

IN THIS ISSUE

Don Pease: ISWNE's brightly shining starPages 1, 3-4
 President's ReportPage 2
 Pease possessed absolute integrityPage 4
 Don Pease was a man who practiced what he preachedPage 5
 Remembering Don Pease.....Page 5
 ISWNE new memberPage 5
 ISWNEWSPage 6
 In defense of Wal-Mart: Retailer's arrival was good news to EspañolaPage 7
 The sweet taste of peacePage 8
 Boston editor focuses on her neighborhoodPage 9
 Three trends that impact community journalismPage 10-11
 'Cabinet Press' celebrates 200th anniversaryPage 12

The International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors

Visit the ISWNE's Web site: www.iswne.org

Published by the Institute of International Studies, Missouri Southern State College, Joplin, MO

Don Pease: ISWNE's brightly shining star

By Rick Friedman

Because of his youngish age in the early 1960s, **Don Pease** was the first in the vanguard of the next great editors who came after the DeCourcys, Warings, Wills, etc. in the International Conference of Weekly Newspaper Editors (ICWNE), as it was called then.

In 1955, **H.R. Long**, who headed Southern Illinois University's fledgling Department of Journalism, **C.A. Burley**, of the *Recorder*, Menlo Park, Calif., and **Houstoun Waring**, of the *Littleton*

(*Colo. Independent*, invited 10 outstanding weekly editors from around the country to Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, to participate that summer in what they hoped would be an annual Nieman Fellow-type week.

In 1959, Don's first ICWNE conference was at Giant State Park in Illinois. At the age of 27, Don was sitting among weekly newspaper editors twice or more his age. In 1957, he had become co-publisher and co-editor with Brad Williams of the *Oberlin* (Ohio) *News-Tribune*, a col-

lege-town weekly newspaper Williams had purchased three years before. Don later recalled for *Grassroots Editor*: "Having been reared in Toledo, Ohio, and being editor of a newspaper in a sophisticated college town, Oberlin, Ohio, I had some feelings of going 'out in the sticks' as I traversed to Southern Illinois in the process of reaching Carbondale."

Don would pass through places where the tops of hills had been ripped off for strip mining and the black slag heaps reminded one of how badly Mother Nature had repeatedly been gang-raped by the mining barons of that era. He recalled his first meeting with H.R. Long: "As I met Howard Long for the first time and observed him during the week-long conference, I saw nothing in Howard Long to reassure me. With his accent, gangly appearance, folksy ways, and malapropisms, I really thought that Howard was a bit of a hick. "At the week's end, I was not at all confident that I would be returning to the conference the next year. Still, I very much liked the various editors I met at the conference, the content of the conference was excellent, and Howard Long was at least a likeable hick. So, I returned during the summer of 1960



Rick Friedman



Jennifer, Jeanne and Don Pease in November 2001

continued on page 3

President's Report

By Nancy Slepicka
Montgomery County News,
Hillsboro, Ill.



Long ago I gave up writing elaborate descriptions of bridal gowns and wedding ceremonies for our newspaper. Why risk confusing *peau de soie* with *pouilly fuisse* or *pate de foie gras*?

Suffice it to say that **AnnaMarie Waltner** wore an elegantly simple, or simply elegant, dress on her wedding day, Saturday, Aug. 10, when she exchanged vows with **Roy Cornett Jr.**

Many of you know AnnaMarie and her brother, **Jeremy**. They've been ISWNE regulars since the mid-1990s conference in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Many of you have also met **Roy**, who came with AnnaMarie to the Victoria and Madison conferences. They live in Georgetown, Ky., and work in nearby Lexington.

Their afternoon wedding took place in a cool shaded grove of trees on a farm near Freeman, S.D., where **Tim** is owner and publisher and Jeremy is news editor of *The Courier*. The farm is the home of **Mary "Bix" Waltner's** sister and brother-in-law.

In his opening welcome, Tim remarked that the wedding guests were a diverse group, including not only relatives and longtime friends of the bride and groom, but also editors and their families who'd come long distances to share the day.

Daughter **Kate** and I drove from mid-Illinois. The **Haupt** family came from Lodi, Wis., — **Bill** on his Harley and **Jan, Alex** and **Kevin** in the mini-van. **Elliott, Marquita, Rachel** and **Marissa Freireich** flew in from Litchfield Park, Ariz.

Joyful music filled the wedding ceremony. "Bobbie's Love Song," a beautiful duet sung by **Kaye Waltner**, an aunt, with another woman and accompanied by guitar and flute, was written years ago by Mary Waltner's late father, **James Bixel**.

The ceremony closed with the wedding party and guests standing to sing "Praise God from whom," a familiar hymn to the many members of the Mennonite Church in attendance. Suddenly surrounded by an astounding harmony of soprano, alto, tenor and bass voices, I put down the music to simply relish being in the middle of the best choir I've ever experienced.

Later, at another farm, the Schweitzer Toe-Tappers featuring Tim on guitar and three other musicians entertained us with bluegrass music of the "Brother Where Art Thou" genre. AnnaMarie, accompanied by Tim, sang a song dedicated to Roy.

For as long as I've been acquainted with ISWNE, children have been welcomed to attend and participate in the summer conferences. Being part

of the Waltners' celebration was a natural extension of this organization. I asked Tim and Jeremy if they had any post-wedding thoughts to pass on to the membership.

Jeremy: "The feeling of family that the ISWNE conveys was almost too evident at Anna and Roy's wedding. For three families to make the trek from their home to ours, covering countless miles, for a wedding of the daughter of a past-president and active member of the association was remarkable. It speaks of what the ISWNE is, at least in part, about: Being there for one another professionally or personally. It is inspirational and a testament to why I love this group of people."

Tim: "Jeremy and AnnaMarie (and Bix) attended their first conference in Calgary, the year after I attended my first conference in Brookings. We included the ISWNE conference as the first part of an extended family vacation that started with Calgary and then went west and down the coast. The kids went along with the idea (I describe it as the 'price of admission') with no real expectation other than my recommendation that they'd meet a lot of interesting people and the conference would be fun. Well as it turned out, although the trip included visits to the Space Needle, Pacific Ocean, the very top of the Golden Gate Bridge (that's another story), the giant redwoods, Yosemite, Universal Studios, **Jay Leno** and a host of other fabulous sites, the ISWNE conference was the highlight! They've attended most of the conferences since.

"We were so gratified to have ISWNE represented at AnnaMarie's wedding. The presence of friends from that association — and the distances that people traveled for this single day event is testimony to the true family spirit of the organization. Our non-ISWNE friends were amazed at the strength of this professional relationship."



The ISWNE clan at the Waltner wedding. Front row (left to right): Jeremy Waltner, Roy Cornett, and Alex Haupt. Back row: Tim Waltner, Bill Haupt, Mary Waltner, Elliott Freireich, Rachel Freireich, Marquita Porter, AnnaMarie Waltner, Kate Slepicka, Marissa Freireich, Nancy Slepicka, Jan Haupt, and Kevin Haupt.

Don Pease: ISWNE's brightly shining star from page 1

and for summer after summer beyond that. I was hooked on the conference.

"In the summers subsequent to 1959, it did not take me long to learn that I had been wrong in my first impressions of Howard Long. He was a solid journalist and one of the best, most clever, shrewdest administrators I had ever met. In the army, he must have specialized in 'midnight requisitions' for he kept the International Conference going and even prospering on a shoestring budget."

From the first time I critiqued the conference editorial pages in 1961, the *Oberlin-News Tribune* served as the bar to shoot for. I discovered the editorial page photo in the *News-Tribune* and, like some other editors, would borrow the idea when I edited my own weeklies in the 1970s.

Don seldom talked about his background and few of us knew that he was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Ohio University, where he also earned a master's degree. He completed his graduate work as a Fulbright Scholar at Kings College, University of Durham, England. In terms of brain wattage, he was to my generation of ISWNE members what Hous Waring was to the generation before us. He served as editor of the *News-Tribune* for nearly 20 years, during which the weekly consistently won prizes for excellence and was voted best paper in Ohio nine times and best in the nation four times.

Don's other mistress was political office. He served two terms on the Oberlin City Council, then was elected to the Ohio State Senate, winning a closely contested race the first time he ran. It was the only time I ever saw him use his column to ask voters to vote for him. I chastised him for it in my *Editor & Publisher* magazine "Weekly Editor" column. Don, being Don, never held it against me. Me being me, I was secretly glad Don won, even if I didn't write it that way.

In 1976, Don ran for the seat vacated by retiring Congressman **Charles Mosher** and won by 66 percent of the popular vote. He would serve eight

terms in the U.S. House of Representatives before heart problems in 1992 nudged him to retire. According to his wife, **Jeanne**, he wanted to travel with her and return full-time to enjoy life in Oberlin for whatever time he had left. Don returned to teach political science at Oberlin College.

In 1993, President **Bill Clinton** appointed him to the board of directors of Amtrak. Don had always been a strong advocate of rail transportation and he and Jeanne used their Amtrak passes to travel the country, including once again attending ISWNE conferences. The last one I saw them at was in Halifax three years ago.

For many of us in ISWNE, no matter where we lived in the United States, Don Pease had been "our congressman from Ohio." He represented all of us.

It wasn't that way when Don won his first elective office as an Oberlin city councilman while still co-editing the *News-Tribune*. It provided one of the livelier debates at the 1962 conference.

Some of us felt that a weekly newspaper editor couldn't wear both hats. **Landon Wills**, of the *Calhoun (Ky.) McLean County News*, had run and lost as a county judge. "If you ran and lose badly, as I did," he argued, "that's okay. At least, you learned something about running and losing in a political race." Landon laughed, as he often did when turning humor on himself. But he meant it.

Having read Don's columns in the *News-Tribune*, I wasn't worried about bias. It was the other way around. In order not to look biased, he was, as a liberal Democrat, bending too far the other way in writing about those who disagreed with his views.

Don argued that he did not cover City Council, which was in the capable hands of reporter **Judy Phillips**. Both he and **Brad Williams** had every confidence in the objectivity of her reporting.

Grassroots Editor would reprint in its July 1962 issue a *News-Tribune* editorial Don wrote for his readers, part of which summed up his position at the confer-

ence debate. Don wrote that he was committed to the principles of professional journalism and pledged himself "to be as objective as humanly possible in playing stories according to their journalism merit and not in relation to his views on any issue before the council. Editorially, general comment on community affairs and on City Council specifically will continue to be made in these editorial columns. Readers are asked to remember that opinions expressed in editorials are always the collective view of the two co-editors, Williams and Pease, who generally split the task of actually writing the editorials after, not before, reaching agreement on what the *News-Tribune's* position will be.

"When it comes to outright criticism of City Council, this is more likely to appear on the right side of the editorial page in the personal, signed column of co-editor Williams. Inevitably, as Pease gets more deeply involved in city affairs, the personal, signed columns of co-editor Pease will be used to discuss legislative details which while not unimportant, don't merit general editorial comment by the *News-Tribune*."

The *News-Tribune* asked its readers "to help us keep on the straight and narrow" and let the co-editors know if it was missing its target of fairness and objectivity in covering the Oberlin City Council. Don was so damned honest in co-editing one of the finest small weeklies in the United States that none of us doubted that pledge. We just wondered how many other editors could do that balancing act of wearing two hats, one political and one journalistic. There was only one Don Pease.

For many of us in ISWNE, no matter where we lived, it was more than ISWNE friendship that made Don our congressman from Ohio. He supported strong ethics laws for public officials and tough campaign finance laws long before they were popular. As a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, he led a successful ban of U.S. coffee imports from Uganda in protest against **Idi Amin's** genocidal regime. He pushed for international labor standards and

human rights. He was an early advocate of tax reform and gained national recognition for his plan to limit tax deductions for those making more than \$100,000, which won bipartisan acceptance in the passage of the 1990 national budget. He championed open "sunshine" laws for government.

I like to think that ISWNE, which was a major part of his life through the late 1950s into the mid-70s until his congressional schedule kept him away from summer meetings, had much to do with his political growth while attending all those three-a-days at Giant Park,

Herrin, Pere Marquette and the summer Lorado Taft campus of Northern Illinois University. And that he became even more of an internationalist from Main Street, which he already was, through the ISWNE trips to Canada and Great Britain.

This year, before Don died, Congress passed a bill naming the Medina Federal Building at 143 West Liberty Street in Medina, Ohio, the "Donald J. Pease Federal Building" because his "unwavering commitment to Ohio's working families, his efforts to improve education, expand access to health

care, and support workers have made a difference" in people's lives.

Don died on July 28. I learned of his death the next morning while watching C-Span.

In 1955, when they created ICWNE (later ISWNE), H.R. Long, Hous Waring and "Cab" Burley had an ideal Main Street weekly editor in mind, one whose horizons they hoped to broaden. Don Pease would become a brightly shining new star they put up there in the night sky that is the expanding ISWNE Galaxy. His still star shines down on the rest of us.

Pease possessed absolute integrity

By **Garrett Ray**

Ray is the former editor of the Littleton (Colo.) Independent

When **Don Pease**, former U.S. congressman and former editor of the *Oberlin (Ohio) News-Tribune*, died July 28, many ISWNE members may not have recognized his name or his connection with our group. He and **Jeanne** were not able to attend most of the recent conferences, but long-time members knew and greatly admired Don.

Forty years ago, he won ISWNE's Golden Quill with an editorial entitled "We Used to be Like the Szabos." It described an Oberlin family of Hungarian refugees.

"...Today the U.S. is still building, but much of the old spirit is gone," he wrote. "We are a nation of fat cats, taking our wealth for granted and guarding it jealously, lest someone take it from us. We assume the right to the

'good life' whether we work for it or not. We eschew opportunities to learn through books in favor of an obsession with recreation, with being entertained. We applaud the aspirations of the world's have-not peoples only so long as they pose no threat to our own material wealth."

The issues Don saw in the 1960s appear equally challenging 40 years later, and indeed, there's a prophetic ring and rhythm to that litany. Yet Pease was no grim Jeremiah, shouting into the wind. Shouting wasn't his style.

ISWNE friends remember Don not only as a perceptive editor, but as a thoughtful, caring person with a gentle sense of humor. He loved traveling (by bicycle, foot or Amtrak) and teaching (whether or not he was in the classroom).

Although we first met in the swimming pool at Pere Marquette State Park in Illinois in the late 1960s, I don't recall Don making a splash in conference sessions. He would listen carefully, ask a question or two, and sometimes offer a

quietly stated opinion. He never dominated a discussion. Yet Don was one of the most respected members of ISWNE.

Don gave up his newspaper work when

he was elected to the House of Representatives, but he took with him to Washington the same characteristics that made him a great editor. He cared about people, he did his homework on complex issues, and he possessed absolute integrity. He was solid all the way through, and we will miss him.



Garrett Ray

Don Pease was a man who practiced what he preached



By **Bob Estabrook**
Lakeville, Conn.

Don Pease always seemed to me the model of what a conscientious legislator and citizen should be. I did not have the privilege of knowing him when he was an active editor and publisher in Oberlin, but I am sure the same qualities were much in evidence — serious dedication, a search for what constituted the public interest, independence and resistance to pressure, and a sense of humor. He retained his characteristic modesty after 16 years as a member of Congress.

Whenever I become annoyed with what seems to be excessive partisanship and verbal flatulence on Capitol Hill, I think of how Don avoided such afflictions. He viewed his job as a responsibility, not a

reward, and he remained essentially a scholar in mastering the details of the task at hand. He maintained his principles and ideals as a liberal Democrat, but he did not believe that all good was centered in one party and all evil in the other. He thought that building bridges constituted the most effective way to get to a destination. I admired him for taking on an assignment as a director of Amtrak after he retired from Congress. This must have been in many ways a thankless task, but some sensible person had to do it if we are to retain any semblance of a passenger service network.

What always impressed me during chance conversations at a number of ISWNE meetings was Don's continued devotion to good journalism as well as his down-to-earth manner in discussing almost any subject. He and **Jeanne** loved to travel and to hike and ride their bikes. They always had a cheery word. Most of all, Don was a man who practiced what he preached.

Remembering Don Pease

By **Mary Jane Schneider Lentz**
Former editor, *The Boyertown (Pa.) Area Times*

Don was my mentor in my brief fling into politics. Meeting him at ISWNE and knowing him as both editor and legislator inspired me to try my hand. I had been a weekly editor for about a dozen years when Don gave me his invaluable advice. He explained the filing process, meeting with party officials, everything I needed to know about running for office.

Taking a three-months' leave of absence from my job, I challenged the Democratic incumbent in the state legislative primary. I loved campaigning, handing out my cards to the night shift workers at local factories, going door to door. I lost the election, decided that politics was not for me, and went back to my editor's desk. But Don gave me an unforgettable three months of my life.

ISWNE new member



Frank McTighe is the publisher and editor of *The Macleod Gazette*, an independent community newspaper in Fort Macleod, Alberta. The 43-year-old McTighe studied journalism at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) at Calgary and has worked at *The Calgary Herald*, *The Taber Times*, *The Vauxhall Advance*, *Coaldale News*, *High River Times*, *The Nanton News* and *The Vulcan Advocate*.

McTighe and his wife, **Emily**, bought *The Macleod Gazette* in September 2001. They also owned *The Nanton News* from 1989-95.

Prior to buying *The Macleod Gazette*, McTighe taught journalism at SAIT, where he is still employed part-time. He is a past president of the Alberta Weekly Newspapers Association.

McTighe's email address is mctighe@telusplanet.net. *The Gazette* can be found online at <http://macleodgazette.awna.com>.

ISWNEWS



Friedman seeks old clippings, photos

In the past couple of weeks, **Rick Friedman**, who is writing the history of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editor, has heard from **Garrett Ray** and **Edith Boys Enos**, both delivering priceless conference material they had stored away. Edith, at 97, is the oldest living member of the original group that attended the first meeting at Southern Illinois University in 1955.

If any ISWNE members have saved past conference memorabilia, including magazine and newspaper clippings (including some of Rick's stories in *Editor & Publisher*), as well as photos, please send them on to **Chad Stebbins** at Missouri Southern State College. Don't worry about being selective. Chad will hold onto the photos for future use in the book and send the material on to Rick.

Freeland moderates and organizes

Gloria Freeland, the director of the Huck Boyd National Center for Community Media at Kansas State University, attended the National Newspaper Association convention in Portland, Ore., Sept. 11-14. She moderated the "Newspapers and Community-Building" Symposium, co-sponsored by the Center and the NNA Foundation. This is the eighth year for the symposium, which brings together members of the academic community and newspaper publishers.

In other news at the Center, **Bill Kurtis**, anchor of three A&E Network series and founder of Kurtis Productions in Chicago, delivered the third annual Huck Boyd Lecture in Community Media at Kansas State University on Sept. 26.

Although Kurtis left Kansas more than 30 years ago, the state is still an important part of his life. One of his current projects is perhaps his most challenging: the revitalization of Sedan, Kan. Kurtis' restoration doesn't stop at rebuilding downtown Sedan. He wants to create a tourism hub in southeast Kansas, including visits to his 8,000-acre buffalo ranch and a replica of Laura Ingalls Wilder's cabin. The area, which Kurtis' family owns, was once home to the author of *Little House on the Prairie*. Kurtis also owns part of the largest tall-grass prairie left on the globe, which he plans to protect.

Freeland said his extensive international media experience as well as his love for rural life and the prairie will make Kurtis an excellent speaker for the lecture series.

Starr's summer programs doing well

Dr. Douglas Perret Starr, a professor of journalism at Texas A&M University, reports that the public relations study abroad summer programs he set up in Mexico City, Mexico, in 1995 and in Madrid, Spain, in 2000, for Texas A&M are in full swing. **Dr. Debra Blakely** supervised the seventh Mexico City program, and **Bob Wegener**, the second Madrid program.

Both programs are designed not only to teach public relations and international communication through visits to newspaper offices, radio and television stations, and public relations offices, but also to expose the students to the history and culture of each nation through guided tours.

Whetstone plugs ISWNE denim shirts

Bob Whetstone reminds members to order the denim ISWNE logo shirts "before the price goes up." Bob reports 20 shirts have been sold so far and that most of the board members have one. The price is still \$36 if mailed within the United States.

"They can email me an order and I'll let them know the final cost before sending us a check," he says.

Bob's email address is carolo@dwave.net.

Hansen gets promotion in Kentucky

Dr. Elizabeth Hansen has been promoted from associate professor to professor in the Department of Communication at Eastern Kentucky University. She teaches community journalism, writing and reporting news, media ethics and media law.



Chad Stebbins, ISWNE's executive secretary-treasurer, married Laurel Brock on Aug. 3 at his home in Carl Junction, Mo. Laurel is a senior special education major at Missouri Southern State College. Chad has four children (Brennan, 14; Grant, 10; Joel, 7; and Samuel, 5) and Laurel has three (Christine, 15; Devri, 12; and Eric, 7), making for a very active household.

In defense of Wal-Mart: Retailer's arrival was good news for Española

By **Bob Trapp Jr.**
Río Grande Sun, Española, N.M.

I know this will sound like the beginning of a letter to *Penthouse* (so I've heard) but I never thought I'd be writing a letter like this.

It seems you can't pick up a newspaper trade publication without reading a column beating up Wal-Mart, a.k.a. The Scourge of Weekly Newspapers. I've sat back long enough. I must step forward and defend them, yes, defend the retail giant.

The Río Grande Sun serves the small, economically depressed town of Española. We're midway between Taos and Santa Fe, and the only thing slowing tourists down on their race between those two destination towns are our low riders.

The only real employment here is the local school district; the county; Los Alamos National Laboratory, 20 miles away; or state government, 30 miles away. We must be short on enterprising young business folks because in 1997 we had next to no retail in Española.

C.R. Anthony's was the one place to buy pants, a dress, men's or women's shoes. It was the No. 1 store in the state for that Oklahoma chain.

Walgreens was the only place to buy back to school supplies, pens, tablets and greeting cards. Its only pharmacy competition was a grocery store that went under. It was their No. 5 store west of the Mississippi.

Two stores sold microwaves, televisions, irons and the like. The selection was abysmal. Prices were so high that it paid your time and gasoline to drive to Santa Fe to buy such items.

The city suffered in that its gross receipts were racing to Santa Fe as fast as people could drive. To make matters worse, while they're there shopping, they eat, buy gasoline, go to the movies and stroll the mall — spending more money.

When Wal-Mart tried to come to town in 1997, a grocer and a hardware store owner teamed up to stop them. They feared a

super store would ruin the grocery store business and the few bolts and screws Wal-Mart sells would hurt the hardware store.

No one got behind them. The population was so starved to have an actual retail outlet, they cheered Wal-Mart on.

We at the *Sun* sat back and held our breath. We couldn't see where an advertiser would be hurt by Wal-Mart coming in and we knew the community desperately needed a retail store.

The store opened in February 1999. We got three ads from them for the opening and nothing from them since.

City gross receipts exploded. The budget expands by almost \$1 million annually due almost entirely to Wal-Mart.

It was an interesting phenomena to watch people in the store. It became a place for people to meet and talk. We have no such facility in town.

It provided almost 100 jobs. No, they're not glamorous jobs, but it's a place for someone to start.

No one went out of business. No stores to this date have closed because of Wal-Mart. In fact, the store being an anchor, drew a Sears store that runs ROP and an insert with us weekly.

A Texaco convenience store opened in the Wal-Mart lot and sells 150 papers. The first ATM on the north side of town went in Wal-Mart's parking lot.

Wal-Mart paid almost \$200,000 for the light at the store's intersection that controls traffic at a terrible intersection the city and state needed to address but wouldn't.

Wal-Mart buys computers for local schools and donated money, water and food during the Cerro Grande fire and subsequent local "disasters." They sponsor many of the local charity golf tournaments, runs and health fairs.

Never a call to come take some guy's picture while he's handing over a check. Never a press release stating, "We gave someone \$100." There are banks and stores in town that bombard us with those things selling them as news when we know it's them blowing their own horn.

Wal-Mart is bad for newspapers directly, no argument. They don't advertise and support the U.S. Postal Service.

But the store in Española is good for the community, and if it strengthens the community, the *Sun* should be able to use that to strengthen our product and our revenue.

Back by popular demand:

Starck's joke at banquet

[*Editor's note: In presenting the Golden Quill awards at the June 28 ISWNE banquet, Dr. Ken Starck from the University of Iowa made the following joke. Several ISWNE members have asked for the text.*]

These are results of a recent survey conducted by the United Nations worldwide. Only one question was asked: "Would you please give your most honest opinion about solutions to the food shortage in the rest of the world?" The survey was a HUGE failure. The reasons? In Africa, they did not know what "food" meant. In Western Europe, they did not know what "shortage" meant. In Eastern Europe, they did not know what "opinion" meant. In the Middle East, they did not know what "solution" meant. In South America, they did not know what "please" meant. In Asia, they did not know what "honest" meant. And in the USA, they did not know what "the rest of the world" meant.

The sweet taste of peace

By **Jim Sawyer**

It wasn't a dream, I keep telling myself as I remember a 30-day period during the summer of 1995 when I saw a harvest of the seeds of peace on three continents.

And I never want to forget it.

I was part of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors group that visited Republic of Ireland President **Mary Robinson** in Dublin, two years before she was to become U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights.

It was a stop along the way that year during **Vickie Canfield Peters'** ISWNE presidency and part of the organization's annual conference — a British Isles and Ireland trek. The meeting with Robinson had been arranged by **David Burke**, now an ISWNE board member, of the *Tuam Herald* in County Galway. And the meeting with Robinson held a surprise. Journalists from Northern Ireland joined in. An Irish peace process had been brewing, and this was wonderful evidence.

That evening in another part of the city, the Provincial Newspapers Association of Ireland hosted us. And **Tom Geoghegan** of *The Nationalist* and *Leinster Times*, at the helm of the association at the time and now a fellow ISWNE member, extended a hearty welcome to members of the Northern press, who once again were part of the group. Good times filled the air as the Republic's cherubic minister of arts and culture, poet **Michael D. Higgins** from County Galway, spun yarns.

Days later, I stood in Jersey. Not New Jersey. The one in the Channel Islands, just off the coast of Normandy, France. I visited friends there in the wake of that British island's 50th anniversary celebration marking the end of German occupation during World War II.

During those turbulent 1940s years when Jersey was under the jackboot, there was great bitterness — some of it even directed toward the Crown by

Channel Islanders. Many felt the islands had been left to virtually fend for themselves as the war in Europe prevailed. But now, old-timers on all sides of the conflict, Germans included, shared the festivities with warmth and friendliness. And with a Royal visit thrown in.

Peace. And the sweet taste of it.

Not long after, back in my beloved Missouri Ozarks, 11 former Soviets, including leading Russian agricultural scientist **Vladimir Shkrabak**, president of St. Petersburg State Agrarian University, held a surprise farewell party for me at my home. I had hosted their week-long visit to study agricultural production through a program involving the University of Missouri and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

A toast was offered by one of the Russians, which the interpreter translated to "May we walk together in love." As the group departed, new-found friend **Anatoly Pyjov** from Moscow gave me the traditional bear hug, and it seemed neither of us wanted to end the embrace. And we didn't, in a way, because we now share e-mails from time to time.

During that visit, I remembered from

childhood the mystical-sounding name of Alma Ata, a city in Kazakstan, USSR. It tied in with my model-airplane-building days and America's new long-range bomber at the time — the lumbering B-36 with its six rear-facing engines. Although awkward and slow, it was touted to have the fuel range to reach that far-away city behind the Iron Curtain.

But now, **Hosman Beginchae**v, a Kazak educator and one of the group, was my new friend. And during his visit, we talked about those days when we both were children and how we figured we would be "enemies" for life.

Now we were sharing a homegrown Ozarks watermelon.

The sweet taste of peace.

And I want it to taste it again.

ISWNE member Jim Sawyer writes a



Jim Sawyer



Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White and U.S. Senator Alton S. Feltus presented a certificate of appreciation to Chris Klug with a personalized organ donor license plate. Klug was recognized for his contributions to organ donor awareness at the University of Chicago's Transplant Celebration. Nationally, more than 80,000 people are waiting for organs, and each day about 16 people on the waiting list die. Illinois has the largest organ donor registry in the nation with more than 5 million Illinois citizens enrolled.

Boston editor focuses on her neighborhood

By **Jessica Bogle**

Sophomore Communications Major
Missouri Southern State College

As editor of *Beacon Hill Times* in Boston, Mass., **Karen Cord Taylor** believes that keeping the focus on her neighborhood, *Beacon Hill*, located in downtown Boston, is most important.

"We really try to keep our focus on this neighborhood," Taylor said. "If it doesn't have anything to do with this neighborhood or if our readers can get the information someplace else, then we just don't do it. We have five or six other newspapers in Boston who are doing a fine job...and we don't want to be redundant. What they're not doing, we're doing."

Taylor started *Beacon Hill Times* in September 1995. The paper started out as only a monthly paper, went to every two weeks, and then in 2000, became a weekly.

Although Taylor did not start out pursuing journalism, she has a history of the career in her family. Her grandfather, uncle, and mother were all in the business in some way.

"I think I always understood what a newspaper was all about," she said.

Beacon Hill Times has a circulation of 11,300. The paper is free and is delivered door-to-door. There are many companies specializing in door-to-door delivery in Boston. The distributor of *Beacon Hill Times* travels every Tuesday morning to deliver the papers. Of the four or five other downtown papers, Taylor believes her paper is well read mainly because it is one of the few with an editorial page.

"Only two of us have an editorial page," she said. "How can you have a newspaper without an editorial page? It boggles my mind! I think a lot of people read our editorial page because they really appreciate some of these urban issues that we deal with."

Beacon Hill Times receives several letters to the editor every week, and some it has to save for the next paper. They come handwritten, typed, through email, or simply from a person stopping by the paper.

"That I think is a good indication of how important people feel it is to have this forum," Taylor said. "We are right on the street. We're not in a heavy commercial district; there's just a few stores, but most of it is residential. We get a lot of people stop by who have something to say to us.



Karen Cord Taylor

It sheds the light of day on things that are important to the community. Otherwise, people don't have any information or they have wrong information or they don't have an opportunity to debate things to the extent that they want to."

Taylor says the hardest story she ever attempted to do was one on the Scientologists. She was not able to publish it. Through the help of her husband's friend, who is a lawyer, she discovered that the Scientologists sued anyone who did a story on them, and she would have had to spend a lot of time defending herself. Unless she was willing to devote her life to the issue, Taylor realized she could not do the story.

"It made me sick at my stomach because I felt like I was in Nazi Germany or some oppressive society that I had not known," Taylor said. "Had we been a larger newspaper, we would have done it. It was very

un-American. It seems to be a perversity of the law. It was very distressing — in fact, the most distressing thing that has happened to me during my journalism career."

On a positive note, Taylor's most special moment in her career came just as unexpected. Her son-in-law, who is a lawyer and whose parents are doctors, gave her a compliment that had kept her going since he first mentioned it.

"He once told my daughter — he didn't tell me, he told my daughter — that of all of their combined parents that he admired what I did the most," Taylor said. "That was the best moment ever because he's a very quiet young man and I like him a lot, and he would never say that to me. To know that he admired me was just wonderful! It happened several years ago and I'm still living on it."

Taylor's family includes her husband, **Daniel Taylor**; a daughter, **Leslie Duvol**, who lives in New York City with her husband and two children; and another daughter, **Susannah Clark**, who is a doctor along with her husband and lives in Albuquerque, N.M.

In her spare time, Taylor enjoys music, art, reading, and traveling. On vacations, she and her husband often go cross-country skiing in the winter and canoeing in the summer. They also like to follow politics.

Although she loves her job, Taylor would love to maintain her own identity — be her own person not associated with the newspaper in people's minds.

"Sometimes I'm [at community events] to enjoy myself and not to do a story," she said. "Sometimes it means that people will come up and start talking to me about an issue in our community when I'd rather actually think or talk about the movies, or anything besides a community issue.

"On the other hand, I sort of enjoy that. I just know from telephone calls and the attitude of people and just the fact that when I go to a party and people want to talk about some issue, it's an indication they're reading the newspaper and they know what I said last week!"

Three trends that impact community journalism

By **Harry Hix**
University of Oklahoma

[Editor's note: These are the remarks Harry Hix made on June 27 as part of the "Trends in Community Journalism" panel discussion at the ISWNE conference.]

You and I may be wondering the same thing: In light of the other distinguished membership of this panel, what am I doing here?

I used to think that I would need to be an expert to be invited to be a conference panelist. Then, I came to realize what an expert is. In many of the small towns in which I've lived, an expert is anyone from out of town, especially if that someone is from more than 50 miles away. However, my favorite definition of an expert is probably more appropriate in explaining my presence with this august group.

X, as I'm sure you know, is the mathematical representation of the unknown. And, as your plumber will tell you, a spurt is a drip of water. Thus, an expert is an unknown drip.

For 16 years of my life, I was a weekly newspaper publisher. My wife, **Carol**, and I published *The Millington Star* in Millington, Tennessee, published a weekly shopper, and published a weekly military newspaper for what was then known as the Memphis Naval Air Station. Now, as Engleman/Livermore Professor of Community Journalism at the University of Oklahoma, I am involved in another aspect of community journalism — education.

It is from these perspectives that I offer some personal observations on what I see as important trends in community journalism. First, I want to emphasize that I make no pretense at having the answers to any problems I may discuss. Rather, I am simply offering observations on some trends which I believe are important and which are having and will continue to have an impact on community journalism. Second, I want to assure you that I do not know what all the trends are and I am not attempting to present or analyze all of them. I choose only to mention three — three with which I have had personal experience and which I think are important. Please be aware that my personal experience with each of these has,

no doubt, helped shape my opinions and may have resulted in a biased evaluation of them. Because you are journalists, I probably did not have to mention this.



Harry Hix

The three trends are these: chain newspapers, or to be more politically correct, group newspapers; Wal-Mart; and changing attitude or belief systems of some in journalism.

Before addressing each of these, I wish to make this apology, if it is an apology. I am fully aware that it has long been the practice of ISWNE not to discuss the revenue aspect of newspapering at this conference. The sessions are devoted to the more sacred aspect of the newspaper — news and editorial writing. However, I am straying from this path somewhat because I believe that a discussion of trends in community journalism cannot be conducted without reference to revenue aspects of the business/profession. The reason is that some of these revenue forces, unfortunately, are having an impact on the news operation of many newspapers.

That said, let's look briefly at the three trends.

Chain or group newspapers. We're all familiar with them. They are fencing us in everywhere. Chains come in a variety of sizes and modes of operation. But everywhere you look on the journalism landscape, there they are. Most people probably think of the giants of newspaper

chains such as the Gannetts and Knight-Ridgers when they think of chains. But don't allow those monoliths to blind your vision. There are other chains out there and they are springing up faster than weeds in your home garden. The March 18 edition of *Editor & Publisher*, for example, had a cover page article entitled, "Raising Chains — Why industry insiders leave top jobs and try to build their own empires, one small town at a time." This "New Chain Gang," as they were called, is happening all around the country.

Granted, most of the newspapers involved are dailies, not weeklies. But weeklies are being bought and sold as part of chains. If you need evidence, ask yourself these questions: Whom do I know that recently sold their newspaper? Was it sold to a chain or to an individual owner? The answer most frequently is that the purchase was by a chain, either one of the giants or one of the so-called new chain gang.

Please understand that I am not saying that chain ownership is either good or bad. Frankly, it has elements of both. There are positives and negatives. The point is that either way, community journalism is being affected. That makes it a trend worth noting.

To examine this trend briefly and to consider some of the impact it has, I wish to use my own state — Oklahoma — as an example. Recently, I sat in the office of OPA Executive Director **Mark Thomas** and discussed these issues with him. He noted that in 1998, CNHI owned two of the 220 newspapers in Oklahoma. Two years later, CNHI owned 50 of those 220. That's 23 percent, or essentially one-fourth of the state's newspapers. Many of those were weeklies.

Does this type of occurrence have an impact on journalism and in our communities? Of course it does. But should we be surprised that it is happening? No, we shouldn't.

In Oklahoma, as perhaps in your state, an individual or family owning a small daily or large weekly also owned two, three or more weeklies surrounding the daily. The daily made a nice profit and the weeklies were kept alive with a small profit margin because of the efficiencies possible from the cluster ownership and the owner's desire to keep them alive

Owned individually, many of the small weeklies would not have survived because of the changing economies of the small towns in which they were located. The chain bought them all because the owner would not sell just the daily; it had to be a package deal.

Now, the chain has created a large debt where the previous owner had no debt service because the small weeklies had long since been paid out. So what happens at the small weekly? Several things. One, the chain can institute many operational efficiencies, but at the same time may be alienating a significant part of the community. For instance, insurance with local agents is dropped. Or the newspaper office is moved and is no longer where it has been for the last 20 to 50 years. Oh, by the way, the lack of business in the small town means cutbacks at the newspaper and that quite often occurs in the newsroom. The three-person staff becomes a two-person, or the two-person becomes one person. Other efficiencies are instituted. The chain thinks it is doing the community a favor, but the community doesn't agree. It is no longer my newspaper.

Other questions arise. Is the new editor/publisher really interested in the community or in advancing to a larger paper in the chain? Is the newspaper still an integral part of the community or is it just a profit center? Are news coverage and editorial writing affected? These are but some of the questions and issues related to chain ownership. It seems to me that they clearly indicate that chain ownership (and, yes, I once worked for a chain) has an impact on community journalism.

Wal-Mart. A small word but a large impact. Interesting stat gleaned from an article in the May 27 edition of *E&P* — last year Wal-Mart's revenue was \$218 billion, which is bigger than the economy of Switzerland, a country with a gross domestic product of \$197 billion.

The same article noted that economist **Kenneth Stone's** study of the effect of Wal-Mart stores on small towns in Iowa between 1983 and 1993 resulted in Wal-Mart driving 7,300 businesses out of business. That included 555 grocery stores or supermarkets. How many of you would be affected if you lost your grocery store advertising? Based on my personal experience with Wal-Mart, that happened.

Wal-Mart can be a key attraction to your city council because of the tax dollars it will generate, and today small towns all over America are facing financial problems. Something that adds to the city coffers looks awfully good. But what does Wal-Mart look like to you and, in the long term, to your community?

First, Wal-Mart doesn't advertise with you. At one time, Wal-Mart was a major advertiser with small papers. But no more. So, it won't help you, it won't provide added revenue that might allow you to provide that extra news coverage you would like. When the mom and pop stores start going under, your advertising will drop because those highly valued mom and pop stores are no longer there to advertise with you. Now, you are facing cutbacks. Is the newsroom where those cutbacks must come?

I am offering only a cursory look at the Wal-Mart phenomenon and simplifying what is a complex dilemma. But keep this in mind. As editors, you want your newspaper to be a strong editorial voice in the community, you want to be a vital part of making your community a great place to live. To do this, you must be financially sound; at least, you must be financially sound enough to remain in business. If you are not in business, you won't be there to write those award-winning, influential editorials. Beware, if the small businesses of your town are going out of business, you are in danger of doing the same. Will Wal-Mart in your community help or hinder?

Changing attitudes. I hope I am not walking where angels fear to tread, but I am concerned that there is a trend in journalism of changing attitudes toward the profession. I am not alone in this concern.

In our conversation at the OPA office, Mark Thomas expressed the same concern and said that he feared the changing attitudes were negatively affecting newspapers' influence in society. As he noted, being an editor or publisher is a 24-hour per day profession. Too many newspapers today, he said, want to be just another business, an 8-5 business. "But we aren't just another business," he said, his voice rising and his hands flexing. "When we lose that concept, we lose."

Some editors and publishers seem less driven, less willing to wield the power and influence that is available to them. Mark said part of this may be the influence of

chain operations, but not all of it. He noted that even people who have grown up in the business are subject to this changing attitude. They have seen the wars fought first-hand and don't want to do it, he said.

I confess that I share his concern. I'm preaching to the choir with this group. Members of ISWNE are still the breed of journalists who believe in strong news coverage, in gutsy, controversial editorials, of campaigning for the good of your community regardless of the flak you may encounter. But do all the other editors and publishers in your state share your ideal?

I believe I see a difference in the attitude of many students today compared to years past. For instance, when I was a student most students were enrolled in the news-editorial sequence and many had a goal of becoming an investigative reporter, an editorial writer or a publisher. Today, the largest enrollment at OU and many other colleges is in the public relations sequence, not news-editorial. In six years of teaching community journalism, I have had three students come to my office to talk about a dream of owning a newspaper. More frequently, they voice concern about the long hours and low pay.

I hope I am wrong in this concern that a change in attitude may be creeping into our profession, our calling.

One other brief observation, please. I have not addressed the internet and convergence, an issue that someone on the panel will probably discuss. However, I would like to mention one potential problem that Mark pointed out to me. That is legal notices and the web. Many weekly newspapers in Oklahoma and other states for years have survived financially because of the significant contribution of legal advertising. For many, it is the difference between profit and going out of business. Attorneys and government employees have realized how easy and inexpensive it is to put legals on the net, and a movement is growing to do this instead of putting legals in the newspaper. Warning: if newspapers become just an option for legal notices, small newspapers will be the major losers.

Thank you for asking me to serve on this panel and for allowing me the privilege of being a member of ISWNE.

'Cabinet Press' celebrates 200th anniversary

The *Cabinet Press* of Milford, N.H., is celebrating its 200th anniversary in 2002 with a year-long celebration. Each issue carries a "Cabinet Snapshot" from a long-ago issue of *The Cabinet*, monthly interviews feature someone who has worked for *The Cabinet* or who is a long-time reader, and on July 17 the paper published a bicentennial special edition. One reader even won a 200-year subscription to *The Cabinet Press*!

In 1802 farmers left messages for each other in a cabinet on the counter of the village store. The founder, a banker named **Joseph Cushing**, likely had that old cabinet in mind when he named his paper *The Farmer's Cabinet*.

Publisher Emeritus **William B. Rotch** wrote the 200-year history of *The Cabinet Press* for the July 17 bicentennial issue. His great-grandfather, **Albert A. Rotch**, was hired by the paper as

a printer, handyman and apprentice and married the owner's daughter in 1869. Albert's son (also

Albert A. Rotch II). Albert's son, the present-day **William B. Rotch**, came to Milford in 1938. The two operated the paper and printing business as a partnership until 1950.

"My father said that it was apparent that if the business succeeded it would be because of my efforts, and if it failed it would be because of mistakes I had made," Rotch wrote. "I gave him some cash and a lot of promissory notes and became sole proprietor [in 1950]."

William B. Rotch, 85, was editor of *The Cabinet* for 50 years. He still writes, producing a steady stream of columns — mostly good humored musings on travel, encounters with other cultures, and reflections on how times have changed in New Hampshire. He and his wife, **Patty**, still take several trips a year.

Frank Manley, with degrees in engineering and management, became publisher and his wife, **Martha Rotch Manley**, became comptroller. They bought the paper in 1994.



named **William B. Rotch**) took over the paper following his father's death in 1890. He was editor and publisher of the paper until 1910, when he was joined by his son

ABOUT THE ISWNE

The International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors (ISWNE) was founded in 1955 at Southern Illinois University (SIU) by Howard R. Long, then chair of SIU's Department of Journalism at Carbondale, and Houston Waring, then editor of the *Littleton (Colo.) Independent*. ISWNE headquarters were at Northern Illinois University at DeKalb from 1976 to 1992, at South Dakota State University in Brookings from 1992 to 1999. Missouri Southern State College in Joplin became the headquarters in 1999.

ISWNE's purpose is to help those involved in the weekly press to improve standards of editorial writing and news reporting and to encourage strong, independent editorial voices. The society seeks to fulfill its purpose by holding annual conferences, presenting awards, issuing publications, and encouraging international exchanges. There are ISWNE members in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan, and India. There are subscribers to *Grassroots Editor*, the society's quarterly journal, in still more countries.

Dr. Chad Stebbins

Editor & ISWNE Secretary/Treasurer
Director, Institute of International Studies

Produced by the Institute of International Studies

Missouri Southern State College
3950 E. Newman Road
Joplin, MO 64801-1595

(417) 625-9736
(417) 659-4445 FAX

stebbins-c@mail.mssc.edu

International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors

Institute of International Studies
Missouri Southern State College
Joplin, MO 64801-1595

FIRST CLASS