



Overseas Press Club
of America

Weekly Bulletin: Nov. 19, 2020

Greetings!

In the days before Thanksgiving 2020 in the U.S., a pandemic is raging yet again, an economy is slipping downhill once more, and the president is seeking to overturn his election loss with claims of voter fraud that numerous courts have found to lack substance. So it may seem hard to take a moment to reflect on what we've achieved and what we're grateful for. But wait – here's something to celebrate: The OPC will begin accepting applications [on Nov. 30 for its annual awards program](#). Here's a chance to show off your best work, whether it's a podcast, a documentary, a multimedia web presentation, a cartoon, a book or a plain old-fashioned print piece. The past year was a lot of things – and I know I'm not the only one anxious to see it in the rearview mirror – but most of all it was a year when we saw some excellent journalism produced all over the world. So get your applications in!



And here's something else to celebrate: The OPC now has a video that can be used to recruit new members, invite donations to our cause in our year-end special appeal fundraiser, and ask companies to buy tables for the annual dinner, whether that's held in-person or virtually. The video explains the multiple purposes of our club, with testimonials from young journalists who have received an emergency micro-grant or a foundation scholarship. You can watch it [on the website here](#). Please feel free to email it to colleagues and friends who aren't OPC members (but should be) during our ongoing recruitment drive.

In this week's Bulletin, you can learn about some interesting upcoming events. One I'd like to highlight will take place at 10:00 a.m. Eastern Time on Monday, Nov. 23, when the OPC co-hosts, with the Foreign Press Association and the Hong Kong Journalists Association, a Zoom discussion on China's media crackdown in Hong Kong. OPC Foundation President Bill Holstein will be one of the moderators.

As usual, the Bulletin fills you in on the comings and goings of colleagues, informs you about members' recently published works, lists resources you can take advantage of, and updates you on some of the latest challenges to press freedoms around the world. Happy Thanksgiving!

Paula Dwyer
OPC President



OPC at a Glance

Please share this video on social media or with friends and colleagues!



Upcoming OPC Events

Nov. 23: The Disturbing Sound of Silence from Hong Kong!

Time: 10:00 a.m. Eastern Time

The OPC and the Foreign Press Association will hold a joint press conference on Zoom with Chris Yeung, Chair of the Hong Kong Journalists Association.



Under cover of the US election, the PRC has been consolidating control in Hong Kong, removing elected representatives. Ominously, when we approached legislators to speak to us, they demurred

because of new laws penalizing foreign contacts.

Yeung will discuss how the new, harsher, regime affects reporting in Hong Kong.

RSVP Now



Dec. 2: OPC Award Winners Share Their Stories The David A. Andelman and Pamela Title Award

Time: 12:00 p.m. (noon) Eastern Time

Jane Arraf, who has covered the Middle East for three decades, will join the OPC for an online program to discuss her work for NPR's Rough Translation podcast, titled "DIY Mosul," which won this year's David A. Andelman and Pamela Title Award for best international TV, video, radio, audio or podcast reporting showing a concern for the human condition. Gregory Warner, Marianne McCune and Jess Jiang also worked on the winning story.



Arraf, who was recently named as Baghdad bureau chief for The New York Times, will be joined by moderator **Doyle McManus** of the Los Angeles Times, who served as head judge on the award jury.

Judges said: "Jane Arraf (and her Rough Translation team) tells these stories of grassroots civic action with uncommon sensitivity and insight into Iraqi culture – insight born of long years covering a very complicated country."

[Listen to the winning podcast episode here >>](#)

RSVP Now



Dec. 15: OPC Award Winners Share Their Stories The Whitman Bassow Award

Time: 12:00 p.m. (noon) Eastern Time

Join the OPC for a discussion with this year's winners of the Whitman Bassow Award, **Tom Warren** and **Katie J.M. Baker** of BuzzFeed News, who won for their series, "[WWF's Secret War](#)."



The head judge for the award, **Kim Murphy** of The New York Times, will moderate.

Judges said: "BuzzFeed's stories led the WWF to overhaul its human rights guidelines even as Congress investigated how the U.S. government could have unwittingly helped fund such atrocities."

[RSVP Now](#)

Welcome New Member

Chan Ka Wing

Freelance
Hong Kong
Student

OPC Members Covering COVID-19

Juan Arredondo, winner of the 2020 Harper's Magazine Scholarship in memory of I.F. Stone, co-produced an interactive multimedia piece for The New York Times [on Nov. 16](#) exploring the lives of undocumented street vendors in Queens as they battle to stay safe and financially afloat amid this year's disruption. The piece includes interviews, photographs and short video clips of workers who have faced evictions and increased risks because their immigration status makes them vulnerable to intimidation and lacking in legal recourse. The story includes a profile of an advocacy group, Make the Road, the Street Vendor Project, that is urging lawmakers to pass a bill to protect undocumented workers. Arredondo provided photography and video for the piece to accompany text by colleague David Gonzalez.



OPC member **Edie Lederer** wrote [on Nov. 14](#) for The Associated Press about a dire warning from the United Nations food agency indicating that next year could bring "famines of biblical proportions" in the wake of this year's pandemic. David Beasley, the head of the World Food Program, told Lederer that the agency's recent Nobel Peace Prize has given them a platform to drive home concerns about food security and the need for more funding to avert a "hunger pandemic" as this year's emergency funds dry up. Lederer, who has worked for the AP since covering the Vietnam War in the early 1970s, is now chief U.N. correspondent for the agency. Among other U.N.-related stories this year, she has covered several COVID-19 stories including a recent shutdown for contract tracing on Oct. 27 after five staff members tested positive for the coronavirus. Lederer joined the OPC in March 1997, and contributed a video memoir to our archives in 2015 that is



[available to view here.](#)

OPC member **Anders Melin** has pricked up ears with his cover story for Bloomberg Businessweek about the pet food supply firm Chewy. [On Nov. 18](#), Melin, who serves as wealth reporter for Bloomberg News, and colleague Bryan Gruley wrote about the company's booming business during a year of locked-down pet owners, with shares that traded at about \$30 early this year soaring to \$72 in October. On Bloomberg Businessweek's podcast, Melin said he first got the scent of a good story when he learned that the company's CEO, Sumit Singh, ranked fifth on a list of the best-paid executives in the U.S. with \$108.2 million earned in salary, bonus, and stock grants for 2019. In the first two quarters of this year the company added more customers than in all of 2019, he said, "it's really supercharged this year, and kind of like Peloton, they were just perfectly in position to take advantage of the coronavirus." The segment about Melin's story begins around 12:00 [on this link](#).

Azad Essa, an OPC member and freelancer who frequently reports for Middle East Eye, has been covering COVID-19 and U.S. election stories for the website, including an article [on Nov. 18](#) centered on the second wave of coronavirus infections, and the underpinnings of statistics of what he called the "morbid fact" that "as the virus spreads and deepens, it will be working class people, particularly Black and brown people, who will be hit the hardest." He outlines several states where Black people have disproportionate infection rates, such as Michigan, where 14 percent of the population is Black but has an estimated 34 percent of all COVID-19 deaths, the District of Columbia where Black people make up 32 percent of the population but have 45 percent of coronavirus-related deaths, and in New York state where Black people make up 14 percent of the population but have 32 percent of the deaths. Essa said contributing factors include disproportionate employment for people of color in essential jobs that require working outside the home, are more likely to take public transportation, to have poor health insurance, underlying health problems, waiting longer for test results, and to face discrimination at hospitals.



Please send us your personal anecdotes, photos, and links to published pieces related to COVID-19 to info@opcofamerica.org, and we will publish them on our website and share with members. You can also share those stories directly with members on our [OPC Connect](#) group on Facebook, or tweet us [@opcofamerica](#).

People by Chad Bouchard

SCHOLARS

Fatima Bhojani, the 2015 Theo Wilson Scholarship winner and an OPC member, wrote an op-ed piece for The New York Times [on Nov. 17](#) about endemic patriarchy in Pakistan, where



she wrote that “when I step outside, I step into a country of men who stare,” adding that it is “culturally acceptable for men to gape at women unblinkingly, as if we are all in a staring contest that nobody told half the population about, a contest hinged on a subtle form of psychological violence.” She wrote the piece with support from the International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF). Bhojani was a recipient of an OPC COVID-19 Freelance Journalism Microgrant this year.

OPC member **Jacob Kushner**, winner of the 2013 Nathan S. Bienstock Memorial Scholarship, filed a piece from Nairobi for the Los Angeles Times [on Nov. 16](#) about a column of Ethiopian refugees fleeing to Sudan to escape civil war. Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed ordered airstrikes against targets in northern Ethiopia on Nov. 4. He wrote that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was preparing for the arrival of up to 100,000 refugees. Last Friday, 22,000 had already crossed into Sudan, half of them children. Kushner pointed out that Sudan can be a perilous place for ethnic minorities and people besieged by war, given a history of genocide in Darfur in 2003 and a bombing campaign in the Blue Nile state that has displaced millions of people. “If precedent is any indication, the outlook for their swift and peaceful return to Ethiopia isn’t good,” he wrote. Kushner had an OPC Foundation fellowship in the Associated Press bureau in Nairobi. He received an OPC COVID-19 Freelance Journalism Microgrant this year.



UPDATES

OPC member **Lucy Sherriff** is looking for a media partner by Wednesday, Nov. 25, after securing a \$10,000 grant to produce a short documentary on what she called “a deeply important story of environmental racism in a Central Californian Latino community.” The grant would cover production costs, but she is hoping to find a reputable national or international publication that is willing to edit inhouse. Production would not need to start until 2021, but Sherriff needs to secure a commitment by Wednesday. Her story “focuses on one Latino family battling against a toxic waste facility that’s just been given permission to expand,” she wrote in an email. Sherriff said she is happy to chat about details and has a rough treatment available to share with editors. Contact Lensherriff@gmail.com to find out more. She received an OPC COVID-19 Freelance Journalism Microgrant this year.



Following up on a case involving OPC member and award winner **David Rohde**, the former Taliban commander accused in Rohde’s November 2008 kidnapping along with two other captives pleaded not guilty [on Monday, Nov. 16](#) and denied involvement in the hostage incident. Haji Najibullah appeared

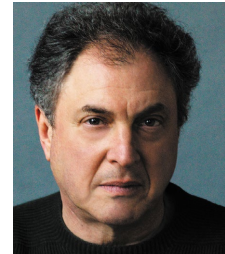
at his arraignment via phone from a federal jail in New York. He faces a six-count indictment that was unsealed on Oct. 28 for Rohde's abduction and demands for a ransom. Rohde was working for The New York Times in Afghanistan when he was abducted at gunpoint along with Afghan journalist Tahir Ludin and driver Asadullah Mangal and held for more than seven months. Rohde and Ludin escaped from a Taliban compound in June 2009. Mangal fled five weeks later.



OPC Governor **Farnaz Fassihi** has been covering stories for The New York Times on Iran's nuclear program amid fears that the Trump administration was flirting with ways to escalate conflict during his final weeks in office. [On Nov. 18](#), Fassihi and Times colleague David E. Sanger wrote that "the government in Tehran has sent conflicting signals, taking a major step to speed up its production of nuclear fuel while also offering President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr. a way to defuse a confrontation." On Wednesday this week the International Atomic Energy Agency said Iranian engineers had started to speed up its processing of uranium in a move that would violate a 2015 agreement that President Trump backed out of two and half years ago.



OPC member **David Friend** [on Nov. 6](#) wrote a tribute to his Vanity Fair colleague, Sam Anson, a longtime contributing editor for the magazine who died on Nov. 2 at the age of 75. Friend described Anson as "an intrepid, incisive reporter and a stylish writer, schooled in the so-called New Journalism of the 1960s and '70s" who was "beloved for his camaraderie, compassion, and spirited intensity." Anson started his journalism career as war correspondent for TIME magazine, covering conflicts in Vietnam and Cambodia, and over the next 50 years wrote as freelancer for magazines, wrote a half dozen books, cohosted a TV talk show for New York City's WNET, and worked for many years at The New Yorker. Friend has served as editor of creative development for Vanity Fair since 1998, and previously was LIFE magazine's director of photography.



OPC member **Rebecca Fannin**, author of *Tech Titans of China* and founder of Silicon Dragon Ventures, was quoted in [a Nov. 16](#) Bloomberg News story about China's crackdowns against perceived threats to the Communist Party. The article covers the government's moves to reign in and regulate Chinese companies like Alibaba and Tencent, which Fannin said had become as powerful in China as Facebook and Apple in the U.S. "Startups will welcome any decline in their monopolistic power because these huge Chinese companies have stifled them," she told Bloomberg, "and used their leverage and size to out-innovate them quickly or buy them out."



New Resources

TRAINING AND PROGRAMS

On Dec. 1, the **International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF)** will host its 30th Courage in Journalism Awards virtually to “celebrate three decades of the bravery and honor this year’s courageous journalists persisting to report against all odds.” [Read more and register here.](#)

On Nov. 23 at 9:00 a.m. Eastern Time, the **International Center for Journalists (ICFJ)** and the **Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University** will host a session and Q&A to discuss a study of effects of the pandemic on journalists worldwide. The survey includes responses from more than 1,400 English-speaking journalists in 125 countries, and results highlight “alarming obstacles and threats confronting journalism during the first stage of the pandemic.” [Read more and register here.](#)

On Nov. 24, the **Rory Peck Trust** will host its annual awards ceremony online to announce winners in several categories. [Read more and register here.](#)

The **Centre for Investigative Journalism** has posted recordings from this week’s ongoing Logan Symposium, titled “Collective Intelligence,” that are available to view on demand. Session topics include building security alliances to combat [malicious hacking](#) (starts about 15 minutes into the recording), press freedom attacks in Belarus (at 2 hours and 15 minutes), creeping surveillance and authoritarianism during the pandemic (at 2 hours and 30 minutes), and many more. [See the schedule and browse archives here.](#)

The **Foreign Press Association** posted a video of its [Nov. 17 conversation](#) between Jacob Mundy, an expert on the Western Sahara, and OPC member and FPA President **Ian Williams**. The interview follows a declaration by the group Polisario that a ceasefire declared four decades ago is now over after Moroccan troops broke the ceasefire in a buffer zone near the Mauritanian border. “The situation we’ve had is the most serious one since 1991,” Mundy said. For decades, Morocco has refused to hold a referendum on independence for the territory that U.N. resolutions mandated.

The **Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting** is now accepting reporting fellowship applications for its Rainforest Investigations Network (RIN). The last day to apply is Dec. 20, 2020 at 11:59 pm EST. [Read more and apply here.](#)

The **Pulitzer Center** has also posted an extensive archive of its events that are available to stream [on demand here.](#)

More Resources

- **First Draft** has been hosting a series of presentations on COVID-19 for journalists, and you can [browse the archives here](#).
- **Columbia University's Brown Institute for Media Innovation** has compiled a large repository of documents on COVID-19 via FOIA requests. [Explore the database here](#).
- **ACOS** [assembled](#) a substantial list of COVID-19 resources for journalists, including links to practical safety advice, funding opportunities, hardship and emergency funds, and reporting resources such as guides for fact checking.
- **ICFJ** [launched](#) a page for COVID-19 resources for journalists.
- **Rory Peck Trust** has a [resource page](#) for pandemic coverage. It includes safety guidelines, funding sources, job opportunities and online training

The OPC has added these links to a special COVID-19 section on the member-only [Resources](#) page available to members who have logged in. Watch that page as we share more. Click the button below to go directly, or find it in your Member Dashboard under "Resources."

If you have any issues accessing the resources page, please contact Chad Bouchard at chad@opcofamerica.org for credentials.

[OPC Resources Page](#)

Press Freedom Update

by Chad Bouchard

Reporters Without Borders, known by its French acronym **RSF**, has announced its list of twelve journalists and media organizations as nominees for the 2020 Press Freedom Awards. The seven journalists and five media outlets are up for prizes in three categories: Courage, Impact and Independence. In a release, RSF secretary-general Christophe Deloire said that the prizes pay tribute to journalists who embody the qualities of each award's name, but said the awards are also "deliberately intended as a demonstration of support for journalists who are too often imprisoned, prosecuted or threatened for embodying these values." Winners will be announced during the organization's awards ceremony in Taipei on Dec. 8. [Read the list of nominees here](#).

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has posted a list of "ten symptoms to track" in global governments' use of COVID-19 as justification to crack down on news media. The list includes laws against so-called fake news, jailing journalists, free speech restrictions as emergency measures, sweeping censorship, threats against journalists, surveillance, new visa restrictions, and increased restrictions and hamstrung access to public information. CPJ is tracking cases of each, and provides examples in [an extensive post here](#).

Early this month, nearly a dozen Hong Kong police arrested **Choy Yuk-ling**, also known as Bao Choy, a Hong Kong freelance broadcast journalist, at her home on charges connected to her accessing a public database of car registrations. Choy is a producer for the public broadcaster Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK). She was charged [on Nov. 3](#) for “giving false statements” to obtain vehicle information during research for a documentary. Choy was investigating the failure of police to keep a mob from attacking anti-government protesters and others at a subway station last year, and her reporting was part of a documentary that aired in July this year. Press freedom groups including the [CPJ](#) and [RSF](#) denounced her arrest and called for police to drop charges. She appeared in court [on Nov. 10](#). If convicted, Choy could face a fine equivalent to about \$645 and up to six months in jail. Meanwhile two other Hong Kong journalists were arrested in the same week, including a reporter [known as KY](#) who was pepper sprayed and had her camera seized after refusing to stop filming the arrest of two women at a mass protest. She was charged with obstructing police. Another journalist, [Nelson Tang](#), was arrested and charged with obstruction during a protest at a mall.

