



Overseas Press Club
of America

Bulletin March 25, 2021

Greetings!

This week's Bulletin features a recap of our [March 18 program on Taiwan-US relations](#) amid escalating pressure from China, a piece from OPC member [Mikey Kay](#) detailing challenges in his reporting over the last year, some updates and [notes of gratitude](#) from recent recipients of OPC micro-grants, a discussion about the [crisis in Myanmar](#) co-sponsored with the Foreign Press Association, and reminders for upcoming OPC book nights, one on April 1 with [Stephen B. Shepard on Second Thoughts](#) and one on April 16 with [John Maxwell Hamilton on Manipulating the Masses](#). And note that the [Annual OPC Foundation Scholar Awards](#) will be held on April 8. Plus catch up on member news in our People column and explore resources, trainings and opportunities.



OPC Micro-Grant Recipients Express Gratitude

The OPC has received notes of appreciation from many of the 92 micro-grant recipients after acceptance messages went out earlier this month. Below is a sampling of stories and thanks we'd like to share with Bulletin readers.

"The OPC micro-grant gives me timely and concrete economic support to produce the story I wanted to tell about some COVID-resilient communities in northern

Italy. It can be considered a 'solution story,' which I hope will give us the opportunity to reflect on the idea of sustainable society. As a documentary photographer, I feel an urgency to investigate the questions that COVID-19 pandemic has posed to human society.” – **Elisabetta Zavoli**, Rimini, Italy

“I would like to thank you for the grant you gave me. The grant helped me so much because I was lacking materials and with your help I bought one laptop, one recorder and a smartphone. And I appreciate it.” – **Claudine Ndayishimiye**, Kigali, Rwanda

“In the Caribbean of Guatemala, a lot of activity is generated related to improving productive activities, waste management and research of marine and terrestrial life that inhabits the area. It is a very diverse area, both in biological as well as cultural terms, however, historically it has been ignored by the government and little known by the Guatemalan population. This micro-grant will help me explore some of these stories, such as sustainable fishing, research on natural resources and their management, and the role that the cultural vision of the three ethnic groups that inhabit the area plays in a paradigm shift in order to improve resilience to climate change and other realities for the immediate future. I am very excited about this opportunity, and grateful to be able to be a part of this program that you promote.” – **Jorge Rodríguez**, Guatemala

“This micro-grant will give me the economic peace of mind to be able to concentrate on continuing work on my projects as well as the resources to investigate projects that I'm working on independently. Most of my projects tend to be self financed, and support is very much appreciated. – **Marco Garro**, Lima, Peru

“Being a freelancer is tougher than ever today. Freelancers lack support in terms of travel expenses and safety nets. Sometimes I get paid lower than Western counterparts, too. This micro-grant from OPC will help me pursue my long-abandoned video documentary projects. It's more than enough to cover anything I need.” – **Adi Renaldi**, Jakarta, Indonesia

“I'm continuing to cover the deaths of meat processing workers of COVID-19 and am currently working with both The New York Times and National Geographic on articles about this issue. I'm also contributing to a forthcoming book on labor rights that will be published in 2022 by the University of Kentucky Press and all proceeds will be used to raise money for the Poor People's Campaign. Other writers include Nikky Finney who won the National Book Award in 2011. Thank you for your continued support.” – **Alice Driver**, Oark, Arkansas

As quoted in our [March 11 press release](#), recipient **Gloria Dickie** called the micro-grant a “godsend” for freelancers struggling during the pandemic:

“Like many reporters, I had foreign assignments cancelled at the onset of the pandemic and haven't been able to replace that expected income with new assignments. At nearly a year into the pandemic, it's taking a toll. Like many freelancers, I'd made this career financially feasible by living cheaply and moving from place to place, staying in hostels. The pandemic quickly upended that lifestyle. This microgrant will help me pay for basic necessities, like rent, and stay

in journalism.”

[Read on the OPC Website](#)

Upcoming OPC Events

For all of the programs below, RSVPs are essential. Register now to receive login credentials before the program.



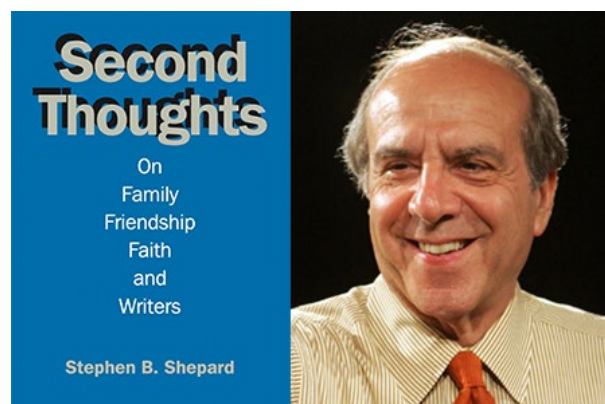
April 1: *Second Thoughts* – On Family, Friendship, Faith and Writers – An OPC Chat with Stephen B. Shepard

Time: 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Location: Zoom video conferencing app.

Join the OPC for virtual cocktails and conversation with author and journalist **Stephen B. Shepard** to discuss his book, *Second Thoughts: On Family, Friendship, Faith and Writers*. Shepard was editor-in-chief

of BusinessWeek, the founding dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at the City University of New York, a senior editor at Newsweek, and co-founder of the Knight-Bagehot Fellowships at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.



In writing the book, Shepard said he hoped to gain new understanding about the family of his boyhood; greater meaning about today’s journalism as it copes with profound change; new thoughts about the Jewishness he once rejected; renewed pleasure in re-reading fiction that matters; and deep understanding of male friendship.

In the chapter titled “The New World of Journalism,” Shepard describes how he and other traditional journalists took pride in acting as “trustworthy gatekeepers,” only to find themselves criticized in the digital revolution as being biased elitists. “We were dethroned, like some ancient monarch.” As social media grew, roughly half of all traditional journalists lost their jobs.

Shepard believes technological change must be kept in perspective. “The new technologies, as dazzling as they seem, are but a means to an overriding end. And that end is journalism.” In an era of media fragmentation, he stresses that in-

depth reporting, community engagement and analysis are desperately needed. “I believe, in the smithy of my soul, that even if the medium ultimately changes – and it will – the intellectual need, the human need, for thoughtful journalism will never, ever go away.”

OPC President **Paula Dwyer** will lead the discussion.

RSVP Now



April 8: Annual OPC Foundation Scholar Awards



Time: 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Place: Online via Zoom

The Overseas Press Club Foundation has announced that this year's 30th Annual OPC Foundation Scholar Awards will be held online on April 8. The event will include an awards presentation to celebrate the 17 journalists chosen by the Foundation's judges and will feature a panel of past OPC Foundation winners who will discuss their own careers and how the Foundation helped them. Associated Press legend and OPC member **Edie Lederer** will moderate. Panelists will include **Portia Crowe**, a freelancer based in Paris; **Dake Kang** of The Associated Press in Beijing; and **Jacob Kushner**, a freelancer based in Nairobi. Please RVSP using the button below.

RSVP Now



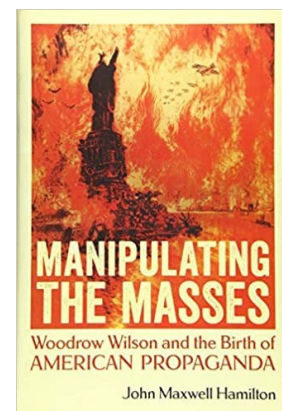
April 16: Book Night - Manipulating the Masses: Woodrow Wilson and the Birth of American

Propaganda

Time: 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Location: Zoom video conferencing app.

Please join us for a Book Night with author and OPC member **John Maxwell Hamilton** about his new book: *Manipulating the Masses: Woodrow Wilson and the Birth of American Propaganda*. OPC Past President **Allan Dodds Frank** will moderate the discussion.



Hamilton has produced a compelling investigation that documents how the American government under President Woodrow Wilson a century ago laid out the foundations for the government to build a propaganda machine designed to mislead the public. Using World War I as the rationale for establishing the "Committee on Public Information" under muckraker George Creel, the Wilson Administration wrote a propaganda playbook that foreshadowed what future administrations would do to manipulate public opinion. In Hamilton's view, these perversions of the truth represent a persistent threat to democracy. His story also has startling revelations about the extent to which the press allowed itself to be bend to Wilson's war aims.

[RSVP Now](#)



365 Days - Storytelling on the Frontlines

OPC member *Mikey Kay*, a journalist and filmmaker based in Paris, wrote the following piece for the Bulletin to encapsulate the last year of his reporting on COVID-19 around the world, including challenges and people he met along the way. Kay's work has appeared on BBC, CNN, ABC News, MSNBC, National Geographic, and more. He is director of the 2019 BBC documentary *My Autistic Big Brother and Me*.

by Mikey Kay

"If the principle of freedom and human rights is higher than the fear of the dead, then it is very difficult to do anything concerning the epidemic."

Looking back over the last year on the hundred or so stories I have had the privilege of telling surrounding COVID-19, from China to the US, and many countries in between, this response from an interview with Slovakian epidemiologist, professor Vladimír Krčmery, has



resonated with me, time and time again in the months since we spoke. The professor did not only have a phenomenal background on countering infectious diseases due to his experiences with Ebola in South Sudan, but he had also set up a shelter for the homeless in Bratislava, Slovakia, with the promise of food and cigarettes in return for the visitors agreeing to lockdown – he knew the transmission rates could be high and deadly among those living on the streets.

As journalists, we are passionate about communicating the truth through storytelling. But rarely do opportunities come along that give us the chance to purely focus on a long arc of episodes threading the brilliance of human beings in responding to tragic events.

In April last year, the Head of Global Brand and Digital Marketing at GE Healthcare, Kristin Fallon, called me to talk about the flood of positive and heroic stories that were emerging in her sphere of communications, from across the world as a consequence of the pandemic. “I want to create a news channel leveraging the access that we have, distributing remarkable stories across our social media platforms” – Kristin passionately relayed to me. A week later I was on the road, driving an RV solo across the U.S. from North to South – supported remotely by a dedicated team who were harvesting the stories. The pace was relentless, there were so many.

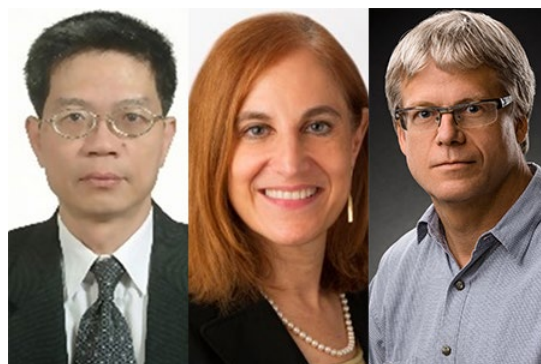
[Read More](#)



Expert Panel Examines Future of Taiwan-US Relations Amid Mounting Pressure from China

by Chad Bouchard

U.S. President Joseph Biden’s administration and leaders in Taiwan face a prolonged period of testing and escalating pressures from China, but probably can avoid a full-scale military confrontation, particularly if they draw in key allies such as Japan into a multilateral coalition, three panelists from the U.S. and Taiwan concluded in a trans-continental video conversation that the OPC hosted on March 18.



Speaking from Taiwan was Dr. Ou Si-fu, director of the Division of Chinese Politics, Military and Warfighting Concepts at Taiwan’s Institute for National Defense and Security Research.

Ou presented slides and photographs showing how Chinese military aircraft routinely engage in flight paths that violate Taiwan’s Air Defense Identification

Zone, often in cooperation with the naval forces of the People's Liberation Army. Submarine maneuvering is becoming increasingly important in the southwest sector of Taiwan's ADIZ because of deep waters, he said. The Biden Administration has signaled that it will supply submarine parts to the government of President Tsai Ing-wen.

[Read the Full Recap](#)



OPC and FPA Host Discussion on the International Response to the Military Coup in Myanmar

On March 18, the OPC and the Foreign Press Association (FPA) co-sponsored a discussion about violence in Myanmar following the military coup last month, and whether the U.S. or United Nations could - *or should* - take action to intervene. FPA President and OPC member Ian Williams spoke with former U.N. Special Rapporteur on Myanmar Yanghee Lee, Chris Gunness of the BBC and Brad Adams of Human Rights Watch. Click the window below to watch the program.



Welcome New Member

Yuntong Man

Freelance Video Journalist &
Adjunct Assistant Professor
Columbia Journalism School
New York
Active Resident, Young (29 or under)

People by Chad Bouchard

We appreciate all member news tips and updates! Please send us your personal anecdotes, photos, and links to published pieces to info@opcofamerica.org, and we will publish them on our People column pages on the OPC website and share with members here in the Bulletin. You can also share those stories directly with members on our [OPC Connect](#) group on Facebook, or tweet us [@opcofamerica](#).

OPC MEMBERS COVERING COVID-19

Keith Bradsher, an OPC member, co-wrote a piece for The New York Times [on March 21](#) with colleague Sui-Lee Wee about the ripple effects of China's strict border closures and quarantine measures over the last year. To stanch the spread of coronavirus, China banned tourists and short-term business travelers, and ramped up restrictions for foreigners, even those who have lived there for years. Those moves resulted in separated families, disrupted businesses, and set thousands of international students adrift in uncertainty, the writers said. The story notes that the number of foreign business managers in China has declined, and an American Chamber of Commerce survey of 191 businesses indicates that the proportion of companies with no expatriates had surged to 28 percent, compared to 9 percent a year earlier.



OPC member **Vernon Silver** was part of a Bloomberg Businessweek team that reported on problems and blowback in the uneven distribution of the Pfizer vaccine. The [March 4 story](#) recounted panic and outrage over a Pfizer announcement in January that the company would temporarily cut vaccine supplies while its manufacturing facility in Belgium closed for an upgrade. Italy, one of the world's worst-hit countries, threatened "unspecified action" against the company and accusations of incompetence. Silver, along with colleagues Stephanie Baker and Cynthia Koons, wrote that vaccine distribution was an "opaque process" involving "a mix of order size, position in the queue, production forecasts, calls from world leaders, the potential to advance the science, and of course the desire to make a profit."

Jim Bittermann, a longtime OPC member and CNN correspondent, reported from France for CNN on new lockdown restrictions [on March 19](#) as the country tries to bring

a surge of COVID-19 cases under control. He said for the next month that in particular targeted sections around Paris and Nice, an estimated 110,000 non-essential businesses would be shut down. "Travel between parts of the country which are under restrictions and other areas will be forbidden," he said in a video dispatch.



SCHOLARS

After her fellowship with Rest of the World ended, **Mehr Nadeem**, the Irene Corbally Kuhn Scholarship winner in 2019, was hired to stay on as a contributing writer covering all things tech in Saudi Arabia, Iran and the Persian Gulf. The OPC Foundation funded Mehr's internship with Reuters in Pakistan.



Gabriela Bhaskar, the 2017 David R. Schweisberg Scholarship winner, has been named as member of the 2021-22 New York Times Fellowship class. A photojournalist based in New York, Gabbie's work has been featured in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg, Reuters and more.



AWARDS

OPC member **Steve Stecklow** was among the winners named in a Reuters' [2020 Journalists of the Year Award](#) in the category of Enterprise Reporting for the series on coronavirus response mismanagement called COVID Kingdom. The series also won a British Journalism Award for Best Science Journalism late last year.



OPC member and photojournalist **Joshua Irwandi** has been [nominated](#) for a 2021 World Press Photo Award. Irwandi is a photographer based in Jakarta for National Geographic. This year's nominations include 45 photographers from 28 countries. Winners will be announced on April 15.

UPDATES

OPC member **Evgeny Afineevsky** is scheduled to participate in a panel tonight (March 25) at 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time following the screening of his film, Francesco, which features interviews with Pope Francis and provides "an intimate look at a global leader who approaches challenging and complex

issues with tremendous humility, wisdom and generosity towards all.” The film is scheduled to premiere in theaters on March 26, and will be available on the Discovery+ service on March 28. [Click here](#) to RSVP for the virtual screening, which will begin at 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time.



Veteran freelance photojournalist **Peter Turnley**, who has been an OPC member since 1992, is among those slated to present his work during an online symposium [on March 30 and 31](#). Hosted at Ohio University’s E.W. Scripps School of Journalism and the School of Visual Communication, The Schuneman Symposium on Photojournalism and New Media will focus on covering global crises. Turnley’s photographs have appeared on Newsweek’s cover 40 times, and he has worked in more than 90 countries and published eight books. Many other photographers, journalists and filmmakers are scheduled to speak, and the two-day event will also feature film screenings, including “The Nightcrawlers” about Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte’s “war on drugs,” and “Essential Journalists,” about journalists’ adaptations in covering COVID-19. Turnley’s presentation is scheduled for 3:05 p.m. Eastern Time on March 31.



OPC member **Kathy Gannon** of The Associated Press interviewed former Afghan President Hamid Karzai [on March 11](#) to discuss a draft deal between the Taliban and the Afghan government. Karzai told Gannon that Afghans were “in a hurry for peace” and healing after decades of conflict. She wrote that President Ashraf Ghani would likely oppose portions of the deal that would diminish the president’s power during a transition government, and the Taliban would push back against liberal reforms and secular rule. Karzai served as president from 2001 to 2004 and has no formal role in negotiations, but is considered to be an important player behind the scenes, Gannon said.



Lucy Sherriff, an OPC member and freelancer based in California, wrote a longform piece for the Medium project Future Human [on March 15](#) about a research project in Hawaii to translate forgotten archives of native-language newspapers for mining valuable climate data. She wrote that there were once more than 100 native language newspapers in circulation in Hawaii that chronicled daily life on the islands. That record was once thought to be lost, but in the early 1990s, Puakea Nogelmeier, a professor of language at the University of Hawai’i, discovered that local libraries and museums had hoarded its old newspapers. He started the slow process of translating and digitizing each article. Sherriff said that data extracted from the weather reports “enabled meteorologists to track Hawaii’s extreme weather past, which, in turn, led to critical legislation protecting Hawaiians from



similar weather in the future.”

OPC member and USA TODAY reporter **Kim Hjelmgaard** participated in an AMA (ask me anything) thread on Reddit [on March 17](#) to discuss his recent reporting on the United States’ vast overseas military empire. Asked whether the Biden administration intends to reduce U.S. military presence overseas, Hjelmgaard said one key indicator of that intention would be a commitment to reform the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution, or AUMF. “This is the legislation that has permitted the U.S. to wield military power all over the world while hunting for terrorists in places like Syria,” he said. “It was intended more narrowly for 9/11-related wars in Afghanistan and then Iraq. The Obama admin also signaled it would reform AUMF. It never did.” Links to Hjelmgaard’s recent reporting on the issue, including a longform piece in February titled “[A Reckoning is Near](#),” can be found in the introduction of the AMA thread.



Henry Peck, an OPC member and freelancer based in East Sussex, U.K., wrote about the UK government’s placement programs on the south coast for people displaced by conflict in Syria and Sudan for Open Democracy [on March 17](#). The article explores a flagship government called the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), and examines how effective it has been in practice. Peck wrote that the program has offered one of the only safe routes to Britain for displaced people, but has been used to justify an antagonistic approach to asylum seekers crossing the English Channel. “Across the world, resettlement serves fewer than 1 percent of refugees, but as Europe grapples with fatal sea crossings, xenophobic politics, and overcrowded asylum facilities, the successes and shortcomings of the VPRS hold lessons for the wider region’s immigration policies,” he wrote.

OPC member **Kathy Eldon** recently traveled to Kenya for a tour and working vacation to visit old and new friends as well as check in on humanitarian aid programs. In a personal newsletter, she wrote about a visit to the Shining Hope for Communities project in a poor community of Nairobi that provides essential services to several local charities. Eldon also wrote about a stop at the nearby Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, a haven for elephants and rhinos, a visit with an Empowered Women group, and more. A browser-friendly version of the email newsletter [is available here](#), where you can also find a link to subscribe for future issues.



People Column March 25, 2021

New Resources

RESOURCES

The **Society of Professional Journalists** has recently updated the Data Journalism page of its **Journalist's Toolbox** with more resources for mapping, geocoding, infographics, sports data, scraping and cleaning, and more data tools and tipsheets. [Explore the resources here](#). In addition, on March 13, Journalist's Toolbox posted a short training video on tools to work with public records. [Watch the video here](#).

Bruce Shapiro, the executive director of the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, posted advice on the NBCU Academy site with tips for how journalists can practice self-care while reporting on community trauma. He outlines steps and strategies for making a self-care plan that includes awareness of warning signs, building resistance to stress, processing trauma, taking breaks from alerts and "doomscrolling," and building a network of support. [Read more here](#).

TRAINING AND PROGRAMS

On April 8 at 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time, the **George Polk Awards of Long Island University** will hold a panel discussion with award winners who provided groundbreaking reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic. Speakers include David Culver of CNN, Helen Branswell of STAT and Ed Young of The Atlantic, with author Laurie Garrett serving as moderator. [Read more and register here](#).

On April 1, the **Foreign Press Association** will host a discussion about prospects for a change in leadership at the United Nations and the inclusion of women as candidates for secretary-general to replace António Guterres. The discussion will feature Al Jazeera English correspondent Kristen Saloomey, PassBlue's Dulcie Leimbach, Stephanie Fillion and Sonah Lee-Lassiter. [Read more and register here](#).

From March 29 to April 25, the **Knight Center** will host an online course titled "Covering the COVID-19 vaccine: What journalists need to know." Students will learn how to improve their coverage of COVID-19 and vaccines, with access to science journalists and medical experts who will discuss "the efficacy of different vaccine formulas, analyze the distribution of vaccines, share tips for dispelling disinformation and misinformation when covering the vaccines, and much more." [Read more and register here](#).

The **Frontline Freelance Register** has posted a recording of a March 25 panel about the business of freelancing in journalism. Anna Codrea Rado spoke with Anna Lekas-Miller about a range of issues including finding clients and setting rates, saving for taxes and dealing with insecurities as a freelancer. [Watch the conversation here](#).

GRANTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The **Magnum Foundation** is accepting applications for the Inge Morath Award, a \$5,000 grant given to a woman photographer under the age of 30 to support the completion of a long-term documentary project. One finalist will also receive a \$1,000 grant in support of their project. Submissions are due by April 30. [Read more and apply 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

