



Overseas Press Club
of America

Bulletin Dec. 19, 2024



Hello Chad,

We hope you enjoy this December edition of the Bulletin. Read recaps of recent OPC events, including an "In the Thick of It" panel on turmoil in Georgia [on Dec. 13](#); a book night with Edward Wong [on Dec. 10](#); and a discussion about the U.S. election at the American Library in Paris [on Dec. 3](#). Check out a preview of a book night with Alice Driver coming up [on Jan. 8](#).

Catch up on OPC community member news in the People Column, programs and opportunities in our Resources section, and more.

Please note that submissions for the OPC Annual Awards are open, with a deadline for Cornelius Ryan Award book entries on Jan. 8, and the deadline for all other categories on Jan. 31.

Journalists Discuss Unrest in Georgia

by Chad Bouchard

Journalists covering upheaval in Georgia said during a Dec. 13 panel that riot police are targeting journalists as well as protesters, and norms of press freedom have shifted suddenly in recent weeks.

The OPC program, held on the eve of the ruling party's appointment of a contentious anti-Western president, was part of the "In the Thick of It" series. The panelists were three reporters who have been on the ground in Tbilisi, and discussed the protests, violence and challenges in covering the conflict.

Singeli Agnew, a documentary filmmaker and governor of the OPC, moderated the discussion.

Georgia has experienced prolonged mass protests since the ruling Georgian Dream party claimed victory in the Oct. 26 elections, a result contested by opposition parties. Tensions escalated after Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze announced on Nov. 28 that Georgia would halt its EU accession talks, triggering

more demonstrations and a police crackdown.

The Committee to Protect Journalists [on Dec. 4](#) said at least 50 journalists had been injured during violent police dispersals at pro-European Union demonstrations between Nov. 28 and Dec. 3.

Will Cathcart, an American journalist, producer, and former media advisor to the president of Georgia, recalled seeing an image of Georgia's current pro-European president, Salome Zourabichvili, confronting police on Nov 28.

"She walked up to the riot police, and started tapping on their shields. She said 'who do you serve, Georgia or Russia? You swore an oath. Who did you swear that oath to? You swore it to me, the president,'" he quoted her as saying. "And then she just walked along, almost like a grandmother scolding these guys."

Daro Sulakauri, a Georgian photojournalist covering news for Reuters and The New York Times, described a police attack against a colleague that she witnessed during one of the first days of recent demonstrations.

"We were surrounded by police. I remember they surrounded us, and I put my hands up to say 'don't arrest me or don't touch me.' They kind of grabbed the cameraman and started beating him. I started saying 'stop, he's a journalist' but I'm sure they didn't listen to me. At some point they stopped, but he was beaten really, really badly," Sulakauri said.

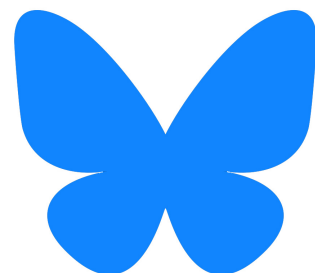
[Read the Full Recap](#)



OPC Joins Bluesky

The OPC has launched a Bluesky account. We invite those who already have accounts to please give us a "follow," and we'd like to follow members back as we grow the OPC community on this platform. The OPC profile page is linked via the button below.

The OPC handle is: [@opcofamerica.bsky.social](#)



Upcoming Events

Jan. 8: Book Night: 'Life and Death of the American Worker – The Immigrants Taking on America's Largest Meatpacking Company' by Alice Driver

Time: 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Place: Online via Zoom

The OPC invites you to join a book night to discuss *Life and Death of the American Worker* by OPC member **Alice Driver**. Winner of the J. Anthony Lukas Work-in-Progress Award, the book begins with a deadly chemical accident at a Tyson processing plant in

2011, which the company quickly covered up. Driver was able to gain the trust of the immigrant workers who survived the horrific incident and its aftermath.

During the course of Driver's reporting, the COVID-19 pandemic struck the community, and the workers were forced to continue production in unsafe conditions, watching their colleagues get sick and die one by one. These essential workers, many of whom only speak Spanish and some of whom are illiterate, found the strength and courage to organize and fight back, culminating in a lawsuit against Tyson Foods.

Yaffa Fredrick, Senior Director of Investigations at The Houston Chronicle, will moderate the discussion.

[The book is available to purchase here.](#)



RSVP Now



April 17: OPC Annual Awards Dinner



ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER

Network with Leading Global Journalists

April 17, 2025 | Cipriani, 25 Broadway, New York City

Main reception **6pm** | Dinner and program **7pm** | VIP reception **5:30pm**

Date: April 17, 2025

Place: Cipriani, 25 Broadway in New York City.

The Overseas Press Club is excited to announce that its 86th anniversary awards dinner will take place on April 17th at Cipriani, 25 Broadway in New York City.

Individual tickets will go on sale in January.

For more information, contact OPC Executive Director Patricia Kranz at patricia@opcofamerica.org.

Edward Wong Discusses His Family's Saga from China to US in 'At the Edge of Empire'

by Chad Bouchard

Edward Wong, a diplomatic correspondent for The New York Times, shared photos and stories about his father's past life in China that he seldom spoke about, during an OPC event on Dec. 10. Wong's father's story started in post-World War II China, wending through his service in the Chinese Army and flight during the Cultural Revolution, ultimately landing in Washington, DC.

The book night, co-sponsored by the Asian American Journalists Association, explored Wong's new memoir, *At the Edge of Empire: A Family's Reckoning with China*.

Tracy Jan, a deputy health and science editor at The Washington Post, moderated the discussion. Wong was the OPC Foundation's David R. Schweisberg Scholarship winner in 1998. Jan and Wong met in 1999 when Jan

was in Taiwan on a Fulbright fellowship, and the two later reconnected as neighbors in Washington, DC.

Wong discussed his research in China, the process of interviewing his father, and talked about contemporary topics such as the potential for war between the U.S. and China over Taiwan, his advice for aspiring correspondents, and answered questions from the audience on a range of topics.

He said his father, now in his early 90s, wasn't reluctant to talk about his experiences when asked, but "I had to take the initiative to pry it out of him."

"I think he realized that there was value in some ways in sharing the history with me and in the fact that I would share it with the outside world," Wong said. "When a lot of people are that age, they think that the events that they lived through – there is some sense that lessons can be learned, and a sense of the importance of that history, which could be lost if it's not documented in some way."

[Read the Full Recap](#)



Journalists Discuss US Election at the American Library in Paris

by Chad Bouchard

The OPC and the American Library in Paris on Dec. 3 convened a panel of French and American journalists for an autopsy of the U.S. election in November, to discuss factors leading to President-Elect Donald Trump's victory in and what it means for his coming term.

OPC member Vivienne Walt, Paris correspondent for TIME and FORTUNE magazines, moderated. She asked the panel of political correspondents if there was an "ah-ha" moment during the campaign when they might have suspected Trump would win.

Walt said she felt uneasy while watching the Democratic National Convention in

August, which featured celebrities and a “sense of everybody being just so really self-congratulatory.”

“When [Kamala Harris] said in many ways Donald Trump is an unserious man – I thought that really doesn't sound good to the ears of many Americans. Does that mean that their politics are not serious? Their complaints are not serious?”

Vivian Salama, a reporter for The Wall Street Journal who had been covering the campaign for a full year, said despite a late surge of support for Harris, when it seemed that “maybe women were turning out in greater numbers,” that a Trump victory felt like a strong possibility for months.

“Largely those of us who were on the campaign trail felt that Donald Trump was very well placed, maybe not for the sweeping victory that we saw but at least for a victory. I would say after the [debate between Trump and President Joseph Biden] everything kind of just went downhill.”

Read the Full Recap



Iranian Cartoonist Released After 8 Months in Prison

In the following post, OPC Past President David A. Andelman writes about the recent release of Iranian cartoonist Atena Farghadani, who had been jailed at the infamous Evin Prison since her arrest in April. Andelman has been covering her case and the international campaign to free her on his Substack, Andelman Unleashed.

by David. A. Andelman



Andelman Unleashed joined with [Cartooning for Peace](#) in [a global campaign](#) from the moment of her latest detention on April 21. Now, it appears, she has been liberated, as this group of the world's leading cartoonists exulted this week.

Violently arrested on April 13 by agents of the intelligence services of the Islamic

Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) while she was trying to display a drawing near the presidential palace in Tehran, Atena Farghadani has since been held in Evin Prison, infamous for its poor conditions. She has just been released after more than 8 months of imprisonment.

An update on the Cartooning for Peace site said the Revolutionary Court of the Islamic Republic of Iran sentenced Farghadani to 6 years in prison on June 10, including 5 years for “insulting the sacred” and 1 year for “propaganda against the State.” The organization said those accusations were “clearly motivated by her commitment and her opinions.”

“On Dec. 10, 2024, her lawyer announced her release, following a decision by the appeals court,” the Cartooning for Peace article said. “On Dec. 9, a post on the cartoonist’s Instagram account stated that Atena Farghadani ‘has been acquitted of the charge of “insult to the sacred,” and was sentenced to 8 months for her caricature on class disparity.’ This new sentence of 8 months in prison, which appears to have been formulated retroactively, is linked to a drawing entitled ‘Class Inequality.’ The appeal decision comes at a time when other figures imprisoned for their positions, such as rapper Toomaj Saleh, arrested in October 2022 and whose death sentence was overturned in June 2024 by the Supreme Court, and Narges Mohammadi, 2023 Nobel Peace Prize winner and imprisoned since November 2021, have also seen their situation change.”

A central question remains – is this a response to some deeply felt pressures building within Iran or a growing sense from the leading Ayatollahs that the world outside is moving dramatically and potentially for them in a catastrophically different direction to which they must begin to respond. Either way, this news is most welcome.

[Read on the OPC Website](#)

Welcome New Members

Nino Benashvili
NYU Tisch School of the Arts
New York
Student



The OPC is grateful to the Simon and June Li Center for Global Journalism at Columbia University for subsidizing OPC memberships and OPC press IDs for the following Columbia journalism students.

Rana Roudi

Youmna Sukkar

SCHOLARS

Sonia A. Rao, winner of the 2024 Emanuel R. Freedman Scholarship, has concluded her internship in Nairobi, Kenya with Reuters News Agency. In a [post on LinkedIn](#), she said that over her three-month stint there, she wrote and reported on the impeachment of Kenya's deputy president, deteriorating Somalia-Ethiopia relations, Somaliland's elections and more. "I pitched several features, including one that allowed me to travel to the coast and interview Kenyan villagers who have turned to seaweed farming as climate change has decimated other industries. I contributed reporting to big breaking news on the killing of Ugandan Olympian runner Rebecca Cheptegei, the Adani Group's presence in Kenya, a suicide bombing in Mogadishu, and more."

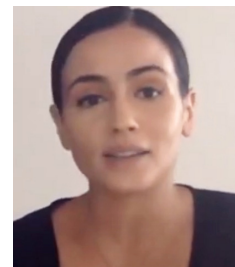


Trisha Mukherjee, the Stan Swinton Scholarship winner for 2024, has embarked on a reporting trip for The New York Times that will take her to Kenya, Madagascar, and Mauritius, where she will be traveling with Times opinion columnist Nicholas Kristof. "I'll be reporting on topics from period poverty in the informal settlements of Nairobi to climate change in Madagascar's coastal communities," she wrote. To follow her updates from the field, check out her Instagram account, [@trisha_writes](#).



AWARDS

Hind Hassan, a member of the VICE News team that won the OPC's 2019 David Kaplan Award, received the Neal Conan Prize for Excellence in Journalism [in November](#). The annual award, now in its second year, comes with a \$50,000 award and honors "extraordinary work embodying the spirit of public good." A release about the announcement said that Hassan's "fearless and thoughtful reporting for VICE News, Al Jazeera and Sky News on conflicts, humanitarian crises, and significant global stories aligns closely with the values championed by Neal Conan during his nearly four-decade tenure at National Public Radio (NPR)." Hassan [spoke](#) to Susan MacTavish Best about the award and the current state of journalism in the POSTHOC Salon series [on Dec. 7](#). Hassan joined an OPC program with her VICE colleagues in [July 2020](#) to discuss the winning investigation into illegal orphanages in Uganda.



UPDATES

OPC member, author and photojournalist **Steve Raymer** donated thousands of images from his decades-long career with National Geographic to the Wisconsin Historical Society [in October](#). Raymer, an alum of the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Journalism and Mass Communication,

included more than 2,000 digital files, nearly 200 color prints, and over 7,000 color transparencies in the donation. Raymer is emeritus professor of journalism at Indiana University. He traveled to more than 110 countries during his 60-year career, including 24 trips to Vietnam, where he served and fought as an Army first lieutenant in 1968 and 1969. "Giving the archive of my life's work is a start toward paying it forward. But it's a debt that I personally feel can never really be repaid," Raymer said in an interview on the school's website.



OPC Past President **David Andelman** wrote a remembrance of French jazz pianist Martial Solal for The New York Times [on Dec. 13](#). Solal, who wrote many scores for films and orchestras over a career that spanned nearly 75 years, died in Versailles on Dec. 12 at the age of 97. The score for Jean-Luc Godard's film *Breathless* was among his most notable works. Andelman said critics have compared him to Art Tatum, Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk, "But he blazed his own path, combining spare melodic lines with lush chordal passages in a style the French newspaper *Le Monde* described as 'cutting through his music with the precision of a goldsmith.'"

OPC member **Haley Willis** filed a story with video from Damascus [on Dec. 9](#) covering a rescue group searching Syria's notorious Sednaya military prison as crowds searched for loved ones jailed under the rule of fallen President Bashar al-Assad. The piece, co-created with Times colleague Nader Ibrahim, showed footage from social media and wire services depicting rebels and rescue workers at the prison using tools to break through concrete floors and walls to uncover hidden jail cells. Willis is a member of the visual investigations team at the Times.



Peter Schwartzstein, a freelance environmental journalist and OPC member, spoke to Circle of Blue [on Dec. 4](#) about connections between climate change and violence around the world. Schwartzstein's book, *The Heat and The Fury*, includes on-the-ground reporting in 30 countries where climate changes such as blistering temperatures and erratic rainfall lead to violence, coastal piracy, rising crime and other results. "As one of the examples, between about 2014 and 2017, I spent many, many months looking at the ways in which ISIS had profited from collapsing agricultural conditions in the rural heartlands of Iraq and Syria to pad its ranks," Schwartzstein wrote.

OPC member **Aliide Naylor** [on Nov. 25](#) wrote a piece for The Times in the U.K. about the capture of a British soldier fighting for Ukraine. She wrote that James Scott Rhys Anderson appeared as a detainee in a video that circulated widely and was first shared on a Russian Telegram account. He described his story to the camera, saying the former signalman with the British Army had been fired from his job and decided to travel first to Poland and then to Ukraine to join the fight. The Russian state-controlled news agency TASS wrote that he had been captured in Russia's Kursk region. The unit that captured Anderson was formed by veterans of the Wagner Group and is now a branch of Akhmat, Naylor wrote.



New Resources

RESOURCES

The **Journalist's Resource** organization has posted a tip sheet for covering higher education. The post provides a list of databases to help journalists access key information on colleges, universities, and student outcomes, including changing demographics of U.S. college students, graduation rates, campus crime, faculty salaries and student health. [Read more here.](#)

The **Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN)** has posted a list of the organization's top investigative tools for 2024. The list includes Bellingcat's Online Investigations Toolkit, the Open Source Munitions Portal to track bombing of civilians, the NINA database of public documents in Latin America, and more. [Read the list here.](#)

The **International Journalists' Network (IJNet)** has published the first edition of a new newsletter, IJNotebook, aimed at student journalists and early-career media professionals. The publication will include exclusive "resources on networking, using public records in your reporting and more." [Subscribe here.](#)

MUCK RACK

In case you haven't signed up for Muck Rack's newsletter for journalists and PR professionals, the **Muck Rack Daily** [link to join is here.](#)

Muck Rack Academy also provides training on a range of topics from measuring metrics to social media basics. The group offers live trainings and tutorials as well as on-demand recordings of past webinars. [Read more here.](#)

The OPC hosted a training session with Muck Rack in July on how to set up a profile and get the most out of its platform. [Read tips and watch the video here.](#)

TRAINING AND PROGRAMS

The **International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF)** is launching a program to increase and deepen coverage of the war in Ukraine. The program, titled Women on the Ground: Reporting from Ukraine's Unseen Frontlines, is open to American, French, and German journalists representing local and regional news outlets and will include reporting trips to Ukraine. The first reporting trip will take place from Feb. 12 to 26. Reporting fellows will begin their trip in Warsaw, Poland, before traveling to the base location in Ukraine. Fellows will also participate in a three-day Hostile Environment and First Aid Training before eight days of reporting on the ground. The deadline to apply is Jan. 5. [Read more and pitch stories here.](#)

GRANTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The **Pulitzer Center** is offering a fellowship for its Rainforest Investigations Network. Experienced investigative journalists based in the Amazon, Congo

Basin and Southeast Asia regions are eligible for this yearlong program reporting on deforestation. The deadline to apply is Dec. 31 [Read more and apply here](#).

The **James B. Steele Fellowship in Investigative Business Journalism** is accepting applications. The Fellowship targets early-career journalists who are looking to jump-start their career as business journalists and is open to applications from the U.S. and abroad. The deadline to apply is Jan. 1. [Read more and apply here](#).

The **National Press Club Journalism Institute** and the **Common Health Coalition** have announced a new public health reporting fellowship, with up to \$7,500 each to five individuals to support reporting projects focused on the intersection of public health policy and health care delivery. The deadline to apply is Jan. 6. [Read more and apply here](#).

The **International Center for Journalists (ICFJ)** in collaboration with the Elliott family and ONE, is accepting entries for the 2025 Michael Elliott Award for Excellence in African Storytelling. The award honors up-and-coming journalists in Africa who “strive to strengthen people's voices and illuminate the transformational change taking place on the continent.” Winners receive a cash prize, a certificate and more. The deadline to apply is Jan. 12. [Read more and apply here](#).

The **Knight Science Journalism Fellowship Program at MIT** is calling for full-time journalists to apply for fellowships in the Boston/Cambridge area from mid-August to May, 2025. Applicants must submit a 500-word background, a CV, work samples, references and a project proposal. The deadline to apply is Jan. 15. [Read more and apply here](#).

GEO magazine is offering a grant of more than \$5,000 for journalists and photojournalists 30 or younger to help with a reporting project to be published in French in GEO's print and web editions. Candidates must submit proposals that “align with GEO's editorial line, including exploration of new territories, the environment, society and territories, and more.” The winner will be announced in April 2025. The deadline to apply is Jan. 17, and the application page is in French. [Read more and apply here](#).

The **Fund for Investigative Journalism** is offering grants up to US\$10,000 to support investigative projects that break new ground and expose wrongdoing. The next deadline to apply is Jan. 27. [Read more and apply here](#).

More Resources

Click the button below to go directly to the OPC's Resources page, 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.

OPC Resources Page



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