

From the President

Ed Byers

*It's winter in Ohio
And the gentle breezes blow
Seventy miles an hour
At twenty-five below.*

*Oh, how I love Ohio
When the snow's right up to your butt
You take a breath of winter
And your nose gets frozen shut*

*Yes, the winter here is wonderful
So I guess I'll hang around
I could never leave Ohio
'Cause I'm frozen to the ground.*

-- Special thanks to Rich Osborne at Ohio Magazine for the winter-weary prose.



Don't forget, our **Excellence in Journalism** awards entry deadline is Feb. 16 at 5 p.m.! Please make sure you have everything to us. This just in: next year, the Excellence in Journal-

ism Awards will go digital. Everything will be done online!

In this issue, read all about Press Club board member **Dustin Klein's** big promotion at SBN, **Bruce Hennes's** nomination as finalist for "Best Speaker/ Meeting Facilitator" in a competition sponsored by Cleveland Business Connects Magazine (CBC). Deadline for voting is Feb. 10. And on page 3 read all about **Larry Baker's** brilliant half century news-gathering career at Channel 3.

A Larry Baker anecdote: Dealing with the oft-times tremendous tedium of the day-in, day-out grind and deadline pressures, former WJW-TV 8 Akron

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Thom Fladung, Newly Named Managing Editor at The Plain Dealer



FLADUNG

A native of Canton and a former editor at the Beacon-Journal and The Repository, Thomas J. Fladung has been named managing editor of The Plain Dealer. Fladung has 28 years in the newspaper business and for the last five years he has been editor of the St. Paul Pioneer Press. The Byliner caught up with Thom as he was cleaning out his office at the Pioneer Press and getting ready to head back home to Northeast Ohio.

How does it feel to be coming home?

It feels right. I've learned so much from all the newspapers I've worked at and all the smart journalists it's been my privilege to work with. And the St. Paul Pioneer Press certainly is one of those. I owe the Pioneer Press journalists a great deal.

I also think that living in Columbia, S.C., and Detroit and Akron and Minnesota has helped me learn about different areas of our country and how readers have different expectations and demands of their newspapers.

But it feels like it's time to come home. To get to do so while also getting the chance to do journalism at The Plain Dealer, with such a talented staff...well, let's just say I can't wait.

Tell us about your family. How excited are they?

To say that my wife and I are excited about returning to Ohio and being closer to family and many friends would be a gross understatement. My mother, one of my sisters and her husband and three of their four children all live in Northeast Ohio. And the fourth child lives in Columbus.

Meanwhile, my wife's mother and her husband, one of her sisters and family live

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Why Joining The Press Club was the Best Cleveland Move I Ever Made

By Krystin Jarrell,

Press Club Member since 2008 and Club Student/Young Member Adviser



JARRELL

Seven out of 10 people get a job through someone they know. After graduating from college, networking is the single largest factor in determining your future.

I moved to Cleveland in September, 2008 with a bachelor's in business administration and a passion for journalism. Not only did I move to an unfamiliar city, I chose a profession that was eliminating jobs daily during an economic period com-

parable to the Great Depression. But, I was smart, I graduated with a decent GPA and I paid my way through school with minimal student loans. I would easily find a job.

No, it wasn't easy. After furthering my education didn't work out and I had to drop my graduate class at Cleveland State University, I was stuck. School was the one thing that I counted on to lead me into my career.

However, dropping the class was the least of my worries—it was November and I still hadn't found a job. That's when I decided—if I was going to be a writer,

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Press Club Board Member Dustin S. Klein Named Publisher of Smart Business



Congratulations are in order for Press Club board member Dustin S. Klein, executive editor of Smart Business Network (SBN) since 2002. Dustin has been named

Publisher of Smart Business Magazines & Events. He started as a reporter for the SBN Cleveland edition in 1997. Two years later, he was named its editor. He was then promoted to corporate executive editor in 2002, where he was tasked with overseeing all content – print, digital and live – for the entire national chain of SBN publications.

As publisher, Dustin will oversee day-to-day operations for the Magazines & Events division, with direct oversight of content/editorial, circulation, production and event-related content. He also retains the executive editor title. As part of his new role, Dustin will be working with the division president to develop new products and services, as well as identify and help facilitate revenue growth strategies. Dustin heads up the Press Club's sponsorship committee.



They said it.....

"There's a difference in meaning between 'the press' and 'the media.' I still prefer to say 'the press,' where news is concerned. It refers to news that has this constitutional mission at its core content. Some of the media is informative, some of it even looks and sounds like news, but the underlying impetus of the media is to generate profit, but we can't let journalism sacrifice itself on the altar of entertainment."
– *Dan Rather, former CBS Anchorman, American University, January 25, 2011.*

Reflections from Lerner Tower

By Laurie Mitchell, Certified Personnel Consultant



Last fall, when MRIs revealed two lumbar discs collapsed into my spinal canal, I finally accepted the necessity of spine surgery if I ever wanted to walk

more than a few feet again. After much research, I selected an excellent neurosurgery team at University Hospitals who graciously agreed to perform the structural repairs two days before Christmas so that I could be down and out when most of my clients were on vacation.

A few bedridden days provided time to recall some "memorable" agency-side placements.

In 1985, I placed a creative director at an Akron ad agency. Of course, I had met him, he had interviewed with my client three times, and all of his references checked out very nicely. But his first couple months on the job didn't go well as he and his boss fought constantly, nearly coming to blows on several occasions. One day, when the writing was on the wall in indelible paint, he assembled all staffers in the agency's large conference room, turned off the lights, started the projector, and showed a movie. The long opening shot was of himself in full frontal nudity with a hard-on. Agency employees screamed and ran for the exits, and he was fired within the hour. Twenty years passed before agency management spoke to me again.

In 1995, I orchestrated the relocation of a woman living in San Francisco to a Charlotte PR Agency as an account supervisor. On her first day, she arrived at 8:30 a.m. and around 9 a.m., when she sat down at her desk, her chair broke and she tumbled to the floor. Despite her multiple efforts all day long to secure another chair, by 5 p.m. when neither she nor any of the agency's 75 other employees had found one for her, she quit. Was it sabotage? Did her colleagues take an immediate dislike to her? I never learned.

In 1998, I relocated an ad agency SVP from Houston to Toronto where he reported to the president of a large multi-office firm. It turned out that my candidate liked to get to the office by 6 a.m., have coffee at his desk, and then brush his teeth again. The men's room was quite a hike down a long hall, but the ladies room was immediately next door, and as no women showed up to work before 8 a.m., he found it very convenient. The president, however, thought it scandalous that a male entered the ladies room, and fired him for poor judgment.

While I've recovered from surgery, I shall never "recover" from the horror of these placements.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

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bureau chief Don Olson tells the story of wandering into Larry's workbench area in the old TV 3 Akron bureau on Wheeler Street. Don couldn't help but notice a makeshift noose above Larry's workbench.

Don: "Larry, What's with the hangman's noose?"

Larry: "Don, if I ever have another day like today, I am going to call you and say three words: 'Cut me down!'"

Yep, we've all had those days. Good luck to Larry in his retirement!

the Byliner

A publication of
The Press Club of Cleveland

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Associate Editor

Maryana Bradas

Contributing Reporters

Stu Warner

Ed Byers

Channel 3's Legendary Larry Baker Retires



Larry Baker, one of the finest broadcast journalists in these parts for nearly 50 years, has called it a career. The legendary WKYC TV 3 news cameraman has retired. Now that he has all the time in the world on his hands, he took time to reflect on his long news career for the Byliner.

Byliner: How did the broadcast news business begin for you?

Larry: I always knew I wanted to be in broadcasting. My brother and I played TV in our bedroom using a card table as a control box and a shoebox for a camera with red light. I loved the idea of giving people information.

When I was 15, we had a show on WGAR, "Pepsi-Cola Teen Time." Hired as a senior in high school, I worked three years at WERE Radio. In 1965, after NBC was forced by the FCC to take KYW back to become WKYC, I was hired there. Two months into that position, I was drafted into the war. After playing in the infantry, I ended up at the Pentagon with Army Television, where I made my entrance into TV. When my service was up, one of

the best supervisors and human beings I know, Howard Spiller, called me to return to a TV job back home, as the studio cameraman at Channel 3.

Byliner: Who had the most influence on your career?

Larry: My brother, Bill Baker, who went on to run Westinghouse TV and WNET. Many people helped me and I stole many good ideas from watching programs and listening to people in the business.

Byliner: What will you miss most about not toting the camera and sticks around?

Larry: My documentaries. I am trying to do a News Magazine show for Akron and Summit, Stark and Portage counties. Since it's so close to Cleveland, it's ignored

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Karen Schiely, The Beacon-Journal

BEST CLEVELAND MOVE

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I would have to take any job that came along so I could get experience freelancing.

I Googled "journalism clubs Cleveland," and The Press Club was listed at the top. I looked at the Web site and wondered if it was still an active club since the site looked so dated. But, I looked at the Contact Us page and saw President Ed Byers' contact information displayed, so it was worth a shot. I sent an email to Ed, explaining my situation and my desire to get involved. When Ed responded, the very same day, he invited me to a board meeting.

At the meeting, I shared my thoughts with the board on various topics related to students. The board members were all very receptive and asked my opinion on how to proceed. I was thrilled—professionals were asking my opinion! Ed said he was grateful to have a young perspec-

tive and he'd be willing to help in any way that he could, but he wouldn't be able to get me a job.

A couple of months and board meetings passed and Ed introduced me to Chris Seper who founded MedCity News with Mary Vanac (two PD veterans). I was able to work for a byline and build my portfolio. From this relationship, I was introduced to my next job.

Then, a couple of months ago, Ed called about an opening at Medical Mutual. And here I am—Marketing Communications Specialist at one of the best places to work in Cleveland.

It's not totally what you know, it's definitely who you know that takes you places. Networking is the foundation of that truth. You hear it all the time and people who've been in the industry forever take it for granted. They have a network built up around them. It's young people who need to start the construction.

The PRESSCLUB of Cleveland

"Serving and honoring communications professionals since 1887."

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Tom Mulloy Photography

Mary Patton
Patton Public Relations

Denise Polverine
Cleveland.com

Meet the New Board Members



MICHAEL E. BENNETT

Employer: Cleveland Jewish News

Title: Publisher and editor

Hometown: Cleveland Heights (grew up in Beachwood)

Family: Wife, Laura; two teenagers

Alma mater: Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University

Previously I worked at/as: The Jewish Federation of Cleveland as director of marketing and communication (and also as director of its fund-raising campaign); The Plain Dealer as features department editor; and in many reporting and editing roles at newspapers in Fort Wayne and Bloomington, Ind.

I am most proud of: My family

I am happy to serve on the board

because: It's a privilege to be able to contribute to The Press Club's success in supporting and growing the profession.

There is value to being a Press Club member because: Membership can further a person's impact on news and on Cleveland – not to mention on his or her career! – by providing formal and informal opportunities for education, networking, recognition, advice, mentoring and more. And it's fun.

Jack Patterson, Beacon Journal, Dead at 81



Jack Patterson, longtime sportswriter for the Akron Beacon Journal, died peacefully Saturday, Jan. 22, 2011.

Jack, 81, grew up in Warren, Ohio and attended Ohio State University. He started his journalism career at the Warren Tribune, where he was assistant sports editor. Jack joined the Beacon Journal in 1955 and served as a sports reporter, columnist, and editor.

During his 38 years at the Beacon Journal he covered the Ohio State Buckeyes and wrote about countless other sports, including professional football, baseball, golf and bowling. But his real love was horse racing—he wrote the handicapping feature Patterson's Picks and covered numerous Triple Crown races. Jack attended 31 Kentucky Derby events over the years.



BOB BECKER

Employer: Ohio Lottery (TV Talent Dude), bbsoundandlight.com (my own company), and I freelance with companies like Sports Time Ohio, MAGNET, WTAM Radio and dozens of others.

Title: Videographer/Producer

Hometown: Lakewood

Family: Luanne Bole-Becker, Chris Becker (currently working at STO), Bryan Becker (away at Columbia School of the Arts in Chicago)

Alma Mater: Lutheran High School West and Cleveland State University

Previously I worked at/as: Disc Jockey at the old M105 (now Majic), switched to radio news reporter at WGAR, TV reporter at Channel 3.

I am most proud of: First member of my family to graduate from college. The jobs I've had have given me a lot of freedom to pursue many vocations.

I am happy to serve on the board because: It's an opportunity to meet other people in the news business and see different perspectives.

There is value to being a Press Club member because: The Press Club does care about the people in the organization as well as our craft of journalism where we report, investigate, and deal with the issues of our society.

"Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

—Thomas Jefferson

The PRESSCLUB of Cleveland

The Press Club of Cleveland Announces Election of 2011 Officers

The Press Club of Cleveland announces the election of officers to its 2011 board of directors. The officers were approved at the Press Club of Cleveland's annual meeting on Dec. 8, 2010. They will each serve a two year term.

The officers of the 2011 board of directors are:

President - Ed Byers, Medical Mutual of Ohio

Vice President - Stuart Warner, The Write Coach, AOL News

VP Programming - Wendy Kertesz, MarketingSense

Vice President/Marketing and Public Relations - Carol Saferin, Mart Saferin and Associates, LLC

Vice President/Membership - Pat Panchak, Former Editor-in-Chief, Industry Week

Treasurer & Secretary - Carol Kovach, Sun Newspapers

VP/ Sponsorship - Dustin Klein SBN

New members elected to the board of directors include:

Bob Becker, bboundandlight, WTAM 1100

Jeff Bendix, Advanstar Communications

Michael Bennett, Cleveland Jewish News

Lisa Lowry, WKYC-TV3

Re-elected to the board of directors for two year terms were:

Maryana Bradas, Business Wire

Jane Christyson, Cleveland Metroparks

Howard Fencel, WKYC-TV3

Bonnie Godbey, Freelance

Bruce Hennes, Hennes Paynter Communications

Atty. David Marburger, Baker Hostetler

Submit Your Best for the 2011 Ohio Excellence in Journalism Awards Competition

Its time to enter your very best work for the prestigious statewide Ohio Excellence in Journalism Awards sponsored by The Press Club of Cleveland. For the 33rd year, the awards will once again recognize the outstanding achievements of journalists throughout Ohio.

The entry form, list of categories and complete rulebook can be located on the Press Club of Cleveland Website:

http://www.pressclubcleveland.com/Media/MediaManager/EIJ_Entry2011_0.pdf

The award ceremony will be held Friday, June 10 at the Cleveland Marriott Downtown at Key Center, the same location as last year's successful awards event.

The Ohio Excellence in Journalism Awards is conducted by The Press Club of Cleveland and judged by out-of-state press clubs.

Each year, The Press Club of Cleveland receives more than 1,000 entries from individuals and media outlets across the state, including weekly, alternative and daily newspapers, radio and television

newsrooms, general circulation magazines, business and trade publications and news-oriented Web sites.

Again, the top awards will go to the BEST IN OHIO — Newspaper (Daily and Non-Daily), Magazine, Television Newscast, Radio Newscast, Trade Publication, News-Oriented Web site and Business Publication along with individual efforts in several categories in the state of Ohio.

Don't Miss the Fun on June 10th!



The Arizona Shootings: So Close, Yet So Far— and an Eerie Silence

By Mary Jane Skala, former editor-in-chief, The Sun Newspapers



As two friends helped me move into a Flagstaff, Ariz., apartment on Saturday, Jan. 8, one of them paused early that afternoon.

“Did you hear about the shooting down in Tucson this morning?” he asked.

Now, nearly one month later, I sense that the tragedy exploded into every corner of the United States except here in Flagstaff, just four hours north.

That Saturday was busy, and it was very late when I finally turned on the TV to get details. This was a national story. I learned that six people had been killed and 14 were injured, including U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Gifford of Tucson.

As I unpacked the next day, I saw a familiar face on TV: Arizona Supreme Court Judge John Pelander, a 1969 Brush

High School graduate. He was a close friend of the federal judge who was fatally shot, and a friend of mine. So far from home, I had a link to this story. I sat down to watch.

My family is close friends of the Pelander family. John's father, Art, worked for the old Sohio years ago. Art served with my late father, WGAR news director and Ohio Bell PR man Charles Day (a Press Club Hall of Famer), on the South Euclid-Lyndhurst school board. His late mother Virginia had taught English at Brush High School, from which we both graduated. Our families are lifelong friends.

Monday morning I dashed off an e-mail about John Pelander to Ray Jablonski, who succeeded me as editor of the east side Sun Newspapers. Here's a local angle, I told Ray. He called Pelander and got a good story.

Meanwhile, off I went to work – but

nobody at the Museum of Northern Arizona, where I'm handling development and publications, uttered a word about the shooting that day. It was as if it had never happened.

Late that afternoon, five of us museum employees headed south in a van to a museum-sponsored lecture in Sedona. As soon as we left, I asked a question: what about the shooting in Tucson?

“Well,” said one co-worker. “I'm going to keep my mouth shut.” I sensed that he had plenty to say, but opted to keep quiet. The topic quickly died.

Strange, I thought. Nobody here talks about current events? Flagstaff is a college town - Northern Arizona University is here – and I've sensed it's the most liberal city in conservative Arizona, but nobody talked that day, or that week, and nobody I know here has said a word since. It's as if the shooting never happened.

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LARRY BAKER

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by Cleveland TV.

Byliner: And what will you miss the least?

Larry: I will not miss telling people that it's snowing when they can look out their window and see for themselves.

Byliner: What's your take on the state of the news business?

Larry: I have worked with many great people who try hard to produce a good product. However, our priorities need

to change in this country. Yes, profit is necessary, but not at the cost of informing people. I understand the changes in the business and I have changed with and embraced most of them.

It's time we looked at how we fund broadcast news and media. All western countries have healthcare and a tax or license supported media. The government does not control the BBC or CBC. The BBC is the largest and most respected news operation in the world. They are moving

into the U.S. because the demand for real news is there. There is room for commercially and publicly supported media.

If we want an informed society in this global society, we have to start having license fees to support them. If we don't, we will be less informed. You can't get all of your information from Facebook, the Web or American Idol. People have to realize how important the news media is in protecting a democratic society and be willing to pay a little for it.

THOM FLADUNG

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in Dayton and our daughter is a freshman at the University of Dayton. Obviously, this will put us so much closer to so many loved ones. We feel truly blessed.

We were in Ohio, visiting over the holidays, at my mom's. We had not said a word to her about the possibility of my joining The Plain Dealer and us moving because ... well, it just wasn't a done deal yet. Which made it more than a little odd when my mother suggested that we all make New Year's resolutions. "How about all of you resolve to move back to Ohio," she said, pretty much freaking us out. And reminding me to never disregard the power of a mother's intuition.

This will be a reunion for you and a lot of your former co-workers?

Yes. One of the real pulls and attractions to coming to The Plain Dealer is to again have the opportunity to work with Debra Adams Simmons. Deb and I worked

together at the Detroit Free Press and have kept in touch over the years. She's a dynamic, skilled editor. And we share many journalistic strategies, philosophies and approaches. She's also a lot of fun to work with.

In Akron, while I was with the Beacon Journal, I came to depend on Reggie Fields as one of our best go-to reporters for hard, breaking news and high-impact enterprise stories. Now, I'll get to work with Reggie as The Plain Dealer's Columbus bureau chief.

I worked with reporter Stan Donaldson and page designer Emmet Smith in Detroit. Also in Detroit, I came to know David Kordalski, who then was with The Detroit News and now is The Plain Dealer's AME for visuals. I'd rather be on the same team with David than competing against him.

And there are so many others I recognize from ties with Akron and from simply reading and enjoying stories when

I'd visit Northeast Ohio and buy a Plain Dealer. It's hard to capture how jacked up I am to now work with them.

Like Terry Pluto. As a lifelong Cleveland sports fan, I had the pleasure of reading Terry's stories, columns and books. Then, when I got the opportunity at the Beacon Journal -- or, as some of my family called it "Terry Pluto's paper" -- I got to work with him. Now, I get to again. I can't wait.

How did this all come down? (I have heard the decision to bring you aboard was a "no-brainer.")

Susan Goldberg, Debra and I all had known one another for years since we had all been with Knight Ridder newspapers. When Susan decided to leave The Plain Dealer for Bloomberg, Deb called and asked if I'd be interested in the managing editor job at The Plain Dealer. That was not an answer that I had to think about for very long.

You must be excited at the new challenges that lie ahead?

I can't wait to dive in. I've watched from afar as The Plain Dealer has become more intensely local, has upped the ante on watchdog and investigative journalism and has told some wonderfully engaging stories. The work Plain Dealer journalists have done on the Cuyahoga County investigation has been work that any newsroom would be proud to claim.

I have watched as Plain Dealer journalists have moved aggressively into the digital space, using video, live chats, blogs and more via cleveland.com to reach more readers.

Look, the challenges are huge. Tomorrow isn't promised to any journalist or newspaper. Technology continues to change our profession at a dizzying pace. But amid it all, I believe that one fundamental fact hasn't changed: readers want stories from where they live that they care about and that can't be found anywhere else.

Yes, we can now do video and audio on those stories. We put links to them on Facebook and we tweet about them. But the sweet spot is still a story that you didn't know about until The Plain Dealer told you.

Those are the stories they're already telling in Cleveland. Those are the stories I'm looking forward to helping find and tell.

Bruce Hennes, Finalist for Cleveland Business Connects (CBC) Award



Congratulations to Press Club board member Bruce Hennes on being selected as a finalist for "Best Speaker/ Meeting Facilitator" in competition sponsored by Cleveland Business Connects Magazine (CBC). If you think Bruce is a dynamic speaker, please take a minute and vote for him in the CBC poll by clicking <http://tinyurl.com/4kqg35s>.

Voting ends February 10. You don't have to vote in every category, just scroll down to the Best Speaker category and select Bruce's name.

THE ARIZONA SHOOTINGS:

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I absorbed the Tucson story alone. I watched national coverage and Phoenix coverage, including several local specials. I watched President Barack Obama's memorial service speech in Tucson and updates on Gifford's recovery.

If this is life outside the news business, I want no part of it.

I was raised on news. Events around the corner and all over the world were discussed over dinner, and my father flew to Russia and Hungary to cover big events 50 years ago when media budgets were healthy. I spent 40 rewarding years in journalism, and I kept my radio on in the newsroom.

Now, here in Flagstaff, a mass murder 250 miles away brings silence. I shudder.

The History of The Press Club of Cleveland

Happy Anniversary To Us - 124 Years And Still Going Strong!

By John Sheridan

The Press Club of Cleveland is celebrating its 124th anniversary this year as we, the members of the Fourth Estate, have valiantly kept alive a flame born in Cleveland way back in 1887.

On Feb. 1, 1887, Plain Dealer Associate Editor Gilbert Henderson and John C. Covert, then editor of the old Cleveland Leader established The Press Club of Cleveland.

By 1889, the club boasted 72 regular members and had moved into posh headquarters, the former Euclid Avenue residence of steel industry magnate Henry Chisholm. It was pronounced "one of the finest clubs in the country."

It wasn't until March 31, 1946 that articles of incorporation were filed with the state of Ohio with the stated purpose being, "to bring members of the press, newspapermen, and men of other professions into closer personal relationship (and) to further good fellowship among (the) members."

During the 40s and early 50s, with Cleveland being one of the ten largest cities in the United States, The Press Club of Cleveland's Olmsted Hotel's headquarters was the place to be – especially on Friday nights. It was a "must" stop for a galaxy of visiting celebrities, most of them looking for a shot of ink.

In 1950, The Press Club of Cleveland went on the air with its own radio show – "The Press Club Presents," a local version of "Meet the Press," emceed by board member Sanford Markey.

Through the mid 1960s and well into the 1970s, except for an annual golf outing, organized by Sanford Markey in the early 1970s, the Club slipped into a phase of near-hibernation. And like many other Press Clubs around the country, The Press Club of Cleveland teetered on the brink of extinction.

It was on a bitterly cold December night in 1977, Industry Week editor Stanley Modic revived the Press Club by summoning his print colleagues to a meeting at the Communicators Club, an umbrella organization which brought together such groups as the Cleveland Advertising Club and the Public Relations Society of America under one roof.



John Sheridan, Stanley Modic and Stu Warner show off their canes at the Hall of Fame dinner.

Deploing the disintegration of the fraternal spirit that had existed among journalists in the past, not everyone in the room was bubbling with optimism about the prospects for success. But Stan Modic was not to be deterred. "There will be a Press Club," he declared loudly, "even if I am the only one who joins!"

The vote was unanimous. Modic had silenced the skeptics and set the tone. He was elected president.

Among the first activities the revived club sponsored, were "Newsmaker Nights" featuring such guests as then-mayor Dennis Kucinich. It was followed by "Pan Luncheon" roasts of Cleveland media figures and hilarious "Comedy Nights" and "Liar's Night" programs.

On the heels of meaningful programming and vigilant leadership, a funny thing happened: membership boomed.

In 1979, it established solid credibility when it inaugurated the Northeastern Ohio "Excellence in Journalism" (EIJ) awards. Several years later, the contest was expanded into a statewide program. The contest continues to grow in popularity with more than a thousand entries in a wide range of categories.

The Press Club continued to flourish and in 1981, established a Cleveland journalism Hall of Fame. The first Hall

of Fame dinner program featured ABC News "Nightline" host Ted Koppel as guest speaker, drawing more than 400 people with 11 charter members inducted into the Hall.

On May 21, 2007, the Press Club celebrated its 120th anniversary and officially established Nighttown in Cleveland Heights as its official home. Nighttown was chosen because of its long and colorful history as a favorite haunt of local journalists since opening in 1965. The plaques of all Press Club of Cleveland Hall of Famers hang throughout the popular restaurant.

The "visual archives" of The Press Club of Cleveland now gracing the walls include large format photos from The Cleveland Press and The Plain Dealer depicting historic and iconic photos well known to all Clevelanders, though rarely seen.

With the membership of many Press Clubs across the United States shrinking (some have ceased existence altogether), The Press Club of Cleveland's ranks have remained stable and healthy. The club's officers and board of directors work tirelessly to serve its members by providing social and educational opportunities, promoting excellence in journalism, attracting and educating high quality candidates to enter journalism, and maintaining a history of journalism in Cleveland.

Aol's Patch Providing Jobs For Journalists

By Stuart Warner

You've read all the horror stories about journalism. Newspapers have closed. Thousands of reporters, editors, photographers, designers, etc., have been laid off. In Northeast Ohio, Sun News closed or consolidated half of its 22 publications. The Plain Dealer and the Akron Beacon Journal have newsrooms that are barely half the size of what they once were. The local TV and radio stations have made major cutbacks.

Yet all is not so bleak. Journalists are getting hired again. And one new venture appears to be hiring more than anybody – Patch.com, which now employs somewhere close to 1,000 journalists at its 800 hyperlocal community websites around the country.

At least 20 of those new jobs are in Northeast Ohio, where Patch.com has 17 sites online with more to come.

"We are really proud of the fact that we hired more journalists in 2010 than any other organization. Built one of the largest pureplay hyperlocal platforms in a short time," Patch President Warren Webster wrote to me in an e-mail. "(We're) building a tremendous user base. Went from 30 to around 800 sites in one year. Thousands of e-mails from 42 states and 12 foreign countries asking for Patch in their towns."

In Northeast Ohio, Patch hired four former Plain Dealer editors and reporters, including Jean Dubail and Susan Ruiz Patton, who supervise the sites. Dubail is the regional editor for the east side operations – Mentor, Cleveland Heights, Beachwood, Hillcrest, Solon, Twinsburg, Kent and North Canton. Patton watches over Avon Lake, Avon, Lakewood, Strongsville, Brecksville, Stow, Cuyahoga Falls, Westlake and Fairlawn-Bath.

Each site is staffed by one full-time editor, who writes, edits, photographs and manages freelancers.

Those editors range from veteran Northeast Ohio journalists like Roger Vozar (Hillcrest) from the Sun News, Melissa Hebert (Avon) from The Plain Dealer and Kymberli Hagelberg (Fairlawn-Bath) from the Beacon Journal, to recent college graduates, including six from Kent State University.

"The multi-media training the students get at Kent State is perfect for us," Dubail said.

Patch also hired former Plain Dealer reporter Kaye Spector as an associate regional editor, assisting Patton. Dubail said that the company is also advertising for an associate on the East side.

And that's about as much detail as you'll get from Patch. The company is an affiliate of AOL.com, which employs me as an enterprise editor for AOL News, its flagship news site. And even I couldn't get much information from Patch headquarters in New York.

"Most of those answers are confidential," I was told in response to a list of questions I submitted to Webster.

So I got some answers from a New York Times story. The company said it spent up to \$50 million this year to open its sites. The site editors earn \$38,000 to \$45,000 per year, the regional editors reportedly as much as double that. All get benefits. Each site also has a freelance budget. The site editors are expected to produce five items daily, including videos or slide shows, as well as edit freelancers. A leaked report called The AOL Way says that CEO Tim Armstrong wants his in-house reporters to produce up to 10 items per day. The report did not say if that includes Patch employees.

There are a lot of community tidbits – school news, neighborhood notes – on the Patch sites. But there's also some pretty good journalism. The Kent site, with Editor Matt Fredmonsky, one of the KSU alums, gives readers the kind of government coverage that you used to get in the large dailies.

On Friday, Jan. 7, there was an armed robbery in the usually quiet Summit County suburb Stow. Not big news in cities, but the talk of the town there. All five suspects were arrested by Saturday morning. When I turned my computer on, under local headlines on my AOL homepage, StowPatch editor Amanda Harocz already had the full story online. The Akron Beacon Journal had it the next day. The Stow Sentry, the local weekly, didn't have the story online until at least Monday and not in print until Jan. 16, according to its website.

A small triumph, perhaps.

However, according to the Times story,



the sites are happy to have 100 readers for a story, "500 page views is a wild success." By comparison, a typical story on AOL News, the company's national site, is likely to get 100,000 or more views. But that's out of an audience of more than 20 million monthly unique viewers.

Neither Webster nor Dubail would comment on numbers concerning readers of advertising.

"We don't release numbers but we're happy to say that we've exceeded every goal we set for ourselves," Webster wrote in his e-mail response. "Traffic and revenue are both exceeding expectations."

Certainly, the competition seems to be noticing. The Record Publishing Co., which has 10 weeklies or biweeklies in the area, has spruced up its print edition with a redesign since Patch went online here. The Plain Dealer, in conjunction with the 11 remaining Sun News papers, which are owned by the same company, announced that it would soon be rolling out 16 improved community pages. Lakewood, Strongsville and Cleveland Heights, all current Patch sites, are already online.

"Although having Patch in our market makes this an important initiative, we've actually had community pages for years ... over 70 of them, in fact," PD Assistant Managing Editor David Kordalski, who is heading the joint PD-Sun project, wrote in an online response to a comment about Patch. "We just thought we could package the content in a more accessible way."

Regardless, it's all good news for news consumers. We're getting more local reporting ... and more local journalists are back to work.

(Stuart Warner is a member of The Press Club of Cleveland's executive board. He is projects editor for AOL News.)