

the Byliner

Join Us on



December 2012

Newsletter of The Press Club of Cleveland

From the President



Ed Byers

This is my final column as president of The Press Club of Cleveland. (If you could be so kind, please hold your applause until the completion of this column. Thank you.)

When I was approached to run in 2007, I was told it would be a two-year hitch, but somehow, two turned into three years and four turned into five years. It seemed as though each year, there was encouragement to stay on for "one more year" – just one more year – so I did, at the behest of a great group of board members – none of whom wanted the job!

But thanks to their dedication, direction and guidance we have made some wonderful strides. Our membership numbers have stabilized, this monthly newsletter underwent an extreme makeover, the website was upgraded and the Excellence in Journalism contest went online, both for entering and judging.

Social media? In 2008, we were LinkedIn, but few of us knew what a "Facebook" or a "Twitter" was. Social media was in its infancy, but we jumped on it, establishing a Facebook page and a Twitter account.

While we have been quick to embrace change, we also love to celebrate our Club's traditions. The two annual signature events, The Cleveland Journalism Hall of Fame Induction and the ever-expanding All-Ohio Excellence in Journalism Awards continue to make us unique among professional journalism organizations in the state of Ohio.

This is a great organization and I have been honored to serve as your president for the past five years, which they tell me is some sort of record for longevity. Well, whatever. All I can tell you is that it has been a fun run. Never a dull moment, for sure.

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"We Have Seen the News, and it is us" – The Plain Dealer's Future

The future of The Plain Dealer has become a national story, a story that took another dramatic turn last week, when Local 1 of the Northeast Ohio Newspaper Guild ratified a new contract with the company that calls for 58 layoffs among union members beginning May 1.

But the deal also extends the union contract through February of 2019, offering more protection to the journalists who remain in the newsroom.

According to reports, the guild currently represents 168 journalists and support staff. The first reduction will reduce that number to 110. Another five guild members can be laid off in 2014. The Plain Dealer also has about 50 exempt managers. No word yet on how many of them will be cut, but guild president Harlan Spector was told that management layoffs will also be "significant." The New Orleans Times-Picayune, which has the same parent company, Advance Publications, went through similar cuts and kept about 30 managers.

Similar reductions here would leave The Plain Dealer with about 135 newsroom employees, not counting staff members from the other Advance subsidiaries here, Cleveland.com and The Sun Newspapers. In 2000, The PD had more than 400 newsroom employees.

The new contract also allows copy produced by non-guild members for Cleveland.com to be

published in the newspaper. Guild members who stay will have some of their previous pay cuts restored. But there is also language in the deal that allows additional layoffs if "the Company ceases to publish a print edition ... at least one day a week."

Advance Publications has not commented on the negotiations. Nor has it revealed whether its new "digital-first" strategy will result in publishing the print version of The Plain Dealer only three days per week, as it has done at some of its other properties.

If that does happen, The Plain Dealer would become the largest newspaper in the country to abandon daily publication, according to USA Today. The Plain Dealer's print circulation has declined to 219,509 daily and 315,978 on Sunday but total readership is up when digital editions are included, according to the September report by the Audit Bureau of Circulations.

Terry Egger, publisher of The Plain Dealer, said in an article on Cleveland.com that the agreement with the guild should hasten the planning process. "We've seen what happened in other [Advance] markets," he said. "I would say in the next two or three months we should know."

Egger, who is retiring in January, is reportedly planning a series of meetings with community

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Feagler, Manuel, McGahan, Mitchell, Skoch Named to The Press Club of Cleveland's Board of Directors

Five new board members have been approved by The Press Club board to serve two-year terms.

The new board members are: Ohio Magazine editor Linda Feagler, WEWS TV-5 News Director Jill Manuel, Dix & Eaton Senior VP Amy McGahan, WKYC TV-3 anchor and managing editor Russ Mitchell and Lorain Morning Journal Editor Tom Skoch.

The new board members were approved unanimously at the Oct. 19 board meeting and will be installed with a full membership vote at The Press Club's annual meeting / holiday party on Dec. 12 at Nighttown.

Linda Feagler is the senior editor of



Great Lakes Publishing's Ohio Magazine, a publication covering the best in travel, arts, history and life in the Buckeye State. She served as senior editor of Cleveland Magazine for four years before joining the staff of Ohio Magazine in 2002.

Through the years, she has won awards for her work from the Society of Professional Journalists and The Press Club of Cleveland.

Linda is a trustee of the Ohioana Library Association, Ohio's nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and promot-

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Happy Holidays

Holiday Cheer was in abundance at Nighttown on 12-12-12 as The Press Club sponsored its annual Holiday Party and Annual Meeting. There was much merry-making, new officers and board members were sworn in and as you can see, everyone had a great time. They all agreed, these parties just keeping better and better every year. Thanks to Lynn Bracic and Debi Weslek for their hard work in making it all happen.

more pics on page 4



From Scribe to Shill, From Fourth Estate to ROI & Corporate Communications

By Laurie Mitchell, Certified Personnel Consultant



I have never taken a Journalism, Public Relations, Communications or Business course although I excelled in Honors English & Literature in high school and college, and one of my graduate school professors regularly read my papers out loud to the class. (Yes, I have stayed at a Holiday Inn Express.) After grad school, I fell into a career as a writer, editor, and stringer without a single clue about what is taught in J school.

Later, when I morphed into a head-hunter, I gleaned from print journalist applicants that they had been schooled to write simply and eschew padding, fleshing out any semblance of hyperbole, and color commentary. Oh, the sharp retorts received when I critiqued or edited their résumés, and encouraged them to incorporate a bit of professional storytelling, some anecdotal parsing of job accomplishments,

and informational epithets describing their employers for the benefit of corporate and agency hiring influences!

My use of heretical phrases such as “compellingly crafted”, “robust wordsmithing” and “personality” to describe the caliber of résumé copy necessary to pique the interest of overworked managers and HR screeners has not always been appreciated by J-school grads needing to reinvent themselves or transition to the dark side.

But, those whose egos are not overly vested in their “college placement office” or white bread “outplacement” version, and who understand the imperative to regard their résumé as a product sell sheet and a stand-alone writing sample demonstrate an open mindedness and flexibility that talent acquisition professionals cherish and respond to.

This week, a Plain Dealer reporter emailed “Thank you so much for the advice. On one hand, changing my résumé is a challenge because I’ve always looked at it as a simple summary of my professional career. But on the other, I have to recognize

that I’m targeting my experience at people who aren’t familiar with what journalists do on a daily basis.”

As imminent PD downsizing once again increases competition amongst local journalists to land suitable business and non-profit roles, those who brand themselves as versatile communicators will have the advantage.

As 2012 comes to a close, a heartfelt thanks to all of my clients, candidates, applicants and buddies for many hearty good laughs, wonderful shared journeys and happy endings, and enduring relationships. May everyone enjoy the blessings of family and friends this holiday season, and may your 2013 be filled with only good things, and may all of us continue to go from strength to strength, success to success.

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PRESIDENT FROM PAGE 1

On January 1, 2013, Stuart Warner will officially assume duties as president and I want to take this opportunity to wish Stuart nothing but the best and I hope you will give him all the support he needs to keep The Press Club of Cleveland strong and prosperous.

Here’s to another 125 years!

-Ed

the Byliner

A publication of
The Press Club of Cleveland

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Lee Moran

Associate Editor

Maryana Bradas

Contributing Reporters

Stu Warner

Ed Byers

*Press Club Member
Anniversaries: December*

16 years

Gail Bellamy

13 years

Ken Krizner

4 years

William A. Wynne

Betsy O'Connell

3 years

John Betchkal

2 years

John Ettorre

David Pfriem

Tim Ryan

Tom Quinn

1 year

Marilyn Mongeon Quill

Susan Elder

Paul Schrimpf

John Revay

PLAIN DEALER FUTURE FROM PAGE 1

leaders to explain the ongoing changes.

The guild said in an email to The Press Club of Cleveland and others that those leaders should ask some of these questions:

- Will The Plain Dealer continue to be published daily?
- How can The Plain Dealer maintain quality journalism after laying off one-third of its staff?
- With the heavy emphasis on digital publication, what will you do for readers who do not have computers and depend on the paper as their primary news source?

The story has reverberated around the nation through print and online articles in such publications as The New York Times, USA Today, the Columbia Journalism Review, the American Journalism Review and others.

The New York Times reported about the community effort to try to save The Plain Dealer, which included a Save The Plain Dealer bash on Dec. 6 at the Market Garden Brewery.

The brewery even released a new beer, 7-Day Lager, which it says is "best when enjoyed daily, because one a day keeps ignorance at bay," according to the Times.

Co-owner Sam McNulty, a former delivery boy for the PD, told the Times he had invited Steve Newhouse, chairman of Advance's digital arm, to the event. Newhouse declined to attend but he was represented at the event in a Clint Eastwood-style interview with an empty chair.

In an email to McNulty, Newhouse said Advance was "working to develop a localized approach that will allow us to continue to fulfill our commitment to quality journalism in an increasingly digital world," according to the Times.

Much of the community's concern has been centered around the unconfirmed reports that The Plain Dealer would publish only on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. The Poynter Institute noted on its website that Advance has already reduced staff and publication frequency at The New Orleans Times-Picayune, The Patriot-News in Harrisburg, Pa., The Post-Standard in Syracuse and at its papers in Alabama and Michigan. All of the properties have been turned into new companies.

There is also speculation, Poynter reported, that The Oregonian in Portland is a candidate for cuts in staff and printing frequency.

In Cleveland, the guild has responded with a proactive campaign, which has included billboards, TV and newspaper ads and social media. "Hot in Cleveland" star Valerie Bertinelli and Iron Chef Michael Symon are among the celebrities who have backed the guild.

Spector said his members have been receiving positive support from the community.

"It's been overwhelming," he told The American Journalism Review. "It's a big story in

Cleveland right now."

The guild's Facebook page, SaveThePlainDealer, has more than 5,000 followers.

"We've heard from thousands of people on our Facebook page and on our petition site and in person," Spector told Poynter. "I've not talked to one person who thinks these cuts are a good idea."

But USA Today reported that Newhouse doesn't believe that maintaining daily print operations is sustainable anymore because of falling revenue and that Advance is steering more resources to newspaper websites such as Cleveland.com.

Former Times-Picayune journalist Rebecca Theim wrote in an article for the Columbia Journalism Review's website that a similar outpouring of public support did nothing to change the New Orleans paper's fate.

She warned Plain Dealer employees to expect a lot of secret management meetings as the executives determine who will go and who will stay. But she also said to expect "unfirings."

"Times-Picayune management was apparently so confident that everyone in the newsroom would be thrilled to join the bold new move that they were taken completely off-guard when at least 14 employees asked to stay instead said, 'Uh, no, thank you.'"

Locally, Crain's Cleveland Business reported that many advertisers "realize they don't need a mass circulation print vehicle seven days a week to reach their key audiences."

Mark Bachmann, a partner at the Marcus Thomas LLC ad agency, told Crain's that advertisers would be hurt if the changes result in a loss of subscribers. "Otherwise, I'm not usually running five- or seven-day-a-week programs," said Bachman, whose company's clients include GE Lighting, the Ohio Lottery and Shearer's Foods. Bernie Moreno, president of Collection Auto Group, first said to Crain's that he wasn't concerned about the reduction of publication days because he only advertises in The Plain Dealer on Saturdays.

However, when he was told the paper might not publish on Saturdays, he replied, "Yikes, that's not good," according to Crain's, which also noted that he said the size of the PD's future audience would still be the No. 1 factor in determining his ad support.

TV Channel 3 pointed out that the three-day-a-week publication schedule could hurt those who deliver the paper. Many of them live on the income from seven-day delivery.

"There are a lot of carriers who depend on this job. There are people who've been doing it for 10, 20 years," Desiree Brown, who delivers up to 380 papers to homes each day, told the TV station. "They really depend on The Plain Dealer, and they're passionate about it."



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More Happy Holidays



NEW BOARD MEMBERS FROM PAGE 1

ing works by Ohio authors. She is also a member of Cleveland State University's advisory committee for the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences.

Jill Manuel has been news director at NewsChannel 5 since August 2008. Jill oversaw the transformation of the WEWS newsroom into a new model called "The Newsroom of the Future," a move designed to better serve consumers in communities all over Northeast Ohio.

Under Jill's leadership, NewsChannel 5 won a prestigious Peabody Award for the investigation, "Operation Deep Freeze."

Prior to moving to Northeast Ohio, Jill was the news director at CLTV in Chicago, the Tribune-owned 24-hour cable channel. Jill was also an executive producer at WBBM-TV in Chicago, and a senior producer at Fox News in New York and Washington, D.C.

Jill as a M.A. in Public Communications from Syracuse University and a B.A. in Philosophy from Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin.

Amy McGahan is a senior vice president at Dix & Eaton. Amy has placed financial and feature stories in national media outlets, including The Wall Street Journal, Barron's,

Financial Times, Forbes, CNBC and Bloomberg Television, in addition to stories in key trade publications.

Amy joined Dix & Eaton in 1997 and has 13 years of public relations experience. Previously, she was associate director of community relations for the Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center and public relations associate for The Eliza Jennings Group. In both positions, she acted as a liaison with community organizations, conducted media and community outreach and education, and coordinated special events.

She is a member of the Public Relations Society of America and serves as an Annual Fund Class Representative for Baldwin-Wallace College, where she earned a bachelor's degree in speech communications.

Russ Mitchell is evening news anchor and managing editor of WKYC TV-3. In January, he joined WKYC from CBS TV where he was anchor of the CBS Evening News weekend editions and The Early Show on Saturday, along with being a national correspondent for CBS News Sunday Morning, the CBS Evening News, and The Early Show.

Russ was on the anchor desk with Dan Rather on Sept. 11, 2001 and reported from Ground Zero and other parts of Manhattan



on the days and weeks that followed. He also anchored the live CBS Special Report coverage of the capture and death of Osama Bin Laden on May 1, 2011.

Russ has been honored with multiple local and national Emmy Awards, a National Association of Black Journalists Award and the Society of Professional Journalists Sigma Delta Chi Award.

A native of St. Louis, Mitchell graduated from the University of Missouri, and began his professional career at KMBC in Kansas City.

Tom Skoch has been with The Morning



Journal in Lorain for 28 years, most recently as editor since 2008. Previously he was the newspaper's Opinion Page editor, and, for many years, its managing editor.

Tom is a Cleveland native and has a journalism degree from Ohio University.

He was a reporter for The Cleveland Press for 10 years, then served as associate director of public relations at University Hospitals of Cleveland for a few years before joining The Morning Journal in 1984.

The new Press Club of Cleveland executive committee will consist of: President: **Stuart Warner**, Vice President: **Pat Panchak**, Secretary/Treasurer: **Carol Kovach** and Immediate Past President: **Ed Byers**. Their terms commence Jan. 1, 2013.

House of Horrors – Rob Sberna

(Special to the Byliner)



Cleveland investigative journalist Robert Sberna is the author of *House of Horrors* (Kent State University Press), which exposes the twisted world of Anthony Sowell, who gained international attention after murdering 11 women on Cleveland's East Side.

Through several one-on-one interviews with Sowell, *House of Horrors* takes readers into the world of the killer, complete with firsthand accounts of the women who managed to break away and survive Sowell's homicidal wrath.

Sberna, of Strongsville, is an investigative journalist who contributes to several national publications. He has covered police and court beats for newspapers in the Midwest. His writings have appeared in the Washington Examiner, The Cleveland Plain Dealer, Neoconomist, Crain's, and Ohio Magazine.

The Byliner caught up with Sberna at The Press Club's Holiday Party at Nighttown.

*What motivated you to write *House of Horrors*?*

I could see fairly quickly that the Sowell case was developing into a national news story, so I initially drove over to the Imperial Avenue crime scene out of a news-hound's curiosity. When I arrived, the coroner technicians were in the process of carrying body bags from the house. As I stood on the sidewalk watching, several older ladies near me were crying. They had an intuition that their daughters were among the victims. They told me a bit about their daughters. And as the Sowell story unfolded, I found myself wanting to know more about the backgrounds of these women. I was also interested in how 11 women could have disappeared without their families or the police, or Sowell's neighbors noticing a pattern. Basically, the book was my attempt to answer those questions.

What were your major obstacles?

The major challenge was the gag rule

that was imposed by the court. This case was more like a mass murder than a serial killing in the sense that the crime scene, the victims, and the killer were all found simultaneously. So the case went from the shocking discovery of bodies on Oct. 29, 2009 to a crime that was under investigation. Reporters couldn't speak with the police, the coroner, or anyone else connected with the case until the end of the trial in August 2011. At that point, I had to scramble to get my interviews and write the book to meet my deadline.

Has anybody said "I saw it on the news, why do I need to read a book about it?" *What is it about your book that is different?*

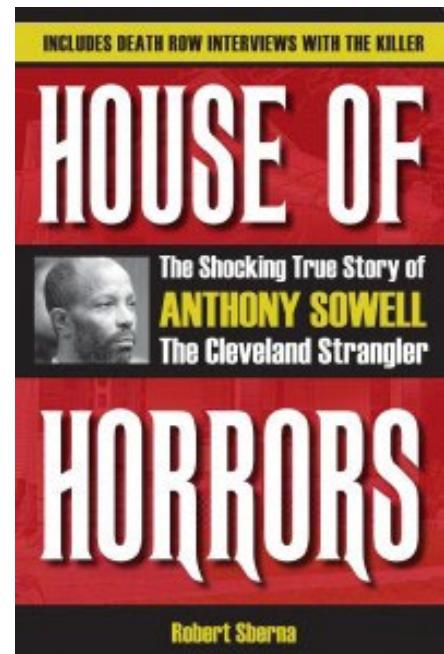
My book is unique because it includes my telephone interviews with Sowell. I spoke with him a half-dozen times. I also interviewed extensively people who knew Sowell well, including his prison bunk-mate, his sister, and other family members. In addition, I was able to speak with six women who were attacked by Sowell, but escaped. The result of all of those interviews was that I was able to provide readers with some understanding, albeit bizarre, of why a person would commit such heinous acts.

What repulsed you most about Anthony Sowell?

His extreme narcissism and his complete lack of remorse for his crimes. In our conversations, he showed no sense of compassion for the victims or their families. He was mainly concerned with having the public know that he was a distinguished Marine, and that his attorneys had done a bad job of defending him.

*What is the lesson we learn from *House of Horrors*?*

This may not directly answer the question, but I've come to realize that maybe the community was a little quick to accuse the police of indifference and negligence in this case. There were numerous suspicious activities around Sowell's house, including a naked woman falling from a second-floor window, and another woman running from



his house after being attacked. Although neighbors witnessed these events, it's troubling that nobody from the neighborhood called the police. If the police had this first-hand information, then maybe Sowell would have been stopped earlier.

What kind of sage advice can you offer others who are considering writing a book?

I would encourage anyone to give it a shot. But it can be difficult. The writing itself can be a long, tedious, and solitary process. Also, with a nonfiction book, like mine, the writer is very reliant on cooperation from sources. That can be extremely frustrating when you're on a tight deadline. When the initial manuscript is completed, the hours of editing begin. When the book is finally printed, the job of marketing begins. Publishers nowadays seem to have very small marketing budgets for anyone but their big-selling authors. So it's incumbent on authors, especially first-timers, to hawk their own books. I'm not much of a salesperson, so that's been interesting, to say the least. Actually, the publishing cycle is so long (for me, it took three years from book proposal to book launch), that I actually felt more of a sense of relief than accomplishment when it was finally over.