The Livingston, which is sponsored by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the University of Michigan, honors accomplished journalists under age 35. Taub won for “The Assad Files,” his *New Yorker* story about smuggled documents that tie Syria’s Bashar al-Assad to torture and other abuses.

Elisa Mala, the Flora Lewis Internship winner in 2012, has a six-month contract at Google in New York. She will be managing logistical components at three offices for the Engineering Residency program, a rotational program for early-career engineers. Elisa spent her OPC Foundation fellowship in the AP bureau in Bangkok.

Stephen Kalin, who won the Roy Rowan Scholarship in 2013, is now senior correspondent in the Reuters bureau in Riyadh. Stephen joined Reuters in 2013 and was posted to Beirut, Cairo, and Bagdad before moving to his current position in Saudi Arabia. He’ll be working alongside **Katie Paul**, the Irene Corbally Kuhn winner in 2007. Katie has been a staff reporter covering business and politics in Saudi Arabia since September 2015.

Pete Vernon, the 2016 Theo Wilson Scholar, had some measured words for *The New York Times* after it eliminated the position of public editor. The paper said it would handle reader feedback directly via social media and the comments section, but that’s “a curious way of replacing an experienced journalist who could offer nuance and perspective while writing with the institutional backing of the nation’s most influential newspaper,” he wrote in *The Columbia*

Journalism Review. Vernon is currently a CJR Delacorte Fellow.

Ed Ou, Dan Eldon Scholarship winner in 2007, is now a visual journalist with NBC Left Field, a new documentary journalism unit of NBC News. NBC Left Field bills itself as an internationally-minded video troupe that makes short, creative docs and features, all designed for social media and internet. Ou will be based in New York. He is currently represented by Reportage by Getty Images and has previously worked for Reuters and The Associated Press.

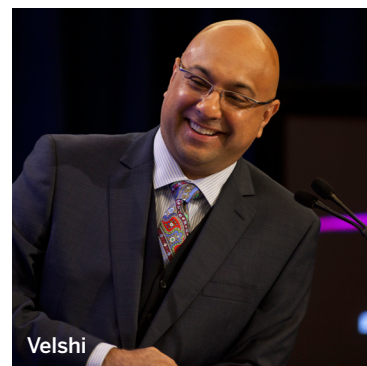
OPC member and 2004 Roy Rowan Scholar **David Shaftel** has co-launched a tennis magazine called *Racquet* with Caitlin Thompson of the Swedish podcasting company Acast. “We are in this world and we love it. We were doing it before we had a magazine,” Thompson told the Nieman Lab, adding that *Racquet* is positioned to be an independent voice in what she sees as the insular world of tennis broadcasting and journalism. Shaftel is a freelancer in New York City; he has lived and worked in Mumbai, London, Trinidad, Louisiana and Cambodia.

WINNERS

OPC member Dean Baquet handed the Mirror Awards i-3 Award for Impact, Innovation and Influence to **New York Times** Publisher Arthur O. Sulzberger Jr. on June 13. The awards are presented by the Newhouse School at Syracuse University. “*The New York Times* recognizes, evaluates and embraces the digital transformation of journalism to remain relevant in a constantly evolving landscape,” said Newhouse Dean Lorraine Branham in a statement. The Fred Dressler Leadership Award went to **Tom Brokaw**, who won the OPC President’s Award in 2013.

UPDATES

NEW YORK: OPC member **Ali Velshi** is co-hosting a new show on MSNBC. *Velshi & Ruhle* pairs him with fellow anchor Stephanie Ruhle to discuss big-picture business news.



RAMIN TALAE/GETTY IMAGES

Velshi told *Forbes* the show sprang from the lively conversations the two would have in his office about stories that were getting overlooked in the increasingly frantic breaking news environment. “We’re not running a market show at all, and we’re not doing personal finance,” Velshi said. “It’s this whole category in the middle.” The show airs on Saturdays at 12:30 Eastern Time.

OPC member **Howard Chua-Eoan** has been named co-deputy editor of *Bloomberg Businessweek*, a role he shares with Jim Aley. He will continue overseeing the front of the book in addition to his new duties. Chua-Eoan is a former news director for *TIME* magazine and has written several books.

Hannah Dreier, who won the Hal Boyle Award at the OPC Annual Awards Dinner this spring, is slated to start covering immigration for ProPublica in July. Dreier has been the AP’s Venezuela correspondent for three years. Her winning story, “Venezuela Undone,” is also a finalist for a Gerald Loeb Award.

“Latin America has a great deal to teach the rest of the world,” says *New York Times* Brazil bureau chief **Simon Romero**, who is moving back to the U.S. after 12 years in the region. “[T]he portrayal of Latin America as a simmering cauldron of problems doesn’t coincide with the region I’ve had the privilege of covering,” he told the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas. Romero won the 2013 Robert Spiers Benjamin Award. He will remain at the



MICHAEL DAVIES

Times, where he's been since 1999, and will cover immigration from his home state of New Mexico.

The Associated Press has published a lengthy review of its World War II-era arrangement with Nazi Germany, in which A.P. photos were published in Nazi propaganda and Nazi photographs were made available to U.S. news outlets. The report, written by Columbia University adjunct assistant professor and former A.P. editor Larry Heinzerling, concludes that the wire service "took steps to retain its independence and provide factual, unbiased information to the world despite intense pressures from Nazi Germany." A German historian has claimed the arrangement allowed the Nazis to "portray a war of extermination as a conventional war."

"When you're coming here, you're coming broken," Mexican immigration activist Rudy Lopez told OPC Foundation board member **Nicholas Schiffrin** in a recent story on deportation. Schiffrin headed to Mexico to see what's happening to longtime U.S. residents who are being sent there. He found deportees disoriented in an unfamiliar country, missing their families in the U.S. and unsure how they were going to make a living in Mexico. Schiffrin is a special correspondent for PBS News Hour.

IBT Media, which bought *Newsweek* in 2013, has rebranded itself as **Newsweek Media Group**. Newsweek is now the company's mass-market news brand; it continues publishing more narrowly focused properties, including *International Business Times*, *iDigital Times*, *Latin Times* and *Medical Daily*. *Adweek* reports the newly reorganized company will also produce conferences and other events.

The New York Times has offered buyouts to editors as it reorganizes newsroom roles. "Our goal is to significantly shift the balance of editors to reporters at the *Times*, giving us more on-the-ground journalists developing original work than ever

before," wrote *Times* executive editor and OPC member Dean Baquet and managing editor Joseph Kahn in a memo. The paper hopes to hire up to 100 additional journalists with the savings.

Other New York-headquartered outlets experiencing layoffs or buyouts include HuffPost, Vocativ and Time Inc. **HuffPost** laid off 39 staffers "as part of a corporate-wide layoff in connection with Verizon's acquisition of Yahoo," according to a statement from the employees' union. Yahoo and AOL, operating operating as a single business unit called Oath, own HuffPost and other properties. **Time Inc.** announced in June that it's cutting 300 positions worldwide through layoffs and buyouts with a goal "to become more efficient and to reinvest resources in our growth areas." **Vocativ** cut some 20 writers and text editors as it shifts its focus to video.

First Look Media's Topic studio plans to turn the story of Vietnam War reporter **Kate Webb** into a movie. *On the Other Side* will star Carey Mulligan and is slated to start production in 2018, according to the *New York Post*. While serving as UPI's bureau chief in Phnom Penh in 1971, Webb was captured by the Viet Cong and held for 23 days; her death was reported in *The New York Times* before she was finally released. The native New Zealander went on to report from the Philippines, Iraq, Indonesia, South Korea and Afghanistan before retiring to her adopted homeland of Australia.

WASHINGTON, D.C.: NPR says new information casts doubt on the official account of the deaths of its journalists **David Gilkey** and **Zabihullah Tamanna** in Afghanistan last year. "The two men were not the random victims of bad timing in a dangerous place, as initial reports indicated," wrote NPR's Robert Little on June 9. "Rather, the journalists' convoy was specifically targeted by attackers who had been tipped off to the presence of Americans." Furthermore, the men's injuries were not

consistent with initial accounts of an RPG attack. Gilkey, a photographer, and Tamanna, a reporter working as an interpreter, were traveling in a convoy of Humvees on a remote road in southern Afghanistan when their vehicle came under attack. NPR is continuing to investigate their deaths.

NPR's **Steve Inskeep**, who shared the OPC's 2014 Best Multimedia News Presentation with others at NPR, is co-hosting a new podcast aimed at capturing the morning news audience. *Up First* is a ten-minute podcast distributed every weekday by 6 a.m., in which Inskeep, David Greene and Rachel Martin highlight the top two to three stories of the day. It is positioned to take on *The New York Times*' short morning newscast, *The Daily*.



JOHN PEMBLE (FLICKR)

PHILADELPHIA: Former OPC Governor **Michael Moran** has joined software firm microshare, where he will manage communications and security strategy, among other duties. Moran, an international security and political analyst, previously worked at Control Risks. He has also worked for numerous news organizations, including as a correspondent for the BBC and head of international news for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

LOS ANGELES: **Los Angeles Times** announced another round of buyouts in June. In a memo, editor and publisher Davan Maharaj said the buyouts would be voluntary and limited to non-union employees with at least 15 years of employment at

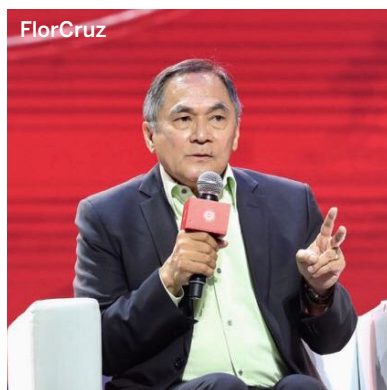
PEOPLE

the paper. Some 80 reporters and editors left the paper in a previous round of buyouts in 2015.

SYDNEY: OPC member **Stephen Dupont** has created a live stage

show around his conflict photography. “Don’t Look Away” debuted at Sydney’s Museum of Contemporary Art and will tour nationally. “I’ve spent years doing talks and lectures, keynotes,” he told the *Sydney Morning Herald*. “I needed another kind of approach to my work, one that

uses photographs, soundscapes, music and videos, but most importantly one that allows me the presence on stage to deliver really personal and revealing stories.” Dupont lives in Sydney and divides his time between production there and work in the field.



BEIJING: OPC member **Jaime FlorCruz** was recognized at Peking University’s 119th anniversary celebration along with two other distinguished alumni. FlorCruz was interviewed onstage about his experiences

as a member of the famed “Class of 1977” – the first class accepted in the wake of the Cultural Revolution, and one that yielded a number of political, intellectual and business leaders. “They had rich life experiences and were good in academics,” FlorCruz told the audience. “They were keen to learn and help reform China.” FlorCruz, who retired as CNN’s Beijing bureau chief in 2014, is writing a book about the Class of 1977 slated for publication at the end of this year.

MOSCOW: A green disinfectant called *zelyonka* has become a tool of oppression in Putin’s Russia, OPC member **Sabra Ayres** recently reported in the *Los Angeles Times*. Journalists and activists have had the liquid thrown at them, sometimes mixed with other substances, in an apparent effort at intimidation. Opposition leader Alexei Navalny underwent surgery in May to repair damage done to one of his eyes in such an attack.

PEOPLE REMEMBERED

Anne Morrissey Merick, who worked with other female reporters to overturn a ban on women staying overnight in battle zones in Vietnam, died on May 2 in Naples, Florida. She was 83. In 1967 Gen. William

Westmoreland issued an order saying female journalists could not stay in the field with troops overnight. This effectively barred them from most combat missions. Morrissey helped organize a handful of women to appeal to the Defense Department, which overrode the ruling. Morrissey worked for ABC news, covering civil rights and the space program before her assignment to Vietnam.

Sally Jacobsen, the A.P.’s first female international editor, died on May 12 in Sleepy Hollow, New York at the age of 70. After assuming the top editorial position over the news wire’s foreign bureaus in 1999, she oversaw coverage of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Veteran AP correspondent Bob Reid said Jacobsen was “a calm, steady, collegial hand” for reporters laboring in war zones. Jacobsen began her career at the AP in Baltimore in 1976 and later served as a correspondent in Mexico City and Brussels. ❖

PRESS FREEDOM UPDATE...

A Venezuelan court has fined one of the country’s most popular news sites the equivalent of \$500,000 for causing “moral damage” to former Vice President Diosdado Cabello. The court ruled the **La Patilla** website had committed civil defamation by republishing a story alleging connections between Cabello and a drug trafficking ring. Cabello has denied the allegations. La Patilla founder Alberto Ravell told a Colombian radio network he planned to appeal.

Al Jazeera reported all of its digital platforms had come under cyberattack after a rift opened between its home state of Qatar and

other Arab Gulf states in early June. The network said the “systematic and continual hacking attempts” were “gaining intensity and taking various forms” but that its platforms had not been compromised.

Guardian reporter **Ben Jacobs** has accepted an apology from Congressman-elect Greg Gianforte of Montana, who threw Jacobs to the floor when the journalist attempted to ask him a question on the eve of the election. Gianforte had initially issued a statement blaming Jacobs for the incident, but in his apology letter he wrote that his “physical response to your legitimate question was unprofessional, unaccept-

able, and unlawful.” Gianforte also vowed to donate \$50,000 to the Committee to Protect Journalists. He faces charges of misdemeanor assault.

The president of Mexico has vowed to prioritize journalist safety and fight impunity for those who kill journalists. **Enrique Peña Nieto** told the CPJ that his administration would follow up on crimes against members of the media and fund federal protections that are slated to run out of money this fall. Mexico is currently one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a journalist.

The names of 14 slain journal-

ists were added to a memorial at the Newseum in Washington, DC on June 5. The 14 hailed from Brazil, Mexico, Afghanistan, India, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Ukraine, and they symbolize “all those who died in pursuit of the news in 2016,” according to the museum. The **Journalists Memorial** was established in 1837 and now bears 2,305 names.

The UN’s special rapporteur on freedom of expression says press freedom in **Japan** is in danger. In a recent report, David Kaye argued government pressure on the media, a lack of public debate over historical events, and crackdowns on information “require attention lest they undermine Japan’s democratic foundations.” Among other concerns, he cited the nation’s 2014 secrecy law, which could make journalist vulnerable to prison terms of up to five years for involvement in leaks. Japan’s UN ambassador, Junichi Ihara, responded tartly, saying “It is regrettable that some parts of [Kaye’s] report are written without accurate understanding of the government’s explanation and its positions.”

A Mexican journalist who sought asylum in the U.S. has returned to his home country after being held for more than three months by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. In a statement, **Martin Méndez Pineda** said “maltreatment, humiliation and abuse by local authorities” forced him to waive his claim and leave the U.S. voluntarily. According to the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, Méndez has received death threats in Mexico since writing about allegations of abuse by authorities there.

Press freedom organizations are calling on the U.N. Human Rights Council to pressure **Turkey** over its treatment of journalists. PEN International, ARTICLE 19, the Committee to Protect Journalists, Human Rights Watch, International Press Institute and Reporters Without Borders called on the council to press the Erdogan regime to halt its crackdown on free expression, re-

lease journalists from jail, and allow closed media outlets to reopen. Some 165 journalists are currently jailed in Turkey – more than any other place in the world.

China has moved to exert even stronger control over internet access by imposing licensing requirements on news organizations. The new rules would require news websites to be incorporated in China and run by a Chinese citizen. Journalistic joint ventures would need special security clearance and only publicly-funded news gathering operation would be allowed, according to the CPJ. The regulations require news sites to “serve the people, serve socialism,” while providing “correct guidance” to the public.

A man in **Thailand** has been sentenced to 35 years in prison for criticizing the king. Human rights advocates say it’s the harshest punishment ever meted out by the nation for violating its lese majeste law, according to the *Bangkok Post*. The 34-year-old man was charged with posting on Facebook 10 times about the monarchy; he was sentenced to 70 years in prison but the punishment was cut in half because he confessed. The sentence suggests new king Maha Vajiralongkorn, who took the throne in 2016 after the death of his father, is unlikely to reform the repressive law.

Officials in **Egypt** have blocked access to 21 news sites, claiming they backed terrorism or reported fake news. According to Reuters, the target outlets include Al Jazeera, the Huffington Post’s Arabic website and local independent news site Mada Masr. Egypt’s state news cited a senior security source as saying the news sites supported terrorism and published lies.

Press freedom organizations are demanding the release of ten **Yemeni journalists** who have been detained for two years in Sana’a. Family members say the ten men have not been charged and some were only recently questioned for the

first time. They say the journalists are suffering from health problems caused or worsened by their imprisonment. According to Reporters Without Borders, arbitrary arrests and disappearances have increased sharply since the beginning of the Saudi-led military campaign against the Houthi militia in Yemen.

Indian cable station **NDTV** has accused the government of a “witch hunt” after the nation’s Central Bureau of Investigation raided homes and offices connected to NDTV’s founders. The bureau said the raids were related to allegations of bank fraud, but NDTV and other news outlets linked them to government criticism of the station’s coverage. “A message is being sent out,” Praveen Swami, a reporter for *The Indian Express*, told *The New York Times*. He added that “journalists who are very influential are finding that their access has been cut off” if they crossed the government.

MURDERS

- The founder of a Russian newspaper that covered corruption was killed in Minusinsk, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Siberia on May 24. **Dmitry Popkov** was the editor-in-chief of *Ton-M*, a paper that bore the slogan “We write what other people stay silent about.” The 42-year-old was found shot to death in a Russian bathhouse, according to the *Moscow Times*. The newspaper had previously been subjected to political pressure and police raids.

- Mexican journalist **Javier Valdez**, who was known for his reporting on the drug trade and organized crime, was shot to death on May 15 in Culiacán, Mexico. Attackers opened fire on Valdez’s car on a busy street in broad daylight, according to *The Atlantic*. Valdez was the co-founder of *Riodoce*, a regional weekly newspaper, as well as a correspondent for the Mexico City daily *La Jornada*. Valdez was a past winner of the CPJ’s International Press Freedom Award and the Maria Moors Cabot Prize from the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. ❖

NEW BOOKS

REFUGEE

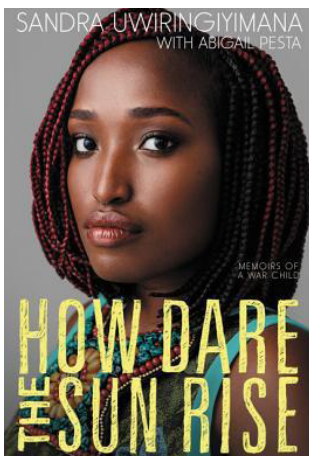
ON AUGUST 13, 2004, 10-year old Sandra Uwiringiyimana's life changed forever. The refugee camp where she was sleeping in Gatumba, Burundi, was attacked by men with guns, machetes and torches. In the ensuing chaos, a man put a gun to Uwiringiyimana's head – but didn't fire.

"Perhaps he didn't want to waste a precious bullet on a little girl," Uwiringiyimana muses in her book, *How Dare the Sun Rise: Memoirs of a War Child* [Katherine Tegen Books, May 2017]. "I was just a girl, after all, so how could I possibly survive? I imagine this is what he was thinking."

An explosion knocked Uwiringiyimana to the ground and she ran away. Her six-year-old sister Deborah was not so lucky; she died that night in their mother's arms.

Uwiringiyimana and her family are members of the Banyamulenge, a tribe that faces discrimination in her native Democratic Republic of Congo. They had fled from Congo a few months earlier to escape threats of violence. Now the violence had come to find them.

The book, co-written with OPC Governor Abigail Pesta, traces Uwiringiyimana's path from that terrible night, through her family's arrival a few years later as refugees in the United States, and to her eventual fame as an artist and activist around refugee issues. *How Dare the Sun Rise* is clearly written with young women in mind, but Uwiringiyimana's powerful, clear voice and Pesta's storycraft combine to create a narrative most readers will find compelling and moving. ❖



WORLD WAR II

WHEN TRAILBLAZING World War II journalist Ruth B. Cowan showed up to cover the conflict in Sicily, General Patton was more than a little skeptical about the idea of a female war correspondent.

"What's the first law of war?" he quizzed her.

"You kill him before he kills you," came the answer.

"She stays," the general decreed.

Ray Moseley's *Reporting War: How Foreign Correspondents Risked Capture, Torture, and Death to Cover World War II* [Yale University Press, March 2017] is full of colorful stories like these that capture the experiences of a generation of pioneering journalists.

Like all conflicts, World War II reflected a changing social landscape. It was the last war in which American journalists wore military uniforms and held honorary ranks. It cemented women's place as conflict reporters – although, like Martha Gellhorn famously stowing away on a hospital boat to cover D-Day, women often had to bend the rules to get close to the action.

A handful of black reporters covered the war; in addition to reporting on the fighting, they provided insight into the racism faced by black soldiers. "The Negro troops are full of injustices done them by various army officers," wrote Roi Ottley of the PM newspaper and Liberty magazine. "Americans deeply resent what little freedom Negroes enjoy here."

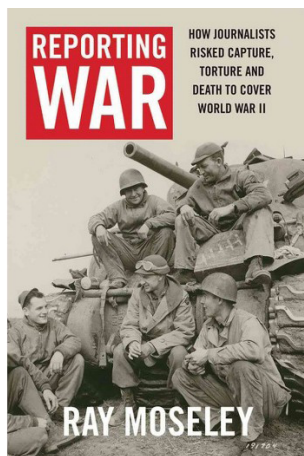
Journalists often confronted the same dangers as the troops, without the means to fight back. And their casualty rates showed it. Of the 1800 correspondents

accredited to the Allies, 69 died on the battlefield. Reporters suffered a 2.2 percent death rate, close to the 2.5 percent borne by the military. The injury rate among journalists was actually higher than for the troops.

Even though more than half a century has passed, today's war correspondents will see echoes of their own experiences here – from the agony of trying to file from remote conflict zones (some WWII reporters resorted to carrier pigeons) to struggles with external and internal censorship.

Moseley himself spent decades reporting for UPI and the Chicago Tribune from places including London, Berlin, Cairo, Belgrade and Nairobi. His painstakingly researched book, crammed with both facts and anecdotes, presents a detailed account of what reporters faced covering the world's bloodiest conflict. ❖

— By Trish Anderton





Meet the OPC Members: Q&A With Yaroslav Trofimov

BY TRISH ANDERTON

YAROSLAV TROFIMOV is a columnist and senior correspondent at *The Wall Street Journal*, where he writes the weekly Middle East Crossroads column. He joined the *Journal* in 1999 and has served as Rome and Middle East and Singapore-based Asia correspondent, as well as bureau chief in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Previously he worked at Bloomberg News. He is the author of two books, *Faith at War* and *Siege of Mecca*.

Hometown: Kiev, Ukraine (as in place of birth); London and New York (as in where most friends live).

Education: New York University (MA) Kiev Institute of Economics (BS).

Languages Spoken: Italian, Russian, French, Ukrainian, Spanish, Arabic.

First job in journalism: Writer for *The European*, a now defunct weekly based in London.

Countries reported from: Close to 100 – across the Middle East, Europe, Asia and Africa.

Year you first became an OPC member: 2003.

Major challenge as a journalist: Remain objective. We are all human and we all have feelings, sometimes very strong ones when we experience wars. Objective coverage doesn't mean moral equivalence between the killer and the victim, obviously. It's one thing to give both sides fair play when you cover an election in Germany, it's another when you are being bombed by one of them in a civil war. Equally, it is hard – on a human level – to remain objective when you are on an "embed" with soldiers on whom you rely to protect your life, but whose potential misdeeds you would have to document.

Best journalism advice received: Make another phone call and see if someone else can confirm or explain.

Worst experience while on the job: Writing a story that then doesn't run.

When traveling, you like to ... Walk through the city, to feel its pulse on the street level, wherever possible. Have time to understand the culture and the way people think. Generally: to blend in.

Hardest story: Covering the deaths of people you know and love.

Journalism heroes: Anthony Shadid and Daniel Pearl. For depth of writing, caveats et al: Ryszard Kapuscinski.

Advice for journalists who want to work overseas: Learn languages and read lots of history books because in many places history, no matter how ancient, still isn't in the past. When there, break out of the expatriate bubble. And don't trust what diplomats and officials say: they often know far less than you.

Dream job: Current one.

Favorite quote: "The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool." – Shakespeare.

Place you're most eager to visit: Syria.

Most over-the-top assignment: Cage-diving with great white sharks in South Africa, for a story on how they increasingly get used to eating humans in that area. (The cage had much bigger openings than I imagined.)

Most common mistake you've seen: Making assumptions based on insufficient reporting.

Country you most want to return to: Cambodia.

Twitter handle: @yarotrof ❖

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mixer at
THE HALF KING
7:00 p.m.
June 27

Annual Meeting
Open to all members
6 p.m. Sept. 5



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